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Level of Students' Achievements in Co-Curricular Activities in Schools

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Keywords:

*Co-curricular,
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This research focused on examining students' achievement in co-curricular activities (CCAs) in secondary schools in Gulu City. The objective of this study was to establish the level of students' achievements in co-curricular activities in secondary schools in Gulu City. The number of medals won, number of trophies won, number of excelling students representing the school, City, Country, number of certificates obtained, number of scholarships awarded and number of records set at competitions denoted the level of students' achievements in co-curricular activities. The study was conducted using a correlational design. Data was collected using questionnaires featuring closed-ended questions categorised into sections. Section A focused on background information, requiring respondents to select the most relevant option. Section B addressed the level of students' achievements in CCAs, with respondents indicating their agreement or disagreement using a five-point Likert Scale, interviews; a structured guide was employed, encompassing background information in part A and questions on students' achievements in part B and observation surveys from 218 respondents. Interview data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics, data from observation was analysed narratively and descriptive statistics analysis was used to determine the level of students' achievements in secondary schools. Ordinal regression was used to analyse the data. The findings were presented in the form of tables and narratives from interviews. The results of the findings indicated that the majority (55.6%) of respondents agreed that the level of students' achievements in co-curricular activities was high. The status of excelling students in CCAs in the city at all levels was high. The study recommended that the government should prioritise funding for co-curricular activities from grassroots to national levels, focusing on talent identification and development. City leaders should lobby development partners and the central government for adequate funding. School head teachers should strategise for promoting co-curricular activities and talent development.

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INTRODUCTION

The realisation of students' achievements is an aspiration that extends beyond individual efforts. The school setting and the guidance of school administrators provide conducive pathways for the holistic development of students (Boris, 2019). Success in co-curricular activities among students not only enhances their overall competence but also positions them to excel in various aspects of life, making them competitive in global competitions. Moreover, participation in such activities was found to open doors to international accolades and acknowledgement, contributing to students' exposure on a global scale (Chege, 2018).

Historically, the genesis of the students' achievements in co-curricular activities is rooted in the scouting movement with its motto "Be Prepared" (Baden-Powell, 1908). Over the years, Baden's ideas were promoted in education by colonialists, and schools had to adapt to meet the needs of society and our young people. The concept of managing Co-Curricular Activities (CCAs) can be traced in the ancient literature, for instance, the ancient scriptures where CCAs like dying cloths, singing, milking, wrestling, archery, playing, cooking, warfare activities were quite common (Coven, 2015).

According to Syafiq et al. (2014), the history of students' achievements in CCAs gives students the opportunity to add, consolidate and practice the knowledge, skills and values that cannot only be learned in the classroom but also planned outside

the classroom. He asserts that effective management of CCAs at school may help students in various aspects, winning trophies, medals, certificates, fostering integration among the races and the school community, training and inculcating the values of leadership. The global development of strategies for managing co-curricular activities, according to Mahoney (2010), was enshrined in the education system, and it became apparent that all schools adapted to the appropriate strategies within their context. Students were given significant chances to gain experiences in CCAs through participating in games and sports, music, dance and drama, art and crafts. In the United States, CCAs are managed accordingly to provide normative experiences for students. In the recent national surveys, it was reported that more than 70% of schools have employed relevant strategies to manage their co-curricular activities well over the past years (Mahoney, 2010).

Students' achievements in various fields such as games, sports, music, drama, dance, arts and crafts not only keep them actively engaged but also provide a platform for exploring their talents. Motivated by the desire to excel, they often strive for high achievements in local, national and international tournaments, ultimately earning medals and other recognitions (Wilson, 2018). Conversely, Frederick & Eccles (2010) argued that students' successes are significantly influenced by their involvement in Co-Curricular Activities (CCAs), citing a direct correlation between educational achievements and CCA participation,

particularly in the United Kingdom. However, Eccles does not delve into the specifics of how the management strategies of CCAs directly impact students' high achievements. Harber (2011) traced the concept of students' achievements in CCAs back to ancient times, where activities like wrestling were used to gauge one's energy level and potential for success in life. In that era, accumulated experiences in such activities held high societal value, emphasising the importance of managing the entire process effectively.

Coven (2015) complements Frederick and Eccles' idea by noting that students' achievements ought to be upheld, for schools' targets to be realised, the focus should be on enhancing students' achievements through CCAs. Coven, therefore, emphasised that students' achievements in CCAs should be highly prioritised and all schools should take it as their central focus.

Statement of the Problem

According to Harber (2011) and Zhang et al. (2016), there were empirical indications that in the mid-19th Century, the world experienced an unprecedented decline in the level of co-curricular activities (CCAs), and students' achievements in these activities decreased by 69% and 72%, respectively. The management strategies for co-curricular activities were closely associated with this significant decline in student achievements in CCAs in secondary schools worldwide. In Uganda, in recent years, there has been a decline in students' achievements in co-curricular activities, with only a 32% achievement rate in the year 2019 in secondary schools (Norman, 2019). With effective strategies for managing CCAs, it was anticipated that students' achievements in co-curricular activities would surpass the average, ranging from 50% to 100% in all secondary schools in Northern Uganda (Bagala, 2017). The issue of low student achievement in co-curricular activities was observable in secondary schools in Gulu Municipality before it attained city status. Although several factors could explain the problem of low students' achievements in co-

curricular activities in secondary schools in Gulu City, this study sought to investigate whether strategies such as mentorship, financing, scholarships, benchmarking, training, coaching, and role modeling could help address the issue of low student achievements in CCAs in Gulu City secondary schools.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the level of students' achievements in co-curricular activities in secondary schools in Gulu City.

Objective of the Study

To establish the level of students' achievements in CCAs in secondary schools in Gulu City.

Research Question

What is the level of students' achievements in CCAs in secondary schools in Gulu City?

○ Scope of the Study

The study was on the level of students' achievements in co-curricular activities in secondary schools in Gulu City. Gulu City comprises two divisions: Gulu East Division (Laroo-Pece Division) and Gulu West Division (Bardege-Layibi Division). Gulu City is bordered by Gulu District from the North and the East, Omoro District from the South and Amuru District from the North. This study will involve only nineteen secondary schools in Gulu City. The study period between 2012 -2022 was covered by this study, as this was the period when Gulu registered a critical trend of events in co-curricular and no study has been conducted on the same period in time.

Significance of the Study

This study aimed to provide valuable insights for various stakeholders. Students could enhance their understanding of optimising performance in CCAs, while the researcher would acquire skills and knowledge at the level of students' achievements in co-curricular activities at the secondary schools.

Additionally, head teachers and teachers might gain extra expertise in enhancing the level of students' achievements, CCAs, and the findings could influence decisions of the Board of Governors in secondary schools to increase their commitment to enhancing CCAs' achievements. Policy makers, such as the Ministry of Education and Sports, could benefit from information on the level of students' achievements in CCA and students' achievement status to offer more informed advice to school leaders. Furthermore, this study's finding serves as a strategic tool for influencing educational policy and practice. It not only aids in bridging the gap between academic learning and holistic development but also supports the creation of an enabling environment where CCAs are valued, well-managed, and fully integrated into the secondary school system. This will ultimately lead to improved student outcomes; socially, emotionally and academically.

Assumptions of the Study

The study assumed that the methodology chosen collected relevant data for the study without much influence from variables outside the study's interest. The identified sample respondents were assumed to have provided relevant data that informed the study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Theoretically, McClelland's Achievement Theory of Motivation (1961) informed this study. The Achievement Theory of Motivation (ATM) suggests that certain societies and individuals demonstrate higher success in accomplishments compared to others. McClelland examined the behaviours of individuals, emphasising that regardless of age, gender, race, or culture, everyone possesses a specific need that drives them. These individual needs are developed and shaped over time through life experiences (McClelland, 1961). McClelland argued that people engage in innovative and improved actions, driven by a need for achievement or an orientation toward

accomplishment, seeking excellence, progress, and personal growth. By concentrating on a particular need, McClelland contends that individuals can challenge prevailing theories suggesting that only extraordinary individuals achieve greatness (McClelland, 1961).

McClelland's ATM theory proposed that human motivation is rooted in the pursuit of achievement, power and affiliation. According to Santiago et al. (2022), an inclination towards achievement develops during middle childhood through familial influence, societal socialisation and exposure to competitive environments. Andersen suggested that the need for achievement is influenced by culture, with some societies producing fewer individuals with achievement orientations. In societies lacking such individuals, lower levels of achievement are anticipated, as evidenced in Massachusetts, USA (King et al., 2012).

Nonetheless, the aforementioned theory suggests that the inclination toward achievement influences one's interest and the drive to engage in an activity with the aim of excelling. Moreover, individuals with a strong motivation to achieve, when faced with tasks of moderate difficulty or risk, typically exhibit higher performance levels in achievement-oriented activities. They also tend to favour an intermediate level of risk and maintain moderately high, realistic aspirations, demonstrating persistent engagement in achievement-oriented pursuits. The above theory was chosen over the other theories because it directly relates to the study variables as explained above.

Conceptually, in essence, students' success is characterised by their ability to lead a fulfilling life, experiencing a sense of well-being, self-belief, and enthusiasm for a chosen career or vocation (Coven, 2015). Co-curricular activities (CCAs) encompass extracurricular pursuits such as games, sports, music, dance, drama, and debating, occurring both within and outside the school setting (Schon, 2014).

Students' accomplishments in CCAs, therefore, signify the organised activities beyond the classroom that contribute to the development of various facets of their personality. This involvement enhances life skills, fostering greater achievements. It involves assessing learners' acquisition of knowledge, non-cognitive skills, higher cognitive skills, social-emotional skills, problem-solving abilities, collaboration, and creativity within a specified timeframe (Rathore, Abdul and Muhammad, 2018).

According to Ohochukwu (2018), students' achievements in CCAs are the outcomes of participating in extracurricular activities that prepare them to contribute to society and collectively shape an informed electorate, upholding their country's fundamental values of liberty, justice, and equality. Jenelle et al. (2021) had discovered that clubs and societies faced closures due to a lack of student interest in joining them, with scouting, for instance, experiencing a mere 1.2% student participation in 2020.

This study adopted Ohochukwu's perspective to define students' achievements in co-curricular activities (such as games, sports, debating, scouting, Girl Guides, Scripture Union, Young Christian Society, etc.) as the level of learners' accomplishments in engaging in CCAs and the continual enhancement of their skills. This included factors such as the number of trophies, certificates awarded to top performers, medals won, participants sent to national and international competitions, and school representations at the national level (representing the district in national competitions).

Contextually, in Uganda, the Education Act (2008) emphasised that the Government of Uganda decentralised the supervision of co-curricular activities in schools to bring about offers of a variety of opportunities for students' achievements in CCAs. Empirically, appropriate supervision of co-curricular activities was known for enhancing high students' achievements in co-curricular activities in

secondary schools in Uganda. The use of appropriate supervision of co-curricular activities like sports, scouting and drama has been introduced in secondary schools in Gulu Municipality. However, the results did not meet expectations, indicating potential challenges in CCAs execution (Bagala, 2017). To tackle this issue, it was deemed crucial to delve deeper into the reasons behind the low achievements in co-curricular activities. Possible factors could have included a lack of resources, insufficient training for mentors and coaches, or inadequate emphasis on the significance of co-curricular activities in the overall development of students. Moreover, socio-economic factors, cultural influences, or infrastructure limitations may also have played a role (Bagala, 2017). This information could have informed the development of more effective and tailored approaches to enhance students' achievements in co-curricular activities in Northern Uganda's secondary schools.

Empirical Review

Level of Students' Achievements in CCAs in Secondary Schools

Co-curricular activities are programmes and learning experiences that complement, in some way, what students are learning in school, that is, experiences that are connected to or mirror the academic curriculum (Great Schools Partnership, 2013). According to Han & Kwon (2018), co-curricular student activities were a deliberate effort designed with intended outcomes and presented in a manner that expanded educational opportunities, encouraged personal development, improved academic skills, and enhanced the health and lifestyle of all participants. CCAs were not a new idea; they were encouraged in schools as an integral part of the student life experience and globally emphasised in the implementation of sustainable development goals (Filho et al., 2019).

Glover (2016) found that the wider use of certificates and digital badges (i.e., digital

certificates of participation or skill) promoted the achievement of learners in co-curricular and other informal learning objectives. According to Glover, the use of badges could result in extrinsic motivation as well as reinforce positive and desirable behaviour. In contrast, Hajar (2020) acknowledged the high level of commitment in CCAs in a Moroccan private school, under the project 'The Friend of Nature'. The study had found that learners demonstrated cognitive development, such as human rights, citizenship rights and responsibilities, and environmental sustainability.

Seow and Pan (2014) and Whitley (2014) documented a high level of students' achievements in CCAs within high schools in the urban setting of the United States of America (USA). They also noted that students in urban communities attending well-established schools had better opportunities to benefit from established training and coaching facilities, leading to competitive success in CCAs at internal, national, and international levels. Whitley's research is relevant to this study as it also explored the strategies for managing CCAs and students' achievements in co-curricular activities in the USA. However, Seow & Pan and Whitley's focus was solely on the impact of extra-curricular activities on students' learning in high schools, with differing geographical and temporal scopes. Meanwhile, this study aimed to comprehend the various strategies employed in managing CCAs and how they positively influenced students' achievements in secondary schools in Gulu City, Uganda.

According to Zhao (2010), students' achievements in CCAs were moderate, with most students attaining an average level across various activities over the years. Zhao suggested that teachers should expose students to diverse training skills, enabling them to train independently, thereby building their competitive confidence and fostering a winning mentality. Notably, Zhao's study focused on a regional knowledge management perspective and management theory, utilising a qualitative design. In contrast, this study sought to address the research

orientation gap by employing both quantitative and qualitative designs to report its findings.

Bridson (2010) uncovered a high level of students' achievements in music, drama, and dance (MDD) among high school students in Saudi Arabia. His findings indicated that participation in MDD not only resulted in minimal school dropouts but also led to increased community service involvement. Importantly, students excelled in singing, dancing, drama, and other aspects, earning trophies in the process. Similarly, Dwyer et al. (2011) reported heightened student achievements in debating in Boston high schools, attributing the success to inter-school participation and media support across various categories. Research on the impacts of music, drama, dance, debating, scout, and guide movements also underscored these achievements, aligning with the focus of this study, although these studies were conducted in different countries.

Tyas et al. (2021) documented the benefits of participating in extra-curricular activities, highlighting high levels of students' achievements in scouting and guiding among Indonesian high school students. The study emphasised the significance of character education development, asserting that scouting activities guided and prepared students for the future by imparting skills such as leadership, patriotism, creativity, personality, noble character, and a goal-winning mentality. Kemdiknas's study is relevant to this research, reporting that the Scout movement supported young people in their physical, mental, and spiritual development, enabling them to play constructive roles in society. The study, conducted in Indonesia in 2011, focused on character development a decade ago. This current study aims to bridge the identified gaps within Gulu City secondary schools.

According to Paulo Hadi Manuel (2020), there was a high level of students' achievements in CCAs among high school students in Angola and other West African countries, both nationally and internationally during championships. Fox, Barr-

Anderson, Neumark-Sztainer and Wall (2010) conducted a study aiming to explore associations between participation in CCAs and academic achievements among middle and high school students. They concluded that regardless of the type of CCAs, whether physical exercises or sports, competition in them was positively linked to high levels of students' achievements, including certificates, recognition, awards, scholarships, and sponsorships. Fox et al. (2010) examined the relationship between CCAs and academic performance in Angolan high schools, yet there were gaps in geography and content that this study aimed to address. Specifically, this study investigated the connection between strategies for managing CCAs and students' achievements in CCAs in secondary schools in Gulu City.

The African Union recognised extra-curricular activities such as science parks and clubs as means to strengthen science and math curricula, disseminate scientific knowledge, and promote the culture of science in African society (African Union, 2016). Consequently, there is a global, regional, and national commitment to CCAs. This study adopted the identification/commitment model, as cited in Marsh and Kleitman (2002), which emphasises the involvement of the school and predicts that positive outcomes are maximised when students "maintain multiple, expanding forms of participation in school-relevant activities."

Kariyana, Maphosa and Mapuranga (2012) argued that schools with a holistic curriculum develop a learner's mental, physical, social, and moral values. However, they noted that many times, academic activities were overemphasised at the expense of CCAs. This indicated that the level of commitment to CCAs remained imbalanced in secondary schools.

Chege (2018) reported that in Kenya, participation in co-curricular activities in general was associated with an improved grade point average, higher educational aspirations, increased college attendance, and reduced absenteeism. Chege (2018)

reported that early analysis of the effect of sports on academic achievement produced inconsistent evidence: students who participated in more sports for many seasons had a "higher level of scholarship than the students who did not compete in sports. The above findings related to this study; however, it was from another country and may not reveal the case of students in secondary schools in Uganda in the year 2022. This study, therefore, sought to investigate the relationship between strategies of managing CCAs and students' achievements in CCAs in secondary schools in Gulu City, Uganda.

Nalugemwa (2022) reported a high level of students' achievements in CCAs and argued that CCAs facilitated the acquisition of interpersonal skills and positive social norms, membership in pro-social peer groups, and created stronger emotional and social connections to one's school—a form of social bonding among peers. CCAs' participation significantly impacted students' mental health, engagement, and academic outcomes. This study aimed to investigate the relationship between strategies of managing CCAs and students' achievements in secondary schools in Gulu City, bridging the gap between ordinary and secondary school levels. Based on the few citations, commitment to CCAs had several benefits to the school as well as learners. However, these outcomes depended on different levels of inputs or strategies. There was scant information on these approaches. For instance, what strategy(ies) to use to maximise learners' achievement was not well understood, particularly in secondary schools in Northern Uganda, where there was great potential for skills in several extracurricular activities.

This study explored achievements resulting from investment in school and identification with school, as suggested by Seow and Pan (2014). Regarding investment in school, the study investigated strategies in managing CCAs in secondary schools, such as financing (contributions to sports gala), management of clubs and societies, mentorship, and role modelling, among others. In the aspect of

commitment/identification with school, the study examined the award of certificates, rewards, and recognition.

Summary

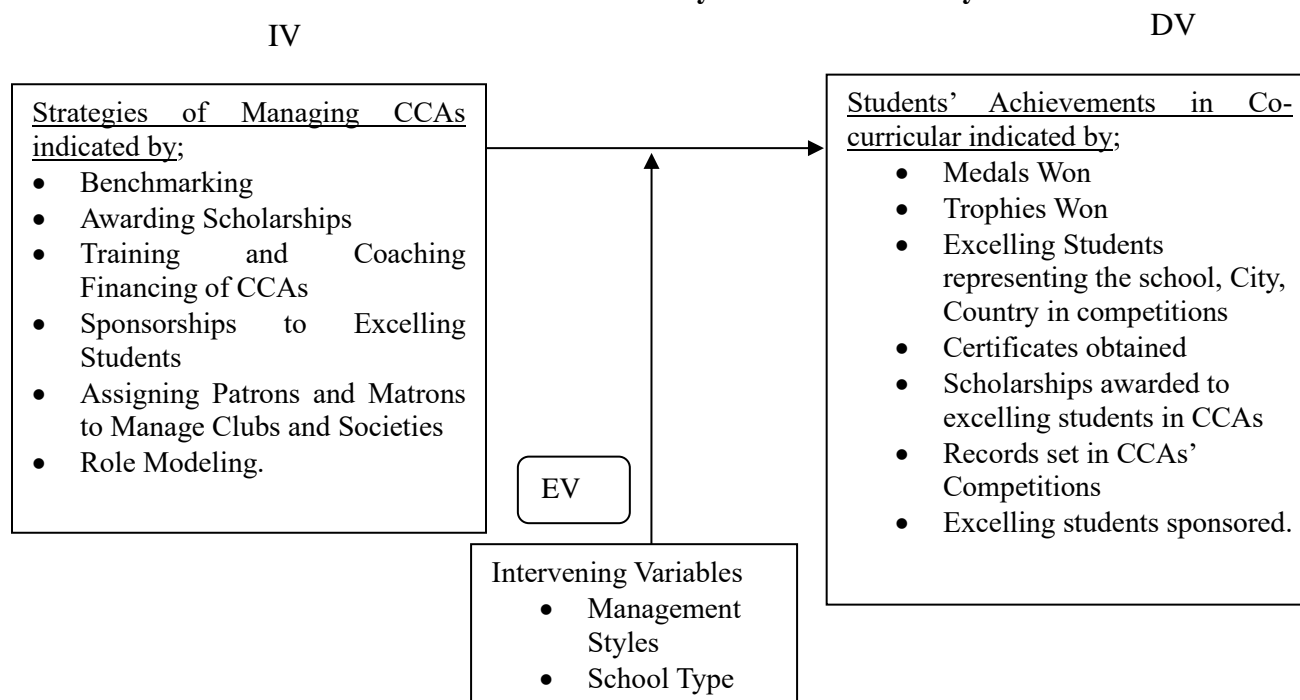
The literature reviewed above on the level of students' achievements in co-curricular activities indicated evidence that the level of students' achievements in co-curricular activities was high. However, there were gaps in determining the factors behind this high level of students' achievements, as the methods concentrated on the review of

documents to collect data. This study aimed to critically investigate the nature of achievements per activity and by category, employing surveys and interviews to confirm results and unpack empirical evidence.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

Achievement Theory of Motivation clearly portrays the interplay that takes place in organisations and is relevantly underpinning this study as presented in *Figure 1*, below.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework Showing the Relationship between Strategies of Managing CCA and Students' Achievements in Secondary Schools in Gulu City



Source: *Researcher (2022)*

It is assumed that there is a relationship between strategies of managing CCAs and students' achievements in co-curricular activities in secondary schools. McClelland's Achievements Theory of Motivation suggests that achievement orientation develops during middle childhood through family, societal socialisation and high standards. This leads to behaviours like goal attainment, success orientation, problem-solving,

and feedback seeking. Cultural factors influence achievement, and role models can motivate others. This theory assumes constant factors and does not address organisational interactions for enhancing achievements.

According to McClelland's (1961) theory of achievement orientation is facilitated by societal determinants that motivate people to achieve highly. In a similar manner, strategies of managing co-

curricular activities are assumed to facilitate students' achievement orientation and eventually motivate students' achievements in co-curricular activities in secondary schools in Gulu City. The achievement orientation identified as benchmarking best practices, awarding Scholarships, training and Coaching of Students, Matrons and patrons, financing of CCAs, assigning of Personnel like Patrons and Matrons to Manage Clubs and Societies and role Modeling facilitates student's achievements and thus motivates students' achievements in co-curricular identified as Number of Medals Won, number of Trophies Won, number of Excelling Students representing the school, City, Country, number of certificates obtained, number of scholarships awarded and number of records set. However, this assumed relation may be influenced by the intervening variables identified as management styles and school type.

Extraneous variables were controlled by randomisation of study participants and ensuring statistical control, holding study participant variables constant; testing all the participants in the same location, giving them identical instructions and treating them in the same way.

METHODOLOGY

Research Orientation.

- The research utilised both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The qualitative approach involved gathering non-numerical data through interviews and observations conducted with head teachers, as well as examining relevant documents. This allowed the researcher to gain insights into the opinions, attitudes, perceptions, attributes, and knowledge of the participants, as noted by Creswell and Plano-Clark (2018). Employing mixed methods enables researchers to utilise a variety of techniques, merging inductive and deductive reasoning (Creswell and Plano-Clark, 2018). This approach mitigates the limitations

associated with exclusively quantitative or qualitative research by providing a complementary strategy that leverages the strengths of each data type, resulting in a more comprehensive report.

Research Design.

Correlation research design was employed in this study. The research design was considered appropriate as it described the existence of the phenomenon based on empirical data. Correlation research design allowed for easy generalisation of findings on a bigger population and, hence, eliminated bias (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2018).

Target Population

The intended group for this study comprised 20 head teachers, 709 teachers, one City Inspector of Schools, and one City Sports Officer, totalling 751 participants, as indicated by PCEO (2020). This selection was based on their direct relevance to the subject matter. The study involved 19 secondary schools, determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size determination method. Both head teachers and teachers served as internal respondents, offering valuable insights and data pertaining to the subject areas.

Sample Size

The sample comprised 270 respondents, including 19 head teachers, 249 teachers, one City Inspector of Schools (CIS), and one City Sports Officer (CSO) and this size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size determination method, as outlined in *Table 2*. The head teachers, responsible for overseeing schools and overall school activities, contributed valuable information and data on the subject areas. Teachers, being the executors of all school activities and strategies for managing co-curricular activities, provided essential data that informed the study report. The CIS and CSO offered comprehensive and balanced insights into the on-the-ground situation.

Table 1: Sampling Frame Showing the Study Population

Category	Target Population	Sample Size	Sampling Techniques
Teachers	709	249	Sample Random Sampling
Head Teachers	20	19	Purposive Sampling
City Sports Officer	01	01	Purposive sampling
City Inspector of Schools (CIS)	01	01	Purposive sampling
Total	731	270	

Source: Report from Gulu City Education Office (2020)

Sampling Techniques

The study was administered using a simple random sampling technique on teachers, which enabled each teacher to have an even chance and likelihood to participate in the study (Oso & Onen, 2011). Teachers were divided into strata based on characteristics, years of experience, serving as patrons/matrons of school clubs, academic qualification, among others. Random selection was then performed within each stratum to ensure balance. The researcher used purposive sampling in the selection of head teachers, the city inspector of schools and the city sports officer respectively. Simple random sampling was used to select teachers in the study, which gave them an equal opportunity to participate in the study. Purposive sampling was used on head teachers, CSO and CIS due to their positions in secondary schools. Head teachers are policy implementers, CIS and CSO were relevant stakeholders in schools (Oso & Onen, 2011).

Data Collection Techniques

- The research data were collected using; questionnaire survey, interviews and observations (medals, trophies, certificates). This was done to establish the level of students' achievements in CCAs.

Questionnaire Survey. The research employed questionnaire surveys for teachers, a method deemed suitable due to its efficiency in covering a large sample size that might be challenging for other techniques. This approach is particularly fitting for a literate population (Kaplan & Maxwell, 2019). Olson (2010) contended that questionnaire surveys

contribute to achieving uniformity, stability, and consistency in gathering facts and information.

Interviews: Self-administered interviews were conducted with head teachers, the City Inspector of Schools, and the City Sports Officer, who served as key informants in the study. Their roles provided them with valuable insights into the study variables, making them essential contributors to the research field.

Observations: The researcher observed medals, trophies and certificates awarded to individuals or schools in conjunction with other techniques (interview guide and questionnaire survey). This simultaneous data collection approach aimed to obtain immediate feedback (Kaplan & Maxwell, 2019).

Data Collection Instruments

This research used questionnaires, interview guides and an observation checklist.

Questionnaires. These were conducted using questionnaires featuring closed-ended questions categorised into three sections. Section A focused on background information, requiring respondents to select the most relevant option using a five-point Likert Scale. The questionnaires, aimed at collecting primary data for the study, were administered to teachers by the researcher, who also sought immediate feedback (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). According to Christensen et al. (2014), questionnaire surveys contribute to achieving uniformity, stability and consistency in gathering facts and information.

Interviews Guide: For interviews, a structured guide was employed, encompassing background information in part A, strategies for managing curricular activities in part B, and questions on students' achievements in part C. The interview guide proved suitable for maximising the limited time of busy respondents, aligning with their office commitments during data collection (Christensen et al., 2014).

Observation Checklist. An observation checklist was utilised, with the researcher concurrently observing CCAs during school visits. This approach, combined with other techniques, aimed to obtain immediate feedback and verify data collected through interviews and questionnaires (Kaplan & Maxwell, 2019; Christensen et al., 2014).

Quality Control

Validity. Validity of the interviews, observations and document analysis was examined. The researcher used the Total Survey Error Framework (Pennay, 2014) as the conceptual and practical framework to assess and reflect on improving the quality of the questionnaire and its results, and to reduce the possibility of any errors (Whiteley, 2014). Survey methodology was preferred as it supports a holistic view of the data collection process in which a researcher can concurrently analyse different dimensions that impact data quality (Pennay, 2014). The instrument validity for each theme yielded the results 0.70 and were considered acceptable according to Creswell and Plano (2018), thus, the CVI was considered valid.

Reliability. The reliability of the questionnaires, which had a Likert scale, was examined. The study used Yamashita and Miller's (2021) approach to establish the internal consistency of the instrument as well as each item. The Likert scale is preferred as it is the most reliable way to measure opinions, attitudes, and behaviour of a person towards a particular subject of investigation (Whiteley, 2014). An instrument with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.70 or above is considered acceptable. It was

noted that the reliability estimate of the research instrument was quite high, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was 0.87, and the reliability of individual items were all above 0.85. Hence, there were no items that were dropped.

Extraneous Variable. The study respondents were selected randomly to participate in the study and matched according to their confounding variables. More so, quality was enhanced through clarity on instructions, measures, and variables helped to maintain the focus of this study variable as respondents better understood them and provided facts and correct information as required by the questions.

Administration Procedures

The student obtained a letter of introduction from the office of the Dean Faculty of Education and Humanities, and it enabled him to proceed to the field. Due to financial constraints, the research did not recruit research assistants. The researcher made a visit to all the schools in advance, created rapport and scheduled dates for data collection (interviews and questionnaires management). Using the obtained schedules, the researcher ventured into the field to collect data. The researcher himself conducted the interviews with the respective respondents, meanwhile the research assistants oversaw the questionnaires with teachers.

Ethical Considerations

Research ethical concerns were honesty, respect for all study participants' or individuals' privacy who felt they could be affected by this research study or reports in one way or the other. The data were treated confidentially, and none of the respondents' names were mentioned anywhere in the study results. Ethical issues, openness, legality, carefulness, respect for intellectual property, objectivity, informed consent, confidentiality, privacy, freedom to make a choice either to participate or not to and use of acceptable language were addressed through consent form signing, seeking permission, choice of convenient time and

place, use of polite language and data were kept safely. Respondents were asked not to write their names on the instruments to ensure privacy and confidentiality. While administering the instruments, professional language and appropriate words were used by the researcher and the research assistants.

Data Analyses

The data were collected, sorted and coded by the use of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS: Version 15.0). This was preferred because it covered many tests of statistical analyses, filtered and prepared data, which were analysed, performed tests for two hypotheses, analysed relationships between the two variables, classified data and created clusters (Coakes, 2008). The interview data underwent both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses, enabling the extraction of meaning from individual respondents' stories. This approach was favoured as it allowed the researcher to emphasise crucial elements within the respondents' narratives and highlight key points that would resonate effectively with the readers of this research. Narratively analysing observational data was chosen to uncover implicit behaviours, emotions and motivations, providing comprehensive linguistic insights into various aspects of cultural or social phenomena. In the case of data from objective one, a coding and ranking system was applied, with Rubric 1 indicating scores of 0-3 (low), Rubric 2 indicating scores of 4-5 (moderate) and Rubric 3 indicating scores of 6-7 (high) for achievements. Descriptive statistics analysis: frequency, percentage and rated scores were used to determine the level of students'

achievements in CCAs in secondary schools, and it addressed objectives one and two. Descriptive analysis was preferred over others because the problem was not hypothesis in nature (Coakes, 2008).

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

The original fear of study was methodological gaps: Fear of disclosing information that could threaten the quality of facts and information by respondents due to the fear of being published. It was delimited by involving techniques like emphasising confidentiality and anonymity during study reporting, a comfortable environment during the study administration and emphasising the study purposes. Information that was missed out by the questionnaire on the level of CCA's achievements was erroneously delimited by interviews and observation. The influence of extraneous variables, which could have impacted the quality of information provided by respondents, was delimited by clear instructions to respondents during the study.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Description of demographic characteristics were structured in terms of respondent's division of location, level of the school, gender, years spent at the school teaching, school foundation body, principles guiding a particular school, decision making values, whether a teacher is a matron or patron to a particular club and society and specific CCAs undertaken at schools.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (Teachers)

		Frequency	Percent
		N	%
Division of the Respondent's Location within Gulu City	A	110	55.8
	B	87	44.2
Level of the school	O' Level	59	29.9
	A' Level	138	70.1
Gender	Male	138	70.1
	Female	59	29.9
School Foundation	Government	76	38.6
	Private	121	61.4
Schools' decision-making bases on	Religious values	127	64.5
	Non-Religious values	70	35.5
A matron or patron of any school club?	No	122	61.9
	Yes	75	38.1
Years spent in the school	1-3 years	86	43.7
	4-6 years	58	29.4
	7-10 years	28	14.2
	Others	25	12.7
	Diploma	50	25.4
Highest Qualification	First Degree	138	70.1
	Master Degree	9	4.6

From *Table 2* above, it was observed that more than half (55.8%) of the respondents engaged in the study were from Division 'A' as compared to Division 'B', with the number of respondents equal to 87 (44.2%). However, the difference does not reflect bias in the study, since the proportion of the respondents did not exceed 2 (that is, the ratio of respondents from Division 'A' (N=110) to Division 'B' (N=87) is less than 2). In total, 197 teachers were involved in the study, representing above 79% response rate.

Of all the teachers (197) who participated in the study, the majority (70.1%) were from A-level schools and the rest (29.9%) from O-level schools. Also, the demographic information indicates that the percentage of females was lower (29.9%) as compared to males (70.1%). This seems to indicate gender inequality in education in the study area, where male dominates the sector. Furthermore, the findings showed that there are fewer (38.6%) government-aided secondary schools, as compared to private schools (61.4%).

When asked whether they were once or still matrons or patrons of school clubs and societies, 61.9% agreed and 38.1% said they had never been matrons or patrons of any school clubs. This signified that the majority of the teachers were knowledgeable about the school's clubs. Moreover, many are in service in their respective schools between 1-3 years and 4-6 years, representing 43.7% and 29.4%, respectively. Here, the greater percentage (70.1%) of the respondents were graduate teachers with a first degree and about one-fifth (25.4%) were diploma holders. This is advantageous to the study because they were well-trained teachers who were believed to have an understanding of CCAs.

Level of Students' Achievements in CCAs in Secondary Schools in Gulu City.

This study explored seven areas of students' achievements, that is, whether the school had ever won any medals, trophies, students won medals, certificates for good performance obtained, reached national or international competition and scholarships awarded. The results of the findings are

presented in *Table 4*. The majority of respondents agreed that achievements such as winning trophies (76.1%), certificates of good performance in CCAs (75.3%), trophies for excelling in CCAs (76.9%) and scholarships (70.4%) were obtained. However,

a moderate number (percentage: 58.9% and 60.4%) of respondents seemed to agree that their students had achieved at national or international levels, as well as awarded medals.

Table 3: Achievements in Co-Curricular Activities (CCAs)

Forms of Achievements	Yes N (%)	No N (%)
Has your school ever won any medals (gold, silver and bronze)?	129 (65.5%)	68 (34.5%)
Has your school ever won any trophies from competing in CCAs?	150 (76.1%)	47 (23.9%)
Have your students won a medal?	119 (60.4%)	78 (39.6%)
As a teacher at this school, has your school been awarded a certificate for good performance in CCAs?	146 (75.3%)	48 (24.7%)
Do you have any record of any student (s) who has/have ever been sent for national or international competition in CCAs?	116 (58.9%)	81 (41.1%)
As a teacher at this school, have any of your students been awarded for good performance in CCAs?	150 (76.9%)	45 (23.1%)
In this school, is there any student who has been awarded a scholarship for excelling in CCAs?	138 (70.4%)	58 (29.6%)

A rubric was developed to help in determining the level of achievement of students based on the respondents' agreement or disagreement. That is, if, for example, a respondent agrees that the school got a medal, then it was scored as 1, others 0. So, in the

seven areas, the sum of scores ranged from 0 to 7. In fact, it is zero if a respondent said no in all the seven areas and 7 if he/she said yes in all the achievement categories. In this case, the achievement rubric was as follows. See *Table 4*.

Table 4: Rubric for Determining Achievements in Co-Curricular

Range of Scores	Level of Achievement
1 - 3	Low
4 - 5	Moderate
6 - 7	High

Following the criteria in *Table 4*, the result revealed that about 55% of respondents rated students' achievement in CCAs as high and about 30% (56

out of 197) rated low students' achievements. While less than 16% (31 out of 197) gave their rating as moderate, as shown in *Table 5*.

Table 5: Analysis of the Level of Students' Achievements in Co-Curricular

Dependent Variable Information				Level of students' achievements
		N	Percent	
Achievements scores	1.00	56	28.6%	Low
	2.00	31	15.8%	Moderate
	3.00	109	55.6%	High

Achievements Rubric 1=0-3 (low); 2=4-5 (moderate); 3=6-7 (high)

When the students' achievements were explored by school types, the respondents from private schools underscored the achievements registered than government schools, as revealed by low and high

ratings. For instance, within school comparisons, the percentage of achievement rated low in private schools (32.2%, N=39) was higher than in government schools (23.7%, N=18).

Table 6: The Distribution of the Level of Students' Achievement in Co-Curricular by School Type

Achievement			School Foundation	
			Government	Private
Achievement Rubric	(1) Low	N	18	39
		% within Achievement	31.6%	68.4%
		% within School	23.7%	32.2%
	(2) Moderate	N	12	19
		% within Achievement	38.7%	61.3%
		% within School	15.8%	15.7%
	3(High)	N	46	63
		% within Achievement	42.2%	57.8%
		% within School	60.5%	52.1%
Total		N	76	121
		% within Achievement	38.6%	61.4%
		% within School	100.0%	100.0%

The same difference was noted when one considers 'high achievement,' that is, private (52.1%, N=63 out of 121) and government (60.5%, N=46 out of 76) schools. Above all, when the City Inspector of Schools was asked about the level of achievement in secondary schools in the City, the Educator rated it moderate, which was consistent with the view from most (9 out of 11) of the Head teachers in private schools. In the case of government schools, most (6 out of 8) of the Head teachers rated their achievement as high. However, from the semi-structured interview, the overall rating was high, which is consistent with the teachers' opinion. Subsequently, analysis was performed to determine which strategies of managing CCAs might have led to the levels of achievement presented in Table 5. This was answered in the subsequent section.

DISCUSSIONS

This study explored seven areas of students' achievements in co-curricular activities. The study focused on establishing whether secondary schools had ever won any medals, trophies, students won medals, certificates for good performance obtained,

reached national or international competitions and scholarships awarded. The results of the findings indicated that the majority of respondents agreed that students' achievements in co-curricular activities were high. For instance, the respondents agreed that students won trophies for the schools, certificates of good performance, sponsorships and scholarships. These achievements revealed the Ministry of Education and Sports' Vision (MoES, 2010), that is, 'Quality Education and Sport for All' is real. Obviously, the Government of Uganda's deliberate efforts to promote physical education and sports in schools cannot be underscored, which seems to be accruing benefits. Also, the information obtained from interviews with the nineteen Head teachers revealed that most of the schools in the study area are making efforts to promote CCAs. Interestingly, opinions from both the teachers and Head teachers in government and private schools were not statistically significant. This revealed that the two categories of schools seem to be following the Ministry of Education and Sport's Vision.

The high level of students' achievements in co-curricular activities reported by Seow and Pan

(2014), Dwyer et al. (2011), and Bridson (2010) may not be directly applicable to the secondary schools in Gulu City. While those studies were conducted in high schools in the USA and Saudi Arabia, respectively and focused on urban areas, the current study was conducted in secondary schools specifically within Gulu City. The cultural, socioeconomic and educational contexts in Gulu City might differ significantly from those in the USA and Saudi Arabia. These contextual differences could influence students' participation and engagement in co-curricular activities, as well as their subsequent achievements in CCAs. Therefore, the findings from the previous studies may not necessarily generalise to the specific context of Gulu City.

Whereas, Zhao (2010) and Kemdiknas (2011) reported moderate students' achievements in Tanzania secondary schools and Indonesian high schools respectively. This view represents one of the categories of the respondents in this study, that is, the Gulu City Sports Officer (CSO) and Gulu City Inspector of Schools (CIS), when asked about the level of students' achievements in secondary schools in the City. Hence, one can argue that students' achievement in co-curricular activities in Urban areas is at least moderate but not poor or low. Following the findings of the study, the moderate or high level of students' achievements should be beneficial to the nation and communities. For example, Fisher (2016) pointed out that CCAs stimulate effective communication, decision-making, socialisation and self-identification and promote health education. Above all provides motivation for learning. Thus, the implication of the finding is that students were getting what Glover (2016) termed as students' holistic development. This is where students acquire intellectual, physical, self-actualisation, emotional and social development, which is beneficial to society.

Under the Ministry of Education and Sports of Uganda, co-curricular activities are programmed in the schools' calendar. This is done to improve

attainment of curriculum goals and objectives (MoE&S, 2008). As pointed out by Kamau et al. (2020), schools should work towards a holistic education or curriculum, which develops students to be mentally sound, physically fit and socially admirable to fit in the society and encounter the world of work. Recent work by Shum, Lee and Cheung (2021) also emphasised the importance of co-curricular activities to students. They noted that such activities, their communication skills, and emotion management provide students with ways to explore their new world and adjust accordingly. Thus, it complements classroom learning activities. To validate the findings of the above studies and provide a more robust understanding of students' achievements in co-curricular activities in secondary schools in Gulu City, this study analysed the qualitative data on the level of students' achievements in CCAs in secondary schools and reports on now. These findings can inform educational policies and practices in Gulu City and potentially other regions in Uganda. Can serve as evidence to support the integration and prioritisation of CCAs within the school curriculum, emphasising the holistic development of students.

Furthermore, this study's results can encourage secondary schools, teachers and parents to recognise and value the role of CCAs in students' overall growth: Lead to increased support and resources for co-curricular programmes, fostering an environment for students to thrive academically, socially and emotionally.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that the level of students' achievements in co-curricular activities in secondary schools in Gulu City were generally high. Most of the teachers who participated in this study generally agreed that their levels of students' achievements in co-curricular activities are high in secondary schools in Gulu City. A similar view was obtained from the Head teachers of the different secondary schools in Gulu City.

Recommendations

The government should fund and emphasise the importance of the sector of co-curricular activities right from the grassroots to the national level, not rewarding at the international level when the process of talent identification and development is not funded and boosted as well.

The city leaders should always lobby development partners and the central government to provide enough funding support to the sports sector, right from the local to the national level.

In order to address the status of low students' achievements in co-curricular activities, the head teachers of the various schools need to strategise the ways of promoting co-curricular activities at schools and as well as identifying and developing students' talents.

Each school administration needs to create a database profiling all the old students who excel in different fields of co-curricular activities for future references and motivation of other students to take up co-curricular activities as something beneficial to their future lives.

Suggestion for Future Study

This research has not covered all the aspects of co-curricular activities at secondary schools; the researcher suggests further areas in the following;

- a) Students' participation in outside-class activities and students' career development in secondary schools.

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