

Extracurricular Activities and Academic Performance of Student Leaders at Asia-Pacific International University

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Abstract - This study examines the impact of leadership experience in extracurricular activities and time management skills on the academic performance of students at Asia-Pacific International University (AIU). Using a quantitative approach, data were collected via a Google Form survey from 80 students holding leadership positions such as club officers, department officers, and student council officers. The study employed descriptive statistics and regression analysis to explore the relationships between leadership experience in extracurricular activities, time management skills, and academic performance. Findings reveal that leadership experience in extracurricular activities positively influences academic performance, as measured by GPA, while time management skills did not show a significant effect. The study highlights the importance of balanced extracurricular involvement and effective leadership training for fostering academic success. Recommendations include promoting leadership development programs, mentorship initiatives, and improved time management strategies. Limitations and directions for future research are also discussed..

Keywords: Extracurricular Activities, Academic Performance, Leadership Experience, Time Management

I. INTRODUCTION

The relationship between extracurricular activities and academic performance is both complex and multifaceted. While students often engage in extracurricular activities to enhance their university experience, the impact of these activities on academic achievement is not always straightforward. Numerous studies (e.g., Gardner, Roth, & Brooks-Gunn, 2008; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002) suggest that participation in extracurricular activities generally promotes better academic outcomes, but the extent of this influence varies depending on the type of activity and the individual characteristics of students (Farb & Matjasko, 2012).

Recent studies indicate that extracurricular activities can lead students to a positive impact on students' performance (Hashim & Ahmad, 2019). Participation in leadership roles such as club officers, department officers, and student council officers offers university students unique opportunities to develop critical skills that can influence their academic performance. These positions often demand a significant investment of time and energy, requiring students to juggle various responsibilities, such as organizing events, managing team dynamics, and representing student interests. Effective time management becomes crucial for these students as they navigate the challenges of balancing academic commitments with their extracurricular duties.

Research indicates that students who successfully manage their time while engaging in these activities tend to exhibit higher academic achievement. For instance, a study by Rao (2022) found that students involved in leadership roles often develop enhanced organizational skills and discipline, which positively correlate with academic performance.

Conversely, when students struggle to manage their time effectively, the additional stress and pressure from these roles can lead to academic decline. A study (Furda & Shuleski, 2019) highlights that students who report feeling overwhelmed by their extracurricular commitments often experience increased anxiety, which can detract from their focus on academic tasks and ultimately impact their grades negatively. Research from the University of Arizona (Truong, 2024) highlights that while extracurricular involvement can lead to various benefits, it may also result in increased stress and anxiety among students. The demands of balancing academics with extracurricular commitments can overwhelm some students, leading to a decline in their academic performance (Truong, 2024). Moreover, a study in *MGES Journals* suggests that excessive involvement in extracurricular activities, particularly those that do not align with academic goals, can negatively affect grades by hindering effective time management (Afalla, 2020). Therefore, the dual nature of involvement in leadership roles, offering opportunities for growth while posing challenges for time management, plays a pivotal role in shaping students' academic outcomes.

This study aims to expand on existing research by examining the unique context of Asia-Pacific International University (AIU), where students who have experienced leadership roles such as club officers, department officers, and student council officers must effectively balance extracurricular commitments with academic responsibilities. Using the leadership competency model, the research assesses both academic achievement and leadership experience in extracurricular engagement, with a particular focus on how time management influences these dynamics.

Research Objective

The objective of this research is to determine the relationship between extracurricular activity leadership experiences, time management skills, and the academic performance of student leaders at Asia-Pacific International University. This includes assessing how time management and the experiences associated with these leadership roles influence academic achievement, using the leadership competency model to measure both academic and extracurricular engagement.

Research Question

How do leadership experiences and time management skills in extracurricular activities, such as club officers, department officers, and student council officers, impact the academic performance of students at Asia-Pacific International University?

Hypotheses

There are two hypotheses for this study.

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant correlation between leadership experience within extracurricular activities and student academic performance at Asia-Pacific International University.

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant correlation between time management skills within extracurricular activities and student academic performance at Asia-Pacific International University.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Role of Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular activities play a vital role in student life, offering opportunities for personal and academic growth. Leadership roles, such as club officers, department officers, and student council officers, are particularly valuable in enhancing skills like time management, communication, and responsibility. Research indicates that students in these leadership positions are better able to balance academic and personal demands, as they must manage time, resources, and energy effectively (Olano, et al., 2021).

These roles foster organizational and management skills, requiring students to organize events, manage teams, and represent peers. As a result, students develop leadership abilities and academic discipline that translate into classroom success. Furthermore, extracurricular involvement has been linked to improved academic performance, as students learn to balance their commitments and develop a sense of responsibility (Patle, 2024). Additionally, these activities are instrumental in cultivating social skills, enabling students to interact effectively and build positive relationships within their communities (Javed & Srivastava, 2024).

Academic Performance

Academic performance, typically evaluated through measures such as GPA, academic awards, and recognitions, is a key indicator of success in university. Many studies have explored the factors that influence academic performance, with a particular focus on how extracurricular activities contribute to academic outcomes. Research has shown that extracurricular involvement, while often viewed as secondary to academic responsibilities, plays a significant role in enhancing academic performance by developing skills that are essential in the classroom, such as time management, teamwork, and communication (Nemiño, 2022).

However, the relationship between extracurricular involvement and academic performance is complex, as the demands of extracurricular activities can sometimes lead to challenges. Students in leadership positions, in particular, must balance multiple responsibilities, which can create stress and result in decreased academic performance if not managed effectively (Aramburo, Boroel, & Pineda, 2017). For example, students who are overcommitted to extracurricular duties may experience burnout, leading to a drop in academic performance as their focus shifts away from their studies. Despite these potential negative outcomes, the balance between extracurricular involvement and academic achievement can be managed

successfully with effective time management strategies, which can help students optimize both their leadership roles and academic success.

Asia-Pacific International University (AIU) Context

Asia-Pacific International University (AIU), located in Muak Lek, Saburi, Thailand, serves a diverse student body of 1,120 students from 35 countries. The university's student population includes 421 males and 699 females, providing a multicultural environment that is integral to the educational experience. AIU offers a variety of academic programs alongside a robust selection of extracurricular activities that provide students with opportunities to develop leadership and other essential skills. The university is committed to fostering a learning environment that encourages both academic excellence and personal development.

At AIU, students are actively involved in leadership roles within 16 official student clubs and 7 academic departments, as well as the student council members. These organizations play a key role in promoting student engagement and creating platforms for developing leadership, time management, and organizational skills. For instance, the Student Council organizes events and initiatives that bring together students, faculty, and staff, providing opportunities for students to engage in community-building activities while honing their leadership skills.

The student clubs at AIU are diverse, catering to a wide range of interests, including academic, cultural, sports, and social causes. Students who serve as club officers are responsible for organizing club activities, managing budgets, and leading teams. Similarly, students who take on leadership roles within academic departments are tasked with overseeing department events, coordinating with faculty, and ensuring that students' academic needs are met.

In this multicultural environment, students have the opportunity to develop global perspectives and work collaboratively with peers from diverse backgrounds. For AIU students, the ability to effectively manage extracurricular responsibilities alongside their academic workload is essential for success, as it enables them to cultivate skills that contribute to both their personal and academic growth.

The Impact of Extracurricular Involvement on Academic Performance

The impact of extracurricular involvement on academic performance has been a subject of extensive research, with many studies showing a positive relationship between the two. Leadership positions within extracurricular activities, such as those at AIU, have been shown to foster the development of skills that can improve academic performance. A study found that students involved in leadership roles within extracurricular activities tend to develop stronger organizational skills, better academic discipline, and improved time management abilities, all of which contribute to higher academic performance (Christison, 2013).

To comprehensively measure the influence of extracurricular leadership roles on academic success, this study will apply the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) model, which evaluates performance from multiple perspectives. The BSC framework will allow us to assess not only academic performance but also the personal and organizational development that students

experience through their extracurricular roles. Specifically, the model's dimensions—learning and growth, internal processes, and student satisfaction—will help capture the impact of extracurricular engagement on students' academic achievement and personal development, providing a holistic view of their success.

However, the potential for negative outcomes also exists, particularly for students who become overwhelmed by their extracurricular responsibilities. Furda and Shuleski (2019) found that students who overcommit to extracurricular roles may experience increased stress, which can lead to a decline in academic performance. This study highlights the importance of time management and balance for students in leadership positions. Effective time management allows students to meet the demands of both their academic and extracurricular commitments, ultimately leading to improved academic outcomes.

Truong (2024) conducted a study that examined how students in leadership roles within extracurricular activities at AIU balance their academic and extracurricular responsibilities. The study found that students who successfully manage their time and avoid overcommitment tend to perform better academically, as they can focus on their studies while fulfilling their extracurricular duties. Conversely, students who struggle with time management are more likely to experience stress and academic challenges.

III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

1. **Research Design:** This research utilized a quantitative approach, collecting data through an online survey distributed via Google Forms. The survey targeted students at Asia-Pacific International University who held leadership roles, such as club officers, department officers, and student council officers, to assess the relationship between extracurricular involvement and academic performance.
2. **Participants/Data Sources:** There were 1,120 students in the first semester of 2024-2025. However, there were about 125 students who used to be part of or are currently involved in the leadership positions in managing the extracurricular activities. Using Yamane's (1967) formula with a 0.05 precision level, the sample size is 96.
3. **Tools and Instruments:** A Google Form was created with structured questions covering two parts. Part one involved five demographic items (academic year, years in extracurriculars, leadership roles held, multiple leadership roles, and current GPA): Part two, based on the leadership competency model, involved six measurement items for leadership experience in extracurricular activities and another six measurement items for time management skills from Kaipunlert (2010) and Foreman & Retallick (2016).
4. **Procedures:** The survey link was shared with 100 students who used to be part of or are currently involved in leadership positions in managing the extracurricular activities via email and social media platforms used by AIU students, ensuring accessibility for all potential respondents. A total of 80 completed responses were collected for this study. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was employed to measure the reliability of a set of survey items. None of the items and the constructs received less than 0.80 Cronbach's alpha coefficient value.

5. **Analysis Techniques:** Data from the Google Forms was exported to SPSS for analysis, including descriptive statistics and multiple regression models.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Data

The demographic profile of the 80 respondents in Table 1 reveals that the majority are seniors (42.5%) and juniors (30.0%), indicating that more advanced students are taking on leadership roles in extracurricular activities. In terms of involvement, most students have participated for over 1–2 years, with 30.0% having 1–2 years of experience and 28.8% having more than 2 years, suggesting a high level of long-term commitment. Regarding leadership roles, department officers make up the largest group (40.0%), followed by country club officers (30.0%) and student council members (27.5%). Notably, 60.0% of the respondents hold multiple leadership positions, highlighting a strong engagement in extracurricular activities, which could either positively or negatively affect their academic performance depending on their time management skills. As for academic performance, the majority of respondents fall into the 2.6–3.5 GPA range (75.0%), with a smaller portion of students achieving GPAs below 2.0 or above 3.5, demonstrating a balance between average and good academic outcomes. This data suggests that the sample includes a diverse group of students, most of whom are experienced in extracurricular roles and performing at a satisfactory academic level.

Table 1 Respondents' Demographic Information (n = 80)

Demographic Feature	Frequency	Percent
Academic year		
Sophomore	21	26.2
Junior	24	30.0
Senior	34	42.5
Years in extracurriculars		
Less than 6 months	17	21.2
6–12 months	16	20.0
1–2 years	24	30.0
More than 2 years	23	28.8
Leadership roles held		
Country Club Officer	24	30.0
Department Officer	32	40.0
Student Council	22	27.5
Other	2	2.5
Multiple leadership roles		
Yes	48	60.0
No	32	40.0
Current GPA		
Below 2.0	3	3.8
2.0–2.5	17	21.2

2.6–3.0	35	43.8
3.1–3.5	25	31.2
Above 3.5	3	3.8

Level of Leadership Experience in Extracurricular Activities, Time Management, and Academic Performance

The data in Table 2 shows that, on average, students report a low level of leadership experience in extracurricular activities (mean = 1.78), suggesting that most students are not highly engaged in leadership roles. Time management skills are rated as average (mean = 2.85), indicating that students have moderate ability in balancing their academic and extracurricular duties. However, their academic performance is rated as high (mean = 3.47), reflecting above-average GPA scores. The low standard deviations for time management (0.44) and academic performance (0.41) show that responses were fairly consistent, with most students exhibiting similar time management skills and academic results. These findings suggest that although extracurricular involvement and time management are moderate, students' academic performance remains high, which may be influenced by other factors.

Table 2. Mean and Standard Deviation Score (n = 80)

Variable	Mean	SD	Level
Leadership Experience	1.78	.53	Low
Time Management	2.85	.44	Average
Academic Performance	3.47	.41	High

Relationship Between Leadership Experience in Extracurricular Activities, Time Management, and Academic Performance

The analysis results in Table 3 show that leadership experience in extracurricular activities has a statistically significant positive influence on academic performance, with a moderate effect size ($B = 0.259$). Time management skills, while negatively related to academic performance, do not show a significant effect in this sample ($p = 0.085$). The model as a whole explains 60% of the variation in academic performance, suggesting that while extracurricular activities are an important factor, other unmeasured variables might also play a significant role in influencing academic outcomes.

Table 3. Regression Table for Leadership Experience, Time Management, and Academic Performance (N = 80)

IV	DV: Academic Performance			Sig
	B	Beta	t	
Constant	3.514		11.961	0.000
Leadership Experience	0.259	0.338	3.036	0.003
Time Management	-0.179	-0.194	-1.743	0.085

Statistical significance at 0.05, R = 0.775, R Square = 0.600

V. CONCLUSION

This study explores how a leadership experience in extracurricular activities contributes to improved performance among Asia-Pacific International University (AIU) students. It captures the contribution of these leadership positions to development aspects such as discipline, organizational ability, and problem-solving strategies, and reflects that such aspects improve academic success, manifesting as higher GPAs for students engaging in such roles. Despite the moderate effect size, the statistically significant relationship that emerged between leadership experience in extracurricular involvement and academic performance gives weight to the importance of such roles in developing important capabilities that extend beyond the classroom. This result is similar to other prior findings. Pansacala et al. (2024) and Rao (2022) found that high leadership experience in extracurricular activities is crucial for academic success.

Surprisingly, time management, one of the most mentioned factors for balancing academic and extracurricular demands, was not found to significantly mediate academic performance. This result is contradicted by other empirical findings. For example, in a study involving student leaders, a significant correlation was found between time management skills and academic success (Mariano et al., 2022). Research on university students revealed a moderate positive relationship between time management skills and academic achievement (Khan et al., 2020). The findings of the current study infer that while time management is an important skill, other factors such as intrinsic motivation, peer support, and institutional resources may be more important in helping students achieve academic success. On one hand, the demographic analysis shows a very uneven participation with some students holding multiple leadership positions, while the overall involvement in such activities remains rather low. This suggests certain barriers to participation that may be reduced to increase the general involvement of students and related benefits thereof.

The study shows that leadership in extracurricular activities is a meaningful part of the holistic development of students. Positive academic outcomes associated with these activities underline their relevance in higher education, where fostering well-rounded individuals is a core goal. AIU can use this knowledge to develop an environment that caters not only to academic success but also encourages significant extracurricular engagement that prepares them for the future.

Recommendations

There are several recommendations derived from this study.

1. Leadership Development Programs

AIU could conduct formal workshops or training programs that encourage leadership skills among students, like communication, cooperation, and conflict resolution. Such courses will equip students to handle their leadership duties alongside their academic duties in an effective manner.

2. Encourage Balanced Involvement

The students should be helped out to manage their extracurricular commitments in a way that they do not end up overcommitting themselves and being burned out. AIU can offer a counseling or advisement session where the student will be in a position to set realistic goals and prioritize their duties accordingly.

3. Encourage Time Management Strategies

Although time management did not mediate academic performance significantly in this study, the importance of managing dual responsibilities cannot be taken lightly. AIU can arrange time management workshops specifically for student leaders that will teach practical techniques such as prioritization and scheduling of tasks.

4. Mentorship Programs

AIU can establish mentorship programs where seasoned student leaders or alumni mentor current leaders in handling their roles more effectively. This peer-to-peer learning may also instill a sense of community and support.

Limitations

There are several limitations in this study that can affect the analysis and comparison of the results and the conclusion that can be made in relation to the research questions:

1. **Small Sample Size:** The study included 80 students from AIU, which makes the findings of this study incapable of being generalized to other institutions or to the entire population.

2. **Cross-sectional Design:** The research was cross-sectional, which means that assessment was made at one particular time; therefore, it offers no data concerning such participation's effect on academic performance over time.

3. The study is based on self-reports of students; therefore, the participants may overreport their participation, their time management, or underreport their academic performance, which may lead to bias.

4. **Focus on One Institution:** The current study was conducted on AIU only; thus, the findings may not be generalized to institutions with different cultures, structures, or educational systems.

Suggestions for Future Research

To overcome these limitations and extend the scope of the present study, the following suggestions have been advanced for future research:

1. **Longitudinal Studies:** Future studies may follow students over several semesters or academic years to gauge the impact of extracurricular leadership experience on long-term academic and career consequences.

2. Broader variables can be explored: intrinsic motivation, family support, faculty mentorship, and academic resources might be further examined for their mediating roles in the relationship between extra-curricular involvement and academic performance.

3. Diverse Populations: Expanding the sample to students from various institutions, regions, and cultural backgrounds can provide a wider perspective on the dynamics involved.

4. Include Qualitative Approaches: Interviews or focus groups will be conducted among student leaders to capture in-depth narratives of experiences, challenges, and strategies in balancing leadership roles and academic responsibilities.

5. Investigate Selected Leadership Styles: Future research may analyze how various leadership styles, such as democratic and transformational, impact the students' ability to handle responsibilities and realize academic success.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

There are three authors for this paper. Below are the contributions of each author.

1. Khwanphon Rakkeereekamnoedsakun: conceptualization, literature review, and data collection.
2. Seung Yeon Choi: investigation, data collection, and writing.
3. Damrong Sattayawaksakul: conceptualization, methodology, data analysis, and supervision.

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