

**INVESTIGATION OF EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES ON  
STUDENTS' SOCIALIZATION AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE:  
A CASE STUDY OF BURAPHA UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE,  
BANGSAEN, CHON BURI PROVINCE, THAILAND.**

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**ABSTRACT**

There is an extensive body of literature confirming the positive impact of extracurricular activities on students' socialization process. Yet, it has always been a battle between class instructors and student affairs instructors about the boundary between attending classes and participating in extracurricular activities. Burapha University International College (BUUIC) is no exceptional. This study aimed to investigate the impact of extracurricular activities on both students' socialization process and academic performance. The first phase of this study aimed to develop extracurricular activities framework to ensure their positive impacts on students' socialization process and academic performance using unstructured interview questions with participated pool of 40 students, and survey questionnaire was used to investigate BUUIC students' perception of the extracurricular activities on their socialization process and academic performance. The findings revealed that students found that extracurricular activities introduced several benefits, but they were not satisfied with some aspects of extracurricular activities.

**Keywords:** Extracurricular activities, students' socialization, academic performance.

## INTRODUCTION

There have been arguments among lecturers, students, and parents about how extracurricular activities affected students in their years in college. Some people are against activities and think that the students should focus more on in-classroom learning. Many researches were conducted in the western countries concerning how activities assist student in socialization and adjustment. Much of the college impact research has centered on particular socialization processes, such as student-faculty interaction and peer influences (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005; Tierney et al., 2005; Cruce et al., 2006).

Research showed that the two primary influences on student learning and development are student-faculty interactions and peer influences (Astin, 1993; Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991, 2005; Whitt et al., 1999; Kuh and Hu, 2001; Tierney et al., 2005; Cruce et al., 2006). According to Pascarella and Terenzini (2005), student-faculty interactions helped strengthen intellectual background in the classroom and have positive impact on cognitive development during college. Whereas peer interactions provide support and encouragement that positively impact on students' development (Tierney et al., 2005). Weidman (1989) suggested that the focus of research should be on students' socialization to fully understand college impact.

Peer interaction is associated with variety of development outcomes. Peer group has been depicted as the most important influence on student development (Austin, 1993). According to Pascarella et al. (1995), peer interaction in- and out-of-the-classroom bring about student development. When students were asked to describe the greatest impact on their learning and development, senior students often answered that it was the interaction with their peers (Kuh, 1995).

Extracurricular activities also provide student with opportunities to explore to both peer and teacher interactions. Extracurricular activities are condition that they are not part of the curriculum program. Therefore, in this study curricular activities include participation in clubs and student activities outside the classroom. Research on extracurricular ac-

tivities also found that youth who participated in extracurricular activities are more likely to have better grade (Marsh, 1992), have high-test score (Gerber, 1996), and attend school more regularly (Mahoney and Cairns, 1997). The relationship between extracurricular activities and academic outcomes has been research activity for many decades (Baxter Smith, 1936; Thomas and Moran, 1991; Eccles and Barber, 1999; Mahoney, 2000; Buoye, 2004). In this study, extracurricular activities are activities outside of the classroom that offered to students, which may be arranged either by Burapha University International College or by Burapha University.

Previous researches have found that extracurricular activities have positive impact on student socialization (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005; Tierney et al., 2005; Cruce et al., 2006) and other outcome variables (Hanks and Eckland, 1976; Marsh, 1992; Gerber, 1996; Mahoney and Cairns, 1997). It is also significant to investigate if extracurricular activities help students in their academic performance. This study aims to investigate students' perceptions about extracurricular activities and its influence on student socialization process and adjustment in Burapha University International College (BUUIC). We also intend to fill a gap in the current literature by investigating the impact of extracurricular activities on student academic performance as well. The specific research questions guiding the investigations were: (1) to what extent do extracurricular activities influence students' socialization process, and (2) to what extent do extracurricular activities influence students' academic performance.

Burapha University International College (BUUIC) offers degrees in Business Administration majoring in Management, Marketing, Hotel and Tourism Management, Management Information System and Logistics Management, as well as Bachelor of Arts in communication skills in Human Resource Development. Total number of students in BUUIC is 755, 56.5 percent are Thai while 44.5 percent are foreigners. Classes are conducted using English as a medium of instruction.

There were range of extracurricular activities

participated by BUUIC students. Some of them were offered by Burapha University and some were offered by BUUIC itself.

Enormous amount of resources were used in BUUIC extracurricular activities. Therefore, the study was conducted to develop extracurricular activities framework to ensure that investments made on extracurricular activities are justified and that all students will receive the extracurricular activities benefits.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study consisted of two methods. The first phase was a qualitative method to investigate the impact of extracurricular activities on students' socialization process and academic performance. The second phase employed survey questionnaire to generalize the findings from the phase.

### Instruments

#### *Phase 1 Interview*

The qualitative approach was employed using open-end interview to gather the data about how extracurricular activities influence student socialization processes and their academic performance and to find out students' view about extracurricular activities. In order to gain diverse perspectives of BUUIC students on extracurricular activities, 40 students from different majors and years were selected to participate in this research. The data collection took place in spring 2009 semester. Content Analysis was used to analyze the collected data.

#### *Phase 2 Questionnaires*

Extracurricular activities questionnaire was developed to investigate students' perception about extracurricular activities and their impact on socialization process and academic performance. The underlying construct of the extracurricular activities and their impact were interpersonal interaction, intrapersonal interaction, and other outcomes such as skills and knowledge. The reliability estimates of the questionnaire are shown in Table 1, with the overall reliability of 0.88.

**Table 1.** Reliability estimates for extracurricular activities questionnaire.

Factor	Coefficient alpha
Interpersonal interaction	0.74
Intrapersonal interaction	0.72
Skills	0.77
Knowledge	0.72

Five hundred sets of questionnaire developed from information found in the first phase were distributed to students in BUUIC. 489 sets were completed and returned with the respond rate of 97.8 %. Number of male respondents (44.8 %) is more than number of female respondents (55.2%). 67.5% of respondents are Chinese, 30.1% are Thai and 2.4% of other nationalities.

#### *Phase 3 Focus group*

To obtain information and framework of extracurricular activities, group of experts consisted of four academic affairs instructors and staff and four student council members from public and private universities were gathered. Results from study of phases 1 and 2 were reported to the attendants and asked them to discuss about the solutions to existing issues.

## RESULTS

It is found that all of the forty students, who participated in this study, have participated in at least more one extracurricular activities and some have participated in several activities. Participant pool consists of both Thai and foreign students. The finding shows benefits that students have acquired from participated in extracurricular activities in BUUIC extracurricular activities, as well as the difficulties they experienced in each extracurricular activity.

Several benefits were mentioned by the participants and have been summarized into five categories, i.e., interpersonal interaction, intrapersonal interaction, skills, knowledge, and experiences.

**Table 2.** Frequency statistics.

	Interpersonal interaction	Intrapersonal interaction	Skills	Knowledge
Mean	3.46	3.22	3.58	3.67

**Interpersonal interaction**

Many students said that they have had chances to make new friends within and outside of BUUIC. Foreign students also had chances to make friends with Thai from other faculties in Burapha University. They exchanged information and learnt about each other's cultures. Some foreign students also learn to speak Thai language. Spending lots of time with others, some students said that they

have not only learned about others, they also get to learn about themselves too. They learn to speak up to communicate clearly to their friends when they participated in the activity. Feedbacks from their teammates or friends help them to understand more about themselves. In return, they also tried to give feedback to friends or teammates. Not only that they interact more with friends, it was also reported that students get to interact more with instructors during each activity.

**Table 2** shows frequency statistics from the second phase of the study, which reported high interpersonal interaction, with the mean of 3.46. The study found high correlations between students' GPA and their interpersonal interaction (Table 3).

**Table 3.** GPA correlations.

	Interpersonal interaction	Intrapersonal interaction	Skills	Knowledge	Club member
GPA	0.129	0.075	0.074	0.050	0.131
No. of activities	0.079	0.045	0.550**	0.584**	-0.169*

\*\* Correlations is significant at the 0.01 level

\* Correlations is significant at the 0.05 level

**Intrapersonal interaction**

Foreign students said that they usually stay in their dormitory during the free time because they did not know their ways around the areas. Their lifestyle changed after they have participated in the extracurricular activities. They spent more time on campus working on the assignments or playing with friends whom they met in the extracurricular activities. Majority of students also said that they feel like attending class more regularly and paying more attention to their study as the result of participating in extracurricular activities. It is found that students' intrapersonal interaction was moderately high, with 3.22 as the mean.

Intrapersonal interaction was found to have high correlations (.075) with students GPA, as shown in Table 3.

**Experience**

Some of the activities like field trips or

campus allowed students to expose themselves to different places in Thailand. Many were impressed with beautiful beaches and mountains that they will carry this memory home to their friends and families. They also learned more about Thailand in term of ways of lives, custom, tradition, and foods. It was found that friends, made in extracurricular activities, assisted students to adjust themselves to college lives. They were introduced to many new friends inside and outside of the college. Foreign students said that they have many Thai friends through participated in extracurricular activities.

**Knowledge and skill**

Students learned new knowledge and got to practice new skills through extracurricular activities. Students who have attended English Camp said that they have learned to be patient and tried to find new method in teaching young kids to speak English. Students who participated in extracurricular

activities as organizing committee said that they have learned many new skills, such as interpersonal skills, time management skills, as well as leadership skills, which they believe to be useful for their future. Questionnaire survey reported the mean of 3.84 on knowledge and skills as other outcomes of extracurricular activities' benefits. Knowledge and skill have moderate correlations with students' GPA (Table 3).

Since BUUIC is an international college using English as a medium of instruction and students consist of both Thai and foreigners, students who joined activity are forced to speak English. Many students claimed that their English proficiency has increased because of the extracurricular activity participation.

### *Academic performance*

In addition to socialization process, it was also found that students' absenteeism was reduced due to the fact that they have friends attending the same classes and class instructor who they have met during the activities. Students also help each other's in term of advises about classes to enroll, preparation for classes, and assignments. Students said that they benefited more from group projects after they participated in extracurricular activities with their group mates. Students said that their class performance was much better and their grades were improved after they attended extracurricular activities. Students' GPA was used in this study to represent students' academic performance. Its correlations with interpersonal interaction, intrapersonal interaction, other outcomes – knowledge and skill, and club member are shown in Table 3. Findings show that student academic performance increases as they joined activities as club member.

Despite the fact that extracurricular activities offer benefits to students, there were few complaints from students about activity information and facilities.

### **Information**

Few students complained about lack of information about the activities. Students said that

they sometimes learned about the activity at the last minute and were not ready to participate. Description of activity is also required by students, they said that it would be better if they are aware of the activity's description. Students claimed that activity information was available to group of students who organized it, for example, student club members. Findings reported that bulletin board, e-mail, and in-classroom announcements are the best ways for students to receive information about extracurricular activities, with the mean of 3.45, 3.40, and 3.45 respectively.

Information about facilities and fund were also another issue raised by students. They do not know whether funds and facilities are available. The requisition process is not clear to all students. Some students expressed their interests in starting up clubs in BUUIC, but they do not know how to apply for and who to discuss with in case the information is needed.

### *Facilities*

Facility was one of the problems that were raised by some students. They requested the college to provide more facilities, such as sport equipment, music instrument, and areas where they could meet and enjoy activity together.

### *Focus group findings*

Experts in focus group discussion demonstrated extracurricular activities framework used in their universities. Due to the fact that those universities were operating for many decades, most of the systems are intact, as well as the student affairs operations. Information regarding extracurricular activities is available on the universities' website. Student affairs staffs are available to provide information and answer students' inquiry. To establish a club or activity, students can follow detail instructions available on the website. Documents and requisition forms can be downloaded. Once the document is submitted to the student affairs office, students will be informed about the university decision within a certain period of time specified on the website.

## DISCUSSION

The result of this study shows that extracurricular activities have positive impact on BUUIC students' socialization process and academic performance, which is consistent with several research studies.

Previous researches proposed that faculty-student and peers interaction are two primary sources of student learning and development (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005; Tierney et al., 2005; Cruce et al., 2006). Student faculty interactions help to improve intellectual culture in the classroom, which provides positive impact to students' cognitive development (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005). While peer interactions provide academic and personal support networks that positively influence students' development (Tierney et al., 2005). In 1995, Kuh reported that when college students were asked to describe the greatest impact on their learning and personal development, the respond was interactions with their peers (Kuh, 1995).

Consistent with the findings of this study, several researches confirmed the relationship between academic performance and several extracurricular activities, such as volunteer work (Hinck and Brandell, 1999), athletic (Broh, 2002). Extracurricular activities were proved to increase self-confident, teamwork, problem-solving skills, creativity, as well as help to reduce stress (Davidson, 2006).

The findings show that information about extracurricular activities took place in BUUIC, was not available to all students. To ensure that BUUIC students will receive benefits from extracurricular activities by receiving necessary information about the activity, BUUIC should develop communication channels with all students. There should be a one-stop-counter or web blog, which ever ways that is most convenient to students, where students who are interested in extracurricular activities can acquire activity information. Activity information must reach the students at least a week before it will take place to provide student with adequate time to prepare themselves and to rearrange their schedule.

Information about how to set up a club or facility and fund requisition must be available to all students. There should be staff available to answer

students' questions about extracurricular activities or assist student in case assistant is needed.

Several limitations to this study existed. The participated pool consisted only of 40 students in BUUIC in 2010, the responses were probably biased and cannot be used in general. This study took place at BUUIC, thus, the results were only limited to one setting. Therefore, it is recommended that a replication of this study should be conducted with different population and the relationships between each type of extracurricular activities and the respondents' level of academic performance should also be studied.

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