

**The principals' Co-curricular Activities Managerial Strategies  
for the Development of Etudents' Knowledge  
in Unity Schools, North Central, Nigeria**

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**Abstract**

*The study examined the principals' co-curricular activities managerial strategies for developing students' knowledge in unity schools, North Central Nigeria. Descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. The total population for the study was 2,701 teachers and 4,356 Senior Secondary (SS) 3 students, 2018/2019 academic session. The sample size for this study comprised of 320 teachers and 338 students. Multistage sampling procedure was used for this study. Four out of seven states were randomly selected and each state was treated as a strata. Proportionate sampling technique and purposive sampling technique were used in the selection of students and teachers respectively. The questionnaire title principals' co-curricular activities managerial strategies for developing students' knowledge in unity schools, North Central Nigeria, was administered to the respondents after validation by experts in the Department of Education Foundation, Faculty of Education, University of Abuja, Nigeria. Cronbach Alpha was used to find the degree of internal consistency and a value ( $r=0.84$ ) was obtained. The analysis of data collected from the respondents was done using mean scores and standard deviation. The findings revealed the managerial strategies adopted by the principal in ensuring quality co-curricular activities delivery in the unity schools. These are; systematic planning; adequate supervision, effective organization and sustainable evaluation. The findings of the study showed that co-curricular activity is an instrument for developing students' knowledge. These are critical and analytical thinking, reading and listening ability, professional knowledge among others. The study recommended among others the creation of office of the vice principal, co-curricular activities for effective management of co-curricular activities in unity schools, North Central Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** Developing, Students, Knowledge, Co-curricular Activities, Principals, Managerial and strategies

**Introduction**

One of the functions of education is to impact appropriate knowledge and skills to learners. Co-curricular activities refer to non-academic experiences sponsored and



supported by a school for the purpose of harnessing the hidden potentials and talents of students. These non-academic activities include; sporting activities, club and societies. Co-curricular activities motivate students towards learning and make the teaching and learning process effective. It is the responsibility of the principal who is the manager of the school to ensure that students acquire knowledge that will enable them function as useful members of the society. The core aim of education is to feature all-round development of a child. All-round development essentially means intellectual, physical, moral, spiritual, emotional, social and aesthetic development. To fulfill this core aim of education, there is a prime need of striking a balance between syllabus, curriculum and co-curricular activities. To a greater extent, the theoretical knowledge gets strengthened when a relevant co-curricular activity is related to the content taught in the classroom (Wanjohi, 2016).

The term co-curricular is defined as a common “life enriching” learning objective focusing on enhancing students holistic well-being and their knowledge and skill acquisition in areas such as adaptability, decision-making, problem-solving, teamwork, interpersonal development, interpersonal competence, practical competence, leadership, cognitive complexity, ethics, humanitarianism and civil virtue (Kauwi Mixed Secondary School, 2018). It is the sum-total of all activities planned directly to reinforce the curriculum in those spheres of learning where otherwise it is difficult to teach within the classroom. These are the activities through which a learner explores one's abilities, develops the strengths and eradicates the shortcomings through informal guidance, observation and self-assessment. Asheley and Gretchen (2015) defined the term co-curricular activities; as activities, programmes and learning experience that complement in some way, what students are learning in school. That is, an experience that is connected to or mirrors the academic curriculum. This learning is mostly voluntary in nature and is facilitated through the programming of the students' affairs office or department. Panigrahi and Geleta (2012) described co-curricular activities as those activities related to formal classroom programs but delivered outside the normal school day and participation is on a voluntary basis while extra-curricular activities to them is referred to as those activities that fall outside the formal curriculum provided in the class. Examples of such activities are sport team, art club, students' newspaper and so on.

Singh (2017) defined co-curricular activities as those activities that are not related with the prescribed curriculum and include; sports, athletes, scouting, various hobbies, excursions, literary societies, dramatic debates and so on that bring social and physical adjustment in the child. Goode (2018) opined that co-curricular activities are those activities that take place outside the classroom but reinforce or supplement classroom curriculum in some way. They are ungraded and do not offer any form of academic credit, but they do provide complementary learning of some form. Examples of co-curricular activities might include National Honour Society, student' council, school sports teams, math clubs, chess club, talent shows, spelling bees, writing competition, debates, mock trials, school newspaper and productions. All of these activities take place outside the traditional classroom and offer no grade or academic credit, but they supplement and complement instruction and education for students. He went further to separate co-curricular from extra-curricular activities. He defined extra-curriculum activities as those activities that occur outside of the educational setting and do not provide instruction or experience to supplement the academic curriculum. Involvement



in a sport that happens outside of the school, for example, would be considered an extra-curricular activity. Other examples of extracurricular activities might include church-related activities, music classes that are not associated with the school, dance recitals, girls'scouts or boys'scouts, or marital arts competitions.

Co-curricular activities enable students to acquired knowledge in teamwork, communication, decision making/problem solving, analyzing quantitative data, technical knowledge of job, obtaining and processing information, analyzing quantitative data and planning, organizing, and prioritizing work. Brandson (2018) observed that students who are involved in co-curricular programmes in college are more likely to graduate on time and be satisfied with their institutions, are more likely to gain important knowledge, leadership skills and competencies, and are more likely to gain skills deemed important by employers and necessary for job success. It helps the students to develop mentally, spiritually and socially. Williamis (2017) stated that co-curricular activities offer the students an opportunity of growing their knowledge in the development of leadership, communication, academic performance, creativity, decision-making, co-operation and community service. Obidi (2017) opined that secondary educator should bear in mind that education should be all-round, one that promotes character and knowledge focusing on the development of all dimensions of their personality; intellectual, character, spiritual, mental, physical and moral. Students should be guided to embrace the value of self-reliance, honesty, diligence, entrepreneurship, self-esteem and ability to face the reality of life.

Co-curricular activities provide the necessary opportunity for students' interaction that could lead to academic and social integration. Knowledge and values can be developed as a result of students' participation in co-curricular activities in the schools. This positive interpersonal interaction between teachers and students is one of the most critical components of effective teaching and learning. Students' interactions in co-curricular activities are factors that may contributing to college students' persistence; reducing drop-outs and improving academic performance. It enriches the lives of students, a higher educational aspiration, more satisfaction with schools and teachers, less involvement in delinquent behaviour and broader conventional peer network.

Co-curricular activities help students to unfold and develop the skills and knowledge necessary to cope with challenges in the future (Andrew and Vincent, 2016). It helps the learners to survive in the world of globalization which is very challenging. The principals who are the managers of co-curricular activities in the unity school must design and implement co-curricular programmes for students that will encourage the development of students' knowledge. The principals' co-curricular activities managerial strategies expand the traditional role of teachers as transmitters of knowledge. The teachers provide the needed support and encouragement that help students to succeed in both the academic and non-academic activities in the school. Co-curricular activities enable teachers to influence students' social, emotional and other personal growth as well as their intellectual development. The principals manage the co-curricular activities in the unity schools by making provision for human and material resources, integrate various activities and ensure that students participate in every co-curricular activity. The principal who is a managerial leader and an administrator provides stability, innovation, resources, and acts as a tool for potential development of the students' knowledge.

Knowledge can be described as awareness, fact, information acquired through experience or education by perceiving, discovering or learning. It can be a theoretical or



practical understanding of a subject. Ettore and Constantin (2018), described knowledge as a universal concept which had attracted the attention of philosophers from ancient times. There were countless efforts to define it following the rules of scientific inquiry, but always, the resulting definition was not able to integrate all the semantic attributes of knowledge. According to Ettore and Constantin (2018), searching for an objective perspective and a rational approach, many philosophers eliminated all subjective aspects related to perception and bodily involvement claiming that knowledge is a justified true belief. Knowledge is created by the human brain and then it is amplified and integrated into organizational knowledge by social interaction. The existence of three fundamental fields of knowledge is postulated: rational, emotional, and spiritual. Rational knowledge is basically explicit knowledge since it is framed by our reasoning mind and natural language. Emotional knowledge is wordless expression of our body's response to the external environment and it is a direct result of emotions and feelings. Spiritual knowledge contains values and ethical principles and it is essential in decision making (Ettore and Constantin, 2018).

Knowledge improves reading, writing and listening ability, long term memory, self and group learning, analytical thinking etc. All these qualities can be acquired by students in secondary schools through participation in co-curricular activities. Zahid and Shafqat (2012) observed that the effects of these co-curricular activities are not immediately visible because they are not reflected on the grades or transcripts, but are exposed through the life style of the students.

Today our students need knowledge to face the reality of the challenging world and these knowledge are supposed to be provided by the school. Many of our youths cannot differentiate between evil and good. Internet fraud, ritual killing, indiscipline, kidnapping, armed robbery, cultism, senseless killing, willful destruction of other peoples' properties, forgery, shameless indulgence in sophisticated harlotry, drug abuse, examination malpractices among others are some of the vices destroying the social, political, economic and cultural fabrics of the Nigeria state due to lack of knowledge.

The researcher observed that many of our youths today lack the knowledge and understanding that there are consequences for every action or inaction of man as life is both physical and spiritual. Furthermore, kidnapping and banditry have turned to an intractable crisis posing a major threat to national and regional security. The herdsmen crisis in the North Central Nigeria is a significant challenge to the educational development of the Region. These rural bandits engage in violent acts, attacking, abducting, killing, robbing villagers and travelers. Most of these bandits, kidnappers and ethnic militias are youths that should be engaged in co-curricular activities that promote values and knowledge needed in building a peaceful, prosperous and equitable society. This is because co-curricular activities provide an opportunity for harnessing the hidden potentials of these youths, discourage anti-social behaviour, and promote social integration, senses of belonging, commitment and responsibility to school community and the nation at large. Our students after graduation lack the needed knowledge to face the reality of our times. Therefore, most of these security challenges in Nigeria especially in the North Central States could have been avoided if our youths are encouraged to go to schools and engaged in co-curricular activities. This concern and the acknowledgement of the place of co-curricular activities as an instrument for acquiring knowledge constitute the gaps this study intends to fill.

The school principal must identify some managerial strategies for co-curricular



activities that will enable students acquire knowledge and improve academic performance. Marias (2011) opined that the principal is responsible for drawing up a yearly plan for co-curricular activities in school. The school principals have the responsibility of formulating rules and regulations and ensure that all student activities are regulated by a constitution for guidance. Adventist Education (2015) stated that keen interest in the co-curricular activities through quality planning, organization, supervision and evaluation is expected of the school principals. Membership should be opened to all students without discrimination and the cost of membership should be minimal. According to UNESCO (2005), the school should provide financial assistance to the registered club or society and any other student activity and the cost of joining students' activities must be minimal so that poor but good students are not discouraged. All activities are expected to be well planned, coordinated and integrated in the school schedule.

It is clear that educational management in secondary schools involves the application of management principles in designing, developing and effecting resources towards achievement of educational goals (Okumber in Nzoka & Orodho, 2014). The roles of teachers in co-curricular activities are multi-dimensional. The school time-table should be properly scheduled to accommodate co-curricular activities and ensure that activities are properly supervised by the coordinators. The principals must work in close collaboration with the student leaders and provide them a voice in the decision-making process of the school (Adventist Education, 2015). The school should be represented by teachers in all students' activities for appropriate supervision. As part of principals' co-curricular supervisory strategy, the students should first of all be encouraged to take part in co-curricular activities and to gain experience from the process. Once students have been stimulated to try out the activities, they should be further motivated to do so by various means. An awards scheme is one of the best motivators. These awards can be praises, certificates, trophies, cash prize or medals etc. The principals should also remind the teachers to conduct regular stock-taking for all assets and facilities in order to safeguard the proper use of finances and resources as part of evaluation strategy. Records must be kept for all activities to serve as future reference (Adventist Education, 2015). The school should also keep for each student an activity record; listing in detail the activities the student has joined as well as his or her performance. These records will be useful in writing student references and recommendations. These reports can also be used in assessing the feasibility of new activities or drawing attention to areas requiring notice.

Chalageri and Yarriswami (2018) opined that while the school plays a pivotal role in conducting co-curricular activities, the teachers take the responsibility of how the activities can proceed further. The teacher can be a planner, adviser, leader, decision-maker, director, organizer, manager, innovator, recorder, evaluator, motivator, communicator or coordinator so that students can gain maximum benefits from co-curricular participation. They further observed that some teachers are not properly trained in that particular activity they are coordinating or are not interested in these activities. Some students are compelled by the teachers to participate in activities which they have no interest and no proper records are maintained regarding attendance and expenditures. It is the responsibility of the principals to ensure that teachers are trained and motivated for effective implementation of co-curricular activities in the schools. Panigrahi and Geleta (2012) observed that lack of trained teachers in the area of co-



*curricular activities, and lack of budget were the factors affecting the implementation of co-curricular activities in secondary schools.* Adeyemo (2013) submitted that lack of trained teachers of co-curricular activities and adolescent growth and development can lead students to quit or experience negative feelings toward the activity. They might be too hard on their students which could hurt the students' morale and as such, there is the need to train more co-curricular teachers. The principals have the responsibility of allocating duties to teachers in accordance with their abilities and interest and also provide training to teachers where necessary. One of the important aspects of principals' co-curricular managerial strategy is to ensure that competent teachers are in charge of every co-curricular activity in the schools.

The process of interacting with the formal and informal social and academic components of the schools is aided by the managerial strategies of the principals such as planning, organization, supervision and evaluation strategies. Others are provision of co-curricular facilities, ensuring teachers' commitments and students' participation. The greater the student's level of social integration and participation in school activities, the greater is their commitment to the school and the achievement of the goal of education, especially the acquisition of knowledge.

### **Purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study is to:

1. Ascertain the knowledge students developed from principals' managerial strategies of co-curricular activities in unity schools, North Central Nigeria.
2. Examine the principals' managerial strategies in the implementation of co-curricular activities for the development of students' knowledge in Unity Schools, North Central Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What are the knowledge students developed from principals' managerial strategies of co-curricular activities in unity schools, North Central Nigeria?
2. What are the principals' managerial strategies in the implementation of co-curricular activities for the development of students' knowledge in Unity Schools, North Central Nigeria?

### **Methodology**

Descriptive survey research design was employed for this study. The population of the study comprised of 2,701 teachers and 4,356 SS 3 students in the 24 unity schools located in the North Central Zone of Nigeria. The sample size for this study comprised of 320 teachers and 338 students based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970) recommended table for determining sample size. Multistage sampling technique was used for this study. Four out of seven states (Benue, Plateau, Kwara, Kogi, Niger, Nassarawa and Federal Capital Territory) were randomly selected and each state was treated as a strata. Proportionate sampling technique was used in the selection of respondents as 7.76% of students in each state were selected. On the selection of teachers as respondents, purposive sampling technique was adopted. The researcher purposively selected 20 teachers in each school. These teachers are co-curricular activities coordinators and



assistants, patrons of club and societies, games masters and the assistants.

The instrument for data collection for this study was the questionnaire structure on a four (4) points modified Likert-type rating scale of Strongly Agree=4 points, Agree=3 points, Disagree=2 points and Strongly Disagree= 1 point. The questionnaire was administered 'face to face' to the respondents after validation. Two research assistants hired and briefed for this purpose administered the questionnaire. Cronbach Alpha was used to find the degree of internal consistency and a value ( $r=0.84$ ) was obtained. The copies of the questionnaire were immediately collated for analysis using mean scores and standard deviation.

## Results

**Research Question 1:** What are the knowledge students developed from principals' managerial strategies of co-curricular activities in unity schools, North Central Nigeria?

**Table 1: Analysis of knowledge Students Developed from Principals' Managerial of Co-curricular Activities in Unity Schools, North Central Nigeria**

N=338								
	Item	4	3	2	1	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
	<b>Knowledge Development</b>							
	Improve reading ability	182	122	16	18	3.38	0.81	Agreed
	Improve students listening ability	178	106	28	26	3.29	0.91	Agreed
	Help improve writing ability of students	174	104	40	20	3.28	0.89	Agreed
	Promote self-learning skills.	184	124	18	12	3.42	0.75	Agreed
	Provides motivation for learning	192	100	28	18	3.38	0.85	Agreed
	Develop in students the spirit of healthy competition	158	124	40	16	3.25	0.84	Agreed
	Improve learning through team-work (group learning)	194	102	24	18	3.40	0.84	Agreed
	Improve long term memory (it helps in retaining knowledge)	184	112	14	28	3.34	0.90	Agreed
	Help students to have positive and analytical thinking in the schools	140	128	28	42	3.08	1.00	Agreed
0	Help students to get enlightened about other societies, their work, custom and culture	184	114	18	22	3.36	0.85	Agreed
1	Help students develop professional knowledge appropriate to work ethics	186	112	16	24	3.36	0.87	Agreed
	Section Mean					3.32	0.86	Agreed
	Grand Mean					3.32	0.83	Agreed

Table 1 portrays that the respondents agreed that co-curricular activities help in improving students' reading ability (item 1,  $\bar{X}= 3.38$ ). Improve students' listening ability (item 2,  $\bar{X}= 3.29$ ). Help improve writing ability of students (item 3,  $\bar{X}= 3.28$ ). Promote self-learning skills (item 4,  $\bar{X}=3.42$ ) Provides motivation for learning (item 5,  $\bar{X}=3.38$ ). Develop in students the spirit of healthy competition (item 6,  $\bar{X}=3.25$ ). Improve learning through team-work (group learning) (item 7,  $\bar{X}=3.40$ ). Improve long term memory (it helps in retaining knowledge) (item 8,  $\bar{X}= 3.34$ ). Help students to have positive and analytical thinking in the schools (item 9,  $\bar{X}= 3.08$ ). Help students to get enlightened about other societies, their work, customs and culture (item 10,  $\bar{X}= 3.36$ ). Help students develop professional knowledge appropriate to work ethics (item 11,  $\bar{X}= 2.97$ ).

**Research Question 2:** What are the principals' managerial strategies in the implementation of co-curricular activities for the development of students' knowledge



in Unity Schools, North Central Nigeria?

**Table 2. Analysis of Principals' Managerial Strategies in the Implementation of Co-curricular Activities in Unity Schools, North Central Nigeria**

N=320								
S/No	Items	4	3	2	1	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
12	The principals ensure that teachers are in charge of every co-curricular activity	190	116	8	6	3.53	0.64	Agreed
13	Duration of each activity is planned	123	182	8	7	3.32	0.63	Agreed
14	Teachers monitor the progress of students	155	142	10	13	3.37	0.74	Agreed
15	Teachers ensure that activities are implemented according to school policies	141	118	32	30	3.14	0.96	Agreed
16	The principals ensure that all activities are adequately organized and efficiently run	143	139	20	18	3.27	0.81	Agreed
17	The principal ensure that the cost to participating students are reasonable	20	130	36	34	3.05	0.96	Agreed
18	The principals monitor every activity coordinator	137	131	22	30	3.17	0.92	Agreed
19	The teachers provide guidance and counselling services to the students	182	95	20	23	3.36	0.89	Agreed
20	The principals ensure fairness in punishment for misbehaviour	156	132	15	17	3.33	0.80	Agreed
21	The principals ensure that teachers keep records of all activities	178	89	31	22	3.32	0.91	Agreed
Weighted mean						3.29	0.83	Agreed

Table 2 shows that the respondents agreed that the principals ensure that teachers prepare their lesson note (item 12,  $\bar{X}= 3.53$ ). Duration of each lesson is planned (item 13,  $\bar{X}=3.32$ ). Teachers give take home assignment to students (item 14,  $\bar{X}= 3.23$ ). Teachers give scheme of work to students at the begging of each term (item 15,  $\bar{X}= 3.14$ ). The principals ensure that all teachers attend classes regularly and they are doing their work (item 16,  $\bar{X}= 3.05$ ). The principals monitor class attendance by teachers and students (item 18,  $\bar{X}= 3.17$ ). The teachers provide guidance and counselling services to the students (item 19,  $\bar{X}= 3.36$ ). The principals ensure fairness in punishment for misbehaviour (item 20,  $\bar{X}= 3.33$ ). The principals ensure that teachers conduct regular class test (item 21,  $\bar{X}= 3.32$ ).

The principals ensure that all teachers attend classes regularly and they are doing their work (item 16,  $\bar{X}= 3.05$ ). The principals monitor class attendance by teachers and students (item 18,  $\bar{X}= 3.17$ ). The teachers provide guidance and counselling services to the students (item 19,  $\bar{X}= 3.36$ ). The principals ensure fairness in punishment for misbehaviour (item 20,  $\bar{X}= 3.33$ ). The principals ensure that teachers conduct regular class test (item 21,  $\bar{X}= 3.32$ ).

### Discussion of Findings

Table 1 ascertained the knowledge students developed from participating in co-curricular activities in unity schools. The findings of this study showed that co-curricular activity is an instrument for developing students' knowledge in unity schools. This finding corroborates the findings of Brandfon (2018) who observed that students who are involved in co-curricular programmes in college are more likely to gain important knowledge, leadership skills and competencies, and are more likely to gain skills deemed important by employers and necessary for job success. It helps the students to develop mentally, spiritually and socially. The findings of study also agreed with Williams (2017) who stated that co-curricular activities offer the students an opportunity of growing their knowledge in the development of leadership, communication, academic performance, creativity, decision-making, co-operation and community service. The findings further agreed with Wanjoh (2016) who opined that to a greater extent, the theoretical knowledge gets strengthened when a relevant co-curricular activity is related to the content taught in the classroom. Co-curricular activities provide knowledge for creative ability, sense of belonging, and decision-making skill among the



students. The findings also agreed with Obidi (2017) and (Kauwi Mixed Secondary School, 2018) who opined that secondary educator should bear in mind that education should be all-round, one that promotes character and knowledge focusing on the development of all dimensions of their personality; intellectual, character, spiritual, mental, physical and moral. The finding further agreed with Andrew and Vincent (2016) who opined that co-curricular activities unfold and develop students' skills and knowledge necessary to cope with challenges in the future. It helps the learners to survive in the world of globalization which is very challenging. Co-curricular activities enable students to acquire knowledge in teamwork, communication, decision making/problem solving, analyzing quantitative data, technical knowledge of job, obtaining and processing information, analyzing quantitative data and planning, organizing, and prioritizing work.

Table 2 examined the principals' effective strategies of managing co-curricular activities in unity schools, North Central Nigeria. The finding corroborates the findings of Okumber cited in Nzoka and Orodho (2014) who declared that educational management in secondary schools involves the application of management principles in designing, developing and effecting resources towards achievement of educational goals. The findings of study also agreed with Marias (2011) who opined that the principal is responsible for drawing up a yearly plan for co-curricular activities in school. The finding further agreed with Adventist Education (2015) who observed that records must be kept for all activities to serve as future reference. The findings also agreed with UNESCO (2005), which declared that school should provide financial assistance to the registered club or society and any other student activity and the cost of joining students' activities must be minimal so that poor but good students are not discouraged.

## Conclusion

This research study has buttressed the fact that co-curricular activities is instrument for developing students' knowledge in Unity schools. Co-curricular activities serve as critical learning laboratories where students can develop knowledge. These knowledge include improve reading and listening ability, self-learning skills, healthy competition, positive and analytical thinking among others. The principal who is the administrative head of the school is responsible for the planning, organizing, supervision and evaluation of co-curricular activities in the unity schools. The study recommended among others, the creation of office of the vice principal co-curricular activities in unity schools to enhance effective management of co-curricular activities which develop students' knowledge. This knowledge enable the students develop an identity, integrate with others, and collectively establish a supportive community.

## Recommendations

The findings of the study necessitate the following recommendations:

1. The office of the vice principal co-curricular activities should be created in the unity schools. This will enhance effective management of available co-curricular activities that should develop students' knowledge.
2. The principals should organized seminars and workshops for teachers who are the coordinators to improve their managerial skills for effective management of co-curricular activities in the Unity Schools.
3. The principals and other relevant authorities like the Parents-teachers Association should hold seminars and training program for students in co-



curricular activities to broaden their knowledge that will enable them think creatively and critically about opportunities in the society after school.

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