



Evidence in Action

A K20 Center Research Brief

Extracurricular Music and Visual Arts Activities Are Related to Academic Performance Improvement in School-Aged Children

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Introduction

This intervention brief explores the impact of extracurricular music and visual arts activities on academic performance in school-aged children. The research article by Ishiguro et al. (2023) investigates whether participation in these activities is positively associated with improvements in general academic performance. The authors review literature suggesting that arts education cultivates creativity, cognitive skills, and social skills, which may transfer to academic performance. Despite some inconsistent findings, the study aims to clarify the relationship between arts involvement and academic outcomes.

Methodology

Research Design:

The study employed a longitudinal survey design, collecting data over two years from 488 seventh-grade children.

Sample:

The sample included 259 boys and 229 girls from various junior high schools in Japan. Data were collected on their participation in extracurricular music and visual arts activities, as well as their academic performance in major subjects.

Data Analysis:

Structural equation modeling was used to analyze the data, examining both direct and indirect effects of extracurricular arts activities on academic performance.

Results

The study found that participation in extracurricular music and visual arts activities was positively associated with improvements in general academic performance. Key findings include:

- **Music Activities:** Participation in music clubs was associated with higher music scores, which in turn were linked to improved academic performance over time. The direct effect of music club participation on academic performance was initially negative, likely due to the extensive practice required, but skills obtained through musical participation



provided students with the skills and tools to improve academic performance in the long term.

- **Visual Arts Activities:** Participation in visual arts clubs was positively associated with visual arts scores, which mediated the improvement in academic performance. The total effect of visual arts participation on academic performance was significant when compared to other cultural clubs or non-participation.

Application into Practice

To replicate this intervention in a school or similar context, consider the following steps:

1. **Encourage Participation in Arts Activities:** Promote extracurricular music and visual arts clubs and ensure they are accessible to all students.
2. **Monitor Academic Performance:** Track students' academic performance alongside their involvement in arts activities to identify any correlations and areas for improvement.
3. **Provide Support and Resources:** Ensure students have access to necessary resources, such as musical instruments and art supplies, and provide guidance from skilled instructors.
4. **Balance Practice and Academics:** Help students manage their time effectively to balance arts practice with academic responsibilities.

Work Cited

Ishiguro, C., Ishihara, T., & Morita, N. (2023). Extracurricular music and visual arts activities are related to academic performance improvement in school-aged children. *npj Science of Learning*, 8(7). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41539-023-00155-0>