

Professional article

**PRESENCE OF EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND THE
NUMBER OF STUDENTS ATTENDING EXTRACURRICULAR
ACTIVITIES/SECTIONS**

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Abstract. *The aim of the research is to explore and compare the participation of students in sections, and their interest (realization, motivation, satisfaction), as well as of parents in extracurricular activities. Google Questionnaires (for students and parents) were used as research instruments. The sample of respondents was formed by surveying 8 students of both genders from each of totally 30 class (N=376 in total), as well as their parents (N=376). Finally, 341 questionnaires were fulfilled by students, and 310 by their parents. The analysis acknowledged that extracurricular activities/sections include significantly more first-class students than second-cycle students. There is more registered students in comparison to those who regularly attend classes, especially at the second cycle of education. In certain aspects of the realization of sections students are satisfied, but there is a possibility for improvements in work. When planning section classes, it is important to envision the ability to place students in the teaching role, developing student self-reliance and self-confidence, but also to encourage peer learning and all students to engage in activities.*

Key words: *questionnaires, realization of teaching, primary school age*

1. INTRODUCTION

The free time of children/students during the primary school attendance period is a time when they are released from their regular school and family obligations. During that time, they should develop and improve their skills and abilities.

Contemporary circumstances bring children a multitude of content and influence, both positive and negative. Therefore, in the time that remains available for students, it is important to organize activities under the supervision of an expert person – a teacher. It is

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of great importance that activities are realized regularly, according to a certain plan and per the interests of students.

Working in extracurricular activities develops peers interaction and enriches social skills enabling social contacts and relationships that build children's personality in different ways (Previšić, 1987), conditioning less common risky behaviors in students involved in extracurricular activities (Dryfoos, 1997).

Different studies show that organized students' free time through extracurricular activities has a great contribution to the formation of positive attributes for the child and its development in general (Vidulin & Papak, 2018, pp. 15).

Despite many positive effects on students such as better personal perception, augmented self-confidence, developed leadership and communication skills, etc., there are challenges in the realization of extracurricular activities including the burden of students with several classes and regular class hours. The fact is that many of the activities the student attends are undermining the positive influences expected.

In schools outside of educational system (e.g. American schools) various activities are available, but they often exert additional funding, as well as the time needed for the organization. Dance, sports and art sections, as well as reconnaissance or activities such as debates and socio-humanitarian activities dominate (Eccles, 2003).

Hence, extracurricular activities have a predominantly cultural-artistic, sports, technical, recreational and scientific (educational) characteristics gathering students in free extracurricular time at school (Cindrić, 1992).

A school is an ideal place for an educated and planned guidance of the children through their targeted activities.

In addition to regular teachings, the school plans extracurricular activities (sections) to encourage the development of individual preferences and students' interests. Different programs of extracurricular activities contribute to the quality of social life of students, the development of positive human values, and the overall development of students.

Extracurricular activities are possibly already tied to a particular subject and some global educational project, they may have interdisciplinary character, and be in the function of social learning, promotion and encouraging children's play and activities of an active-production nature (Mendeš, 2010).

In the broadest sense of the word, extracurricular activities/sections can be considered anything that students deal with outside the classical school framework or formal classes limited by the strict plan and learning curriculum.

The aim of the research is to explore and compare the participation of students in sections, and their interest (realization, motivation, satisfaction) in extracurricular activities, as well as of their parents.

2. METHODS

The initial basis for setting up the research were the standard rules (RS Official Gazette, 2013 a,b), the report conclusions the analysis of the documents i.e., the report on the external evaluation of Belgrade School Administration since May 17, 2017 (Školska uprava Beograd, 2017), the School's Development plan for 2018-2022, the School program for 2018-2022, the school's Annual School plan for 2019/20 and the regulation on the quality standards of the institution's quality (RS Official Gazette, 2018). Common conclusion within above listed documentation emphasize the problem of poor student

involvement in extracurricular activities, and problem of planned measures that have not yet achieved the expected results.

2.1. Sample of the respondents

Actual research was conducted in March 2021, at the elementary school “Danilo Kiš” in Belgrade. The school had 30 classes of the first (grades 1-4) and 17 sections of the second cycles (grades 5-8) of the previous school year (at the time of conducting research). The sample of respondents was formed by surveying 8 students of both genders from each class (N = 376 in total), as well as their parents (N = 376). Finally, totally 341 questionnaires were fulfilled by students, and 310 by their parents.

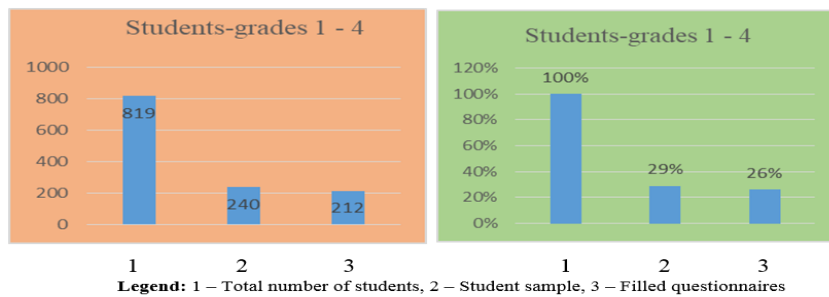


Diagram 1 Student Sample – The First Cycle

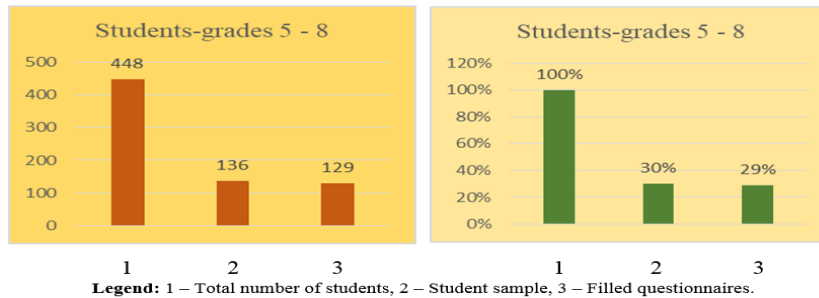


Diagram 2 Student Sample – The Second Cycle

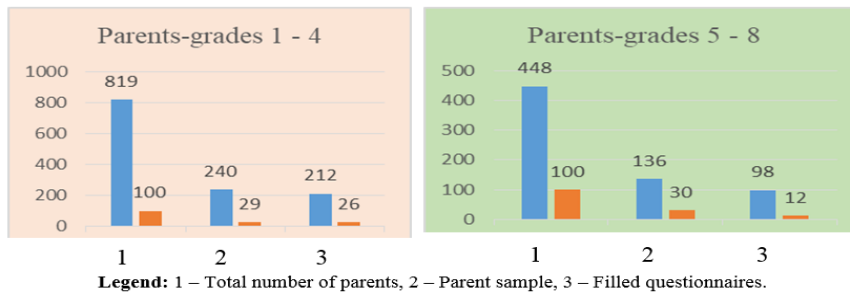


Diagram 3 Parent sample – The First Cycle **Diagram 4** Parent sample – The Second Cycle

2.2. Statistical analysis

The digital version of Google Questionnaires (for students and parents) was used as research instrument. This tool facilitated distribution, data collection and analysis. All data are mistreated and described by the means of descriptive statistics and XLSTAT Microsoft Excel® data analysis software.

2.3. Questionnaire description

Two questionnaires have been elaborated, for students and for parents (see Appendix 1 and 2, respectively). Each questionnaire initially contains a questionnaire title, an introductory word - instruction, and the aim. In this way, respondents are familiar with the goal of the survey, motivated to give realistic answers, and ascertained that the school take devising measures to improve quality of work. The analysis of the questionnaire of the first and second cycle students, as well as their parents was done separately, considering the different organizational and motivational moments.

2.3.1. Subheading *The questionnaire for students*

The questionnaire for students included 14 questions, and by answering the same, students had the opportunity to highlight what they like in the work of the section so far, as well as what could change. Most of the questions are related to the research of students' opinions on the organization of sections by teachers, student participation and presentation of these activities. At the beginning, the questions refer to the perception of students' opinions on the implementation of sections in the school so far, personal participation and satisfaction (questions 1 to 4). Questions under ordinal numbers 5 and 6 examine the attitude of students about the importance of the implementation of sections in the school. The set of questions from 7 to 14 refers to the students' views on the manner of realization of the sections in which they participated or were informed about them.

2.3.2. Subheading *The questionnaire for parents*

The questionnaire for parents contains 15 questions. Questions 1 to 4 examine the level of information of parents about the implementation of sections in school, participation and motivation of the child for these activities. Questions 5 through 8 explore parents' views on the importance of conducting school sections. A set of questions from 9 to 15 shows parents' satisfaction with children's participation in sections, motivation and the impact of this type of activity on student development.

3. RESULTS

Descriptive analysis of all of the questionnaires leads to the following conclusions: the number of students enlisting for participation in sections in the first cycle is 507 (62%) compared to 133 (30%) of those enrolled in the second-cycle (Table 1), with larger number of sections offered to the students at the first cycle.

Table 1 Student Participation in Sections

Variables	No.	Percentage
Total number of students in the first cycle	819	100%
Students signed up for sections-first cycle	507	62%
Students who regularly attend sections compared to the number of registered students-first cycle	480	95%
Total number of students in the second cycle	448	100%
Students signed up for sections-second cycle	133	30%
Students who regularly attend sections compared to the number of registered students-second cycle	72	54%

4. DISCUSSION

The research covered several aspects of extracurricular activities/sections, such as, the realization of activities in section classes, the motivation of students to participate in the activities envisioned in the sections and students' satisfaction.

- The realization of activities in section classes – first-cycle students are significantly more satisfied with the realization of the sections compared to second-cycle students, and a parallel can be drawn comparing the number of students who quit attending these classes. Most students see the importance of participating in sections, realize that new knowledge can expand existing general knowledge and direct them to further education. Students believe that the majority of teachers encourage students to engage in the work of sections, yet point out that teachers do not always allow them to choose topics that will satisfy their interests. Because they feel that section work is not always presented through available media, it can be concluded what affects their satisfaction or discontent;
- The motivation of students to participate in the activities envisioned in the sections – most of the surveyed students are familiar with the sections that are being conducted in the school, however there are students who are not fully familiar with the sections; students are interested in participating in sections, but there is room for encouraging several under-motivated students; the reason for the previously stated can be in the fact that first-grade students and parents don't always have complete information, especially about sections-making teachers, sometimes, because of the uncertainty, students don't apply and don't have an interest; students of the second cycle due to their numerous obligations pay no attention to this segment of the school's work;
- Students' satisfaction – it is positively affected by the ability to work together as team members and to use different sources of knowledge. Students suggest that local community resources are not being used sufficiently, which is very important for connecting knowledge gained in the school environment with life-experienced findings.

The obtained results coincide with the results of other researches, which show that children who participate in extracurricular activities understand and express their feelings and attitudes much better, establish positive interactions with the environment, express assertiveness in social contacts, respond effectively to peer pressure and have better success in school (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007).

The analysis acknowledged that extracurricular activities/sections include significantly more first-class students than second-cycle students. There is more registered students in comparison to those who regularly attend classes, especially at the second cycle of education. In certain aspects of the realization of sections students are satisfied, but there is a possibility for improvements in work.

At school, teachers encourage students to apply for participation in sections (mostly talented ones that would certainly achieve their ambitions by attending additional classes). It is important to engage students who want to do so, although they do not tend to a certain curriculum or area in which the section is dedicated.

The results of some research show that children spend most of their time in the company of their peers, looking for contents and ways of life different from family or school ones (Rosić, 2005). This fact should be taken into account together with the other conclusions.

It takes considerably more motivation for second-cycle students to participate in sections, and it is necessary to assist teachers in devising section programs, activities and plans, realization and promotion of section products. Professional collaborators can direct teachers and be an important link in the planning, telling teachers to integrate access to regular instructions and extracurricular activities, goals, and learning outcomes. Teachers should be noted that, in organizing sections, they can exploit inter-class competencies and connect different objects into one section. Curriculum can be linked within the expert council, but not necessarily. More opportunities should be looked at to provide students with the content of different areas, presentation of content that is not intended for regular hours, thus pointing out to students the importance of participating in extracurricular activities.

Parent involvement represent huge motivating factor both for students and teachers.

Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems, & Holbein (2005) determined that elementary school students show a beneficial relationship between parental involvement and the various motivational constructs (school engagement, intrinsic/extrinsic motivation, perceived competence, perceived control, self-regulation, mastery goal orientation, and motivation to read). Teachers' motivation is augmented in case of parental support in schools (Perie, 1997).

5. CONCLUSION

Attention needs to be paid to a variety of sections that can be improved, e.g. by using modern digital tools, which can be a motivating factor for students, and a known working method. When planning section classes, it is important to place students in the teaching role, to develop student self-reliance and self-confidence, but also to encourage peer learning and all students to engage in activities.

Local community's resources could have been used as supplementary funds, allowing students to become acquainted with some important content in an obvious manner. It can also solve to a certain degree the problem of finding terms that are more appropriate for students without directly being associated with regular classes.

It is necessary to set a goal that is wanted to be achieved, to list all the activities that will enable the goal to be achieved, and to ensure that the evaluation indicator is determined.

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APPENDIX

1. Questionnaire for students

Participation in extracurricular activities-sections in school

Dear student,

It is very important that you read the following questions carefully and express your opinion regarding the implementation of extracurricular activities-sections in our school.

The goal of this questionnaire is to single out everything that you like, but also what could change, in order to improve the work within the extracurricular activities-sections in the coming period.

In order to get the best possible results, I ask you to express your opinion by assessing the claims to the extent that the above is present through a four-point scale.

TRUE / PRESENT

1. incorrect / not present
2. to a lesser extent true / present
3. to a greater extent accurate / present
4. true / fully present

Thanks in advance.

1. I am familiar with extracurricular activities-sections that are organized in the school.
2. I am interested in participating in sections.
3. I am satisfied with the sections in which I participated.
4. I am satisfied with the terms in which the sections are realized.
5. I believe that participation in sections contributes to increasing general knowledge.
6. I think that participating in sections can help in the choice for further education.
7. Teachers encourage all students to get involved in the work of the sections.
8. Teachers present the work of sections through a website, bulletin board or event.

If you have participated in the work of any section so far, please answer the following questions:

9. Participation in the section allows me to satisfy my interests.
10. The teacher gives me the opportunity to choose the topics I will deal with in the section.
11. In the classes of the section, we usually work as a team or in pairs.
12. We always prepare papers in the section classes.
13. In the preparation of papers we use only textbooks.
14. The teacher uses the resources of the local community (museum, gallery, park, library and other institutions) in the implementation of sections.

2. Questionnaire for parents

Realization of extracurricular activities-sections in school

Dear,

It is very important that you read the following questions carefully and express your opinion regarding the implementation of extracurricular activities-sections in our school. The aim of this questionnaire is to see what is important and to what extent it is important for students to join the sections in a timely and purposeful manner, but also what could change in order to improve the work within extracurricular activities-sections in the future.

In order to get the best possible results, please express your opinion by assessing the claims to the extent that the above is present through a four-point scale.

TRUE / PRESENT

1. 1.incorrect / not present
2. 2.to a lesser extent true / present
3. 3.to a greater extent accurate / present
4. 4.true / fully present

Thanks in advance.

1. I have information about extracurricular activities - sections of children in school.
2. I am interested in my child's participation in extracurricular activities.
3. I am familiar with the sections in which my child participates.
4. My child is very motivated to participate in sections.
5. I believe that extracurricular activities are useful for improving general knowledge children.
6. Sections contribute to the improvement of children's specific abilities.

7. Participation in sections improves learning motivation.
8. Participation in sections has a positive effect on increasing work habits children.
9. I actively monitor my child's participation in the sections
10. I think that it is useful for competent external associates to participate in the realization of the sections.
11. I am satisfied with the sections in which my child participates.
12. I am satisfied with the terms of the sections in which mine participates a child.
13. I advise other parents to include their children in the sections schools.
14. I believe that the school should provide students with as much as possible Section
15. Participation in sections can help children choose for further education.

PRISUTNOST VANNASTAVNIH AKTIVNOSTI I BROJ UČENIKA KOJI POHAĐAJU VANNASTAVNE AKTIVNOSTI / SEKCIJE

Cilj istraživanja je da se istraži i uporedi učešće učenika u sekcijama, i njihovo interesovanje (realizacija, motivacija, zadovoljstvo), kao i roditelja u vannastavnim aktivnostima. Google upitnici (za učenike i roditelje) korišćeni su kao istraživački instrumenti. Uzorak ispitanika formiran je anketiranjem po 8 učenika oba pola iz svakog od 30 odeljenja (ukupno N=376), kao i njihovih roditelja (N=376). Na kraju anketiranja, 341 upitnik ispunili su učenici, a 310 njihovi roditelji. Analiza je potvrdila da vannastavne aktivnosti/sekcije uključuju značajno više učenika prvog razreda nego učenika drugog ciklusa. Više je prijavljenih učenika u odnosu na one koji redovno pohađaju nastavu, posebno u okviru drugog ciklusa obrazovanja. U pojedinim aspektima realizacije sekcija učenici su zadovoljni, ali postoji mogućnost poboljšanja u radu. Prilikom planiranja sekcijske nastave važno je predvideti sposobnost postavljanja učenika u nastavnu ulogu, razvijanje samopouzdanja učenika, ali i podsticanje vršnjačkog učenja i svih učenika da se uključe u aktivnosti.

Ključne reči: *upitnici, realizacija nastave, osnovnoškolski uzrast*