

Promoting Moral Education through Co-curricular Activities: Does School type Count?

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Abstract

Moral Education is provided by social institutions like the family, religious bodies, the mass media and the school. In the school, Moral Education can be promoted either through the teaching of subjects like the Religious and Moral Education (RME), or by the use of co-curricular activities. This paper examined the level of effectiveness of the use of co-curricular activities in promoting Moral Education among senior high school students. The cross-sectional survey research design was used. A total of 443 SHS students from Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana were purposively selected from a population of 93,897 to participate in the study. They were selected from different types of schools, categorised into mission or non-mission; single sex or mixed; boys or girls; private or public; and day or boarding. A nineteen-item close-ended questionnaire was used for the data collection. Fifteen co-curricular activities were used to measure their level of effectiveness in the promotion of Moral Education. The SPSS was used to process the data. Frequencies and percentages were used for the data analysis. The research findings revealed that the school-type counts when co-curricular activities are used to promote Moral Education. Secondly, among the co-curricular activities used, school worship and religious clubs had the highest level of effectiveness in the promotion of Moral Education. This suggests students' preference for religious morality over secular morality. The study recommends that the Ministry of Education in Ghana appoints teachers to co-ordinate co-curricular activities which are used to promote Moral Education in schools. This will help students to develop positive attitudes towards co-curricular activities.

Key words: Moral Education, Co-curricular activities, School type

Introduction

Moral Education is one of the subjects that are promoted in senior high schools in Ghana. The subject can be promoted in schools either through the teaching of certain subjects like Religious and Moral Education, or by the use of co-curricular activities. Co-curricular activities are the components of the various school activities that help to develop the total personality of the individual learner. These activities complement and supplement the school curricula. There are various types of co-curricular activities. These include sports, musical performances, drama, organization of exhibitions, school clubs, et cetera. A number of studies on co-curricular activities have been done extensively at the global level (Stevens, 1999; Darling, Caldwell & Smith, 2005; Tan & Pope, 2007; Sultana, 2012; Daniyal, Nawaz, Hassan & Mubeen, 2012; Astorini, 2016; Priya, 2016). Co-curricular activities are sometimes referred to as *extra-curricular*, *extra-mural*, *hidden curricular*, *covert curricular* and so on (Tan & Pope, 2007). Kuh, Schuh, Whitt, Andreas, Lyons, Strange, Krehbiel, & MacKay (1991) referred to these co-curricular activities as *out-of-class activities*, and classified them into seven, to reflect their moral dimensions as: cultural, social, political, communication, religious, academic, and athletic (p. 8).

In Africa, similar studies have been conducted about the use of co-curricular activities in promoting Moral Education in schools (Kisango, 2012; Kariyana, Maphosa, & Mapuranga, 2013; Wanjohi, 2016). Regrettably, not much work has been done on the use of co-curricular activities to promote Moral Education in Ghana. The works that we came across dealt with the influence of co-curricular activities on students' performance in Economics (Acquah & Partey, 2014); the role of co-curricular activities in promoting Moral Education in Senior High Schools in Sunyani Municipality (Owusu, 2016); and the change in focus from religious morality to secular morality in Ghanaian basic school curriculum (Asare-Danso, 2018). The gap that needs to be filled is how to promote secular morality through the use of co-curricular activities in schools. This was the motivation for the study.

The issue to be investigated by this study is to find out whether the effective implementation of co-curricular activities to promote Moral Education in Senior High Schools in Ghana is dependent on the type of school that is implementing it. The unit of analysis for the study was the school-type. The study attempted to find out whether there were differences in the level of effectiveness of co-curricular activities between mission and non-mission schools; public and private schools; day and boarding schools, single sex and mixed schools; girls and boys schools

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following research question and hypotheses were formulated to guide the study

Research Question

1. What is the level of effectiveness of the implementation of co-curricular activities to promote Moral Education in Senior High Schools (SHS) in Brong Ahafo Region?

Hypotheses

2. H_0 : There is no significant difference in the level of effectiveness of co-curricular activities in promoting moral education between public and private SHS
3. H_0 : There is no significant difference in the effectiveness of using co-curricular activities to promote moral education between mission and non-mission in SHS
4. H_0 : There is no significant difference in the effectiveness of using co-curricular activities to promote moral education between single sex and mixed in SHS
5. H_0 : There is no significant difference in the effectiveness of using co-curricular activities to promote moral education between only male and only female SHS
6. H_0 : There is no significant difference in the effectiveness of using co-curricular activities to promote moral education between day and boarding SHS

Literature Review

Co-curricular activities are primarily designed to augment and support the normal classroom instructional processes in the school system. Sultana (2012) posits that co-curricular activities are considered as an important part of child development. It is a new way of imparting knowledge, skills and attitudes through the child's participation in a number of activities. These activities are educational in nature, and they help in the development of the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of the learners. According to Sultana (2012), co-curricular activities provide children with varied educational experiences, which are obtained outside the classroom, and they help to ensure a balanced development of the child, and prepare the child to become a very good and useful citizen of a country. Schools are therefore selected to play the major role of promoting co-curricular activities. Regrettably, many schools are not able to use co-curricular activities to promote moral education among children. This is the case because the Ghanaian educational system stresses on curriculum activities in the classroom to the neglect of co-curricular activities. It is therefore necessary to ensure that school authorities and parents/guardians are sensitised about the importance of co-curricular activities at the school level. Co-curricular activities are defined as activities that enhance and enrich the regular curriculum during normal school days. They are also referred to as extracurricular, extra-class, non-class, school-life, and student activities (Tan & Pope, 2007). Co-curricular activities encourage learner-centred teaching and learning than the regular classes. In the organisation of co-curricular activities, learners are given a sense of autonomy, and they assume responsible positions while the teacher serves as a facilitator or a guide, rather than an instructor (Stevens, 1999).

The implementation of co-curricular activities is more liberal and informal, as compared to the normal classroom instruction. This ensures that students learn at their own pace, and also on their own. In spite of its advantages, sometimes students may cultivate bad habits and develop bad moral practices, instead of good morals when co-curricular activities are not well supervised. The upsurge in immoral behaviours in Senior High Schools (SHS's) in the country requires a more practical way of teaching Moral Education to improve the moral stance of the students. Even though there is a curriculum for the teaching of Religious and Moral Education in SHS's in Ghana, most of the schools refuse to implement the Religious and Moral Education curriculum because the subject is not externally examined by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC), which is the examining body. It therefore provides a justification for the encouragement of the implementation of co-curricular activities for the promotion of Moral Education in the Senior High Schools. According to Daniyal, Nawaz, Hassan, and Mubeen (2012), co-curricular activities help to a large extent in the development in the academic, social, mental, and character of students. They therefore recommended that every student should be provided with the opportunity to take part in at least one healthy and positive activity (Daniyal et al, 2012). This implies that one potent avenue for the promotion of Moral Education is the implementation of co-curricular activities in Senior High Schools (Owusu, 2016). The research question in this study attempts to unearth the level of effectiveness of promoting Moral Education through the use of co-curricular activities in selected Senior High Schools in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana. It is thus worthwhile to look at what effectiveness means and some criteria for measuring effectiveness of a programme. This section of the study talks about these issues. Effectiveness refers to effects of a program or policy under more real-world conditions (Flay, 1986; Greenberg, 2004). When the school organises a programme or sets a policy to be implemented, it is expected that by the end of the programme the students or any other participant will be impacted positively. Participant will be in the best position to tell whether they have really benefited or not. Sadler (1996), also added that effectiveness means "how well something works or whether it works as intended and meets the purposes for which it is designed" (p. 37).

This is clearly talking about the fidelity of the implementation of the programme that is being studied. In fact, most of the stakeholders in the school system have in mind and sometimes on paper the aims and objectives of implementing the curriculum. These objectives are sometimes achieved whereas in other cases, they are not achieved. This study will look at the extent to which the purpose for which co-curricular activities are instituted and implemented are achieved with respect to the promotion of Moral Education. Young and Levy (1999), see "effectiveness" as the "contribution that institutions make to solve the problems that motivate actors to invest the time and energy needed to create them"(p. 3). Now, the question one may pose is, "Are co-curricular activities worthy of investing time, money and other resources in?" This is not a matter of the efficiency of the programme but just to find out how worthwhile it is to spend the already inadequate school resources on these co-curricular activities. According to Baker and McLelland (2003), with respect to effectiveness components, when considering policy implementation, it should be based on the policy application (practice), the meeting of objectives (performance), the proficiency with which the objectives are met, and the achievement of goals (purpose). Effectiveness studies focus on important factors such as the quality of implementation, which will affect programme outcomes when delivered under naturalistic conditions. Furthermore, issues regarding programme fidelity and adaptation as programmes are "taken to scale" may contribute further variation in the expected outcomes (Elliott & Mihalic, 2004; Flay, 1986). Effectiveness trials test whether programmes or policies are effective under "real-world" conditions or in "natural" settings. Effectiveness trials may also establish for whom, and under what conditions of delivery, the programme or policy is effective (Flay, 1986). Effectiveness trials are heavily dependent on the relationship between the host environment and the research team, such that the measurement must be harmonious with the mission and vision of the host institution (Flay, Biglan, Boruch, Castro, Gottfredson, Kellam, & Ji, 2005). This means that ethical issues concerning the conduct of research must be discussed and considered strictly in order not to violate the mission and visions of the Senior High Schools in which the research work is going to be carried out. Failure to comply with the ethics of the research is likely to pose danger to the participants and this may force them to give wrong information or decide not to participate in the study at all.

Methodology

Research Design

The quantitative research paradigm was used because the study required the testing of hypotheses. Descriptive survey research design was used for the study. Descriptive survey has a number of advantages. It enables researchers to observe, describe and document an aspect of a situation as it naturally occurs (Amedahe, 2002).

Descriptive survey also specifies the nature of a given phenomenon, and gives a picture of a situation or a population (Osuala, 1993). This is to say that it reports the way things are on the ground. Consequently, it involves collecting data in order to test hypothesis or answer research questions that concern the current state of the problem under study. Considering the purpose of the study, which is to assess the differences that exist in the level of effectiveness of promoting Moral Education through the implementation of co-curricular activities in SHS in the Brong Ahafo Region, cross sectional survey design was most appropriate for the conduct of the study. The Brong Ahafo region of Ghana was considered as the study area because the region had a number of senior high schools that could be used for the study. Besides, the researchers were familiar with the study area, and as a result, they had good relations with the respondents.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The population for the study comprised all the 62 SHSs in the Brong Ahafo region of Ghana, made up of 4 private and 58 public schools. The schools had a total population of 93,897, comprising 83,869 from public schools and 10,028 private schools. In determining the sample size for our study, the table for determining sample size from a given population that has been suggested by Krejcie & Morgan (as cited in Sarantakos, 1997, p. 163) was used. A total of 443 SHS students were selected to participate in the study. The sample covered different types of schools, as presented in Appendix A. The schools were categorised into mission and non-mission; single sex and mixed; boys and girls; private and public; and day and boarding. The samples were selected through the use of simple random sampling. The frequencies and percentages of the students who represented the various types of school could be found in appendix A.

Research Instrument

All research studies involve data collection (Gay, 1990). For the purpose of this study, a nineteen-item close-ended questionnaire was designed and used for the data collection. The items were divided into two, namely items that dealt with the types of schools and items that tested the level of effectiveness of promoting Moral Education through the implementation of co-curricular activities.

Data Analysis

The types of statistics used in the analysis of the data were the descriptive and inferential statistics. To be specific, the data were analysed through the computation of frequencies, percentages, mean of means, standard deviation and independent sample t-test distributions. This was done with the use of the version 22 of IBM, SPSS Statistic computer software.

Results and Discussion

The study was to establish the level of effectiveness of the use of co-curricular activities in promoting Moral Education in senior high school students in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana. This was based on the assumption that there can be differences in the level of effectiveness of co-curricular activities between mission and non-mission schools, public and private schools, day and boarding schools, single sex and mixed schools, girls and boys schools in the SHS in Brong Ahafo Region. The results of the study were presented in tables below. In all, 443 SHS students from Brong Ahafo Region participated in the study. Descriptive statistics namely means and standard deviations were used for the analysis to aid comprehensive and holistic discussion of the results. Also independent samples t-test was employed to test the entire hypotheses. The only research question in the study attempted to find out the level of effectiveness of co-curricular activities in promoting Moral Education. Fifteen notable co-curricular activities that were implemented in SHS's in the Brong Ahafo Region were examined. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of the views of students on the level of effectiveness of using co-curricular activities in promoting Moral Education.

The Level of Effectiveness of the Implementation of Co-curricular in SHS to Promote Moral Education**Table 1- Descriptive Statistics on Level of Effectiveness of Co-curricular Activities**

Types of Co-curricular Activities	Mean	Std. Deviation
School Worship	4.23	1.14
Religious Clubs eg. SU, Young Christian Association	4.07	1.22
Debate Clubs	3.92	1.15
Quiz Competitions	3.86	1.15
Entertainment	3.74	1.21
Science Clubs	3.60	1.31
Cadet Corps	3.57	1.17
Sporting Competition	3.45	1.03
Musical Programmes	3.02	1.26
Civic Education Clubs	2.95	1.31
Drama Troupe	2.95	1.29
Special day celebrations eg. Speech and prize- giving days	2.86	1.27
Dancing Group	2.81	1.22
Cultural Programmes	2.71	1.15
Durbars	2.68	1.29

Scale: 1=Uncertain, 2=not effective, 3=Less Effective, 4 =Effective, 5=Very effective

Mean of means= 3.36 Average Standard deviation=1.21

Sadler (1996) posited that effectiveness means “how well something works or whether it works as intended and meets the purposes for which it is designed” (p. 37). The first research question attempted to look at the views of students on the level of effectiveness of some selected co-curricular activities in their schools. From Table 1, it can be seen that the level of effectiveness of the implementation of co-curricular activities to promote moral education was generally less effective. Most of the co-curricular activities were less effective because a mean of mean of 3.36 were attained for all the co-curricular activities in Table 1. The mean of mean falls into the scale 3 when run into the nearest whole number.

It can be seen that Seven (7) co-curricular activities namely School worship, Religious Clubs eg. Scripture Union, Young Christian Association, Debate clubs, Quiz competitions, Entertainment, Science clubs and Cadet corps were effective in promoting Moral Education in the senior high schools in the Brong Ahafo region of Ghana. A mean range of 3.57 to 4.23 were obtained. The means fall into the scale 4 (effective). The co-curricular activities that achieved the highest mean was School worship (4.23) and the second highest was Religious clubs (4.07). This implied that co-curricular activities which are religious in nature were most effective in the use of co-curricular activities for the promotion of Moral Education in SHS in Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana.

The implementation of Sporting competitions, Musical programmes, Civic education clubs, Drama troupe, Special day celebration, Dancing group, cultural programmes and Durbars were also less effective since their means fell within the scale of 3 (Less effective). The means of the eight items ranged from 2.68 to 3.45. Durbar as a co-curricular activity was the less effectively implemented among all the co-curricular activities. Sporting competition achieved the lowest standard deviation of 1.03 meaning that the view on it was the most unanimous among the items. This is because the standard deviation falls far below the average standard deviation of 1.21. The implementation of Civic Education Clubs also achieved a higher standard deviation of 1.31 indicating that the views of the Students on this item varied.

Five hypotheses were formulated and tested in the study. Tables 2 to 6 present the inferential statistics on the five hypotheses.

Ho: There is no significant difference in the effectiveness of using co-curricular activities to promote moral education between mission and non-mission SHS.

Table 2- Independent Samples Test for Mission and non-mission schools

Type of school	M	SD	t	Df	Sig
Mission	50.07	10.92			
Non-mission	50.99	10.42	-.869	441	.385

A mean of 50.07 (SD = 10.92) indicates that the level of effectiveness of using co-curricular activities to promote moral education appeared to be lower in the Mission schools, as compared to the Non-mission (M = 50.99, SD = 10.42). The independent samples t-test was used to establish the level of significance of the difference in the mean values between the two types of schools. A Levene's Test of equality of variances indicated that ($F = .355$, sig. > 0.05), therefore equal variances are assumed. The test shows that there is no significant difference in the effectiveness of using co-curricular activities to promote moral education between Mission and Non-mission schools in SHS ($t = -.869$, $df = 441$, sig > 0.05). Therefore, we accept the null hypothesis. Even though the level of effectiveness of using co-curricular activities to promote Moral Education in mission SHS seemed to be lower than non-mission schools, there was no significant difference between them statistically. This analysis suggested that the level of effectiveness was not dependent on whether the SHS was a Mission or a Non-Mission school.

Ho: There is no significant difference in the effectiveness of using co-curricular activities to promote moral education between single sex and mixed (or co-educational) SHS's or institutions.

Table 3- Independent Samples Test for Single and Mixed schools

Type of school	M	SD	t	Df	Sig
Single sex	53.08	10.98			
Mixed	49.18	10.41	3.594	441	.000

A mean of 53.08 (SD = 10.98) shows that the level of effectiveness of using co-curricular activities to promote moral education appear to be higher in single sex schools as compared to Mixed (M = 49.18, SD = 10.41). The independent samples t-test was used to establish the level of significance of the difference in the mean values between the two types of schools. A Levene's Test of equality of variances shows that ($F = .162$, sig. > 0.05), therefore equal variances are assumed.

The test shows that there is statistically significant difference in the effectiveness of using co-curricular activities to promote moral education between single sex and mixed SHS ($t = 3.594$, $df = 441$, two-tailed probability > 0.05). We therefore reject the null hypothesis.

Ho: There is no significant difference in the effectiveness of using co-curricular activities to promote moral education between only male and only female SHS

Table 4- Independent Samples Test for Boys and Girls schools

Type of school	M	SD	t	Df	Sig
Boys School	52.37	11.56			
Girls School	54.02	10.17	-.877	137	.382

From Table 4, the Levene's Test for Equality of variances was used to determine whether the difference in the level of effectiveness of using co-curricular activities to promote moral education between Boys and Girls school was significant. The test indicated that the variances for the two groups were equal ($F = .362$, $p > .05$), and therefore a test for equal variances was used. The mean of male schools in Brong Ahafo Region (M = 52.37, SD = 11.56) is not significantly higher ($t = -.877$, $df = 137$, two-tailed probability > .05) than that of all female schools (M = 54.02, SD = 10.17). We therefore accept the null hypothesis.

Ho: There is no significant difference in the level of effectiveness of co-curricular activities in promoting moral education between public and private SHS.

Table 5- Independent Samples Test for Public and Private schools

Type of school	M	SD	t	Df	Sig
Public	49.82	10.82			
Private	50.59	10.72	-.639	441	.523

From Table 5, a mean of 49.82 (SD = 10.82) indicates that the level of effectiveness of using co-curricular activities to promote moral education appear to be lower in public schools as compared to private schools (M = 50.59, SD = 10.72). The independent samples t-test was used to establish the level of significance of the difference in the mean values between the two types of schools. A Levene's Test of equality of variances indicated that ($F = .833$, sig. > 0.05), therefore equal variances are assumed. The test shows that there is no significant difference in the effectiveness of using co-curricular activities to promote moral education between public and private in SHS ($t = -.639$, $df = 441$, sig > 0.05). We therefore accept the null hypothesis.

Ho: There is no significant difference in the level of effectiveness of using co-curricular activities to promote moral education between day and boarding SHS.

Table 6- Independent Samples Test for Day and Boarding Schools

Type of school	M	SD	T	Df	Sig
Day	49.78	10.91			
Boarding	51.75	10.25	-1.798	441	.073

From Table 6, the Levene's Test for Equality of variances was used to determine whether the difference in the level of effectiveness of using co-curricular activities to promote moral education between Day and Boarding school was significant. The test indicated that the variances for the two groups were equal ($F = .595$, $p > .05$), and therefore a test for equal variances was used. The mean of Day schools in Brong Ahafo Region (M = 49.78, SD = 10.91) is not significantly higher ($t = -.877$, $df = 137$, two-tailed probability $> .05$) than that of Boarding schools (M = 51.75, SD = 10.25). Thus the null hypothesis is accepted.

Conclusions

The level of effectiveness of implementing co-curricular activities to promote Moral Education in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana is dependent on the type of co-curricular activities that one engages in. The findings of the research have revealed that whiles religiously-inclined co-curricular activities were effective, the non-religious activities were less effective. School worship and religious clubs were the most effectively organized co-curricular in SHS in Brong Ahafo Region. Regrettably, school worship and religious clubs were the only two out of the fifteen co-curricular activities selected from the school for the study that were religious in nature, and they all proved to be effective.

The level of effectiveness of promotion of Moral Education through the implementation of co-curricular in SHS's in Brong Ahafo Region varies according to the school types. Whilst there are significant differences in some types of schools, others have no differences statistically. We therefore conclude from the results of our study that school-type as mission, non-mission, day, boarding, public, private, only male and only female does not really count when one is dealing with co-curricular activities. There were slight differences in the means for the various types of schools. The only school-type that counts when dealing with the level of effectiveness of promoting Moral Education through the implementation of co-curricular activities is whether the school is a mixed or a single sex school. Single sex schools are fertile grounds for the promotion of Moral Education through the implementation of co-curricular activities than mixed schools.

Recommendations

The findings of the study revealed that students' had preference for religious morality over secular morality. It is therefore recommended that the Ministry of Education in Ghana formulates an educational policy that will mandate all categories of schools in Ghana to promote secular morality. This could be done by appointing teachers to co-ordinate co-curricular activities in schools. When this is well organised, it will help students to develop positive attitudes towards co-curricular activities, which are predominantly secular in nature.

The research findings also revealed that the level of effectiveness of promoting moral education through the implementation of co-curricular activities appeared to be lower in Mission schools than in Non-Mission schools. The study therefore recommends that Mission Schools should be encouraged by all stakeholders in Education to promote secular morality through the use of co-curricular activities, since Ghana is a pluralistic nation.

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APPENDIX A

Table 1-Percentages and Frequencies of Students in Various School Types

School Type	No.	%
Mission	283	63.9
Non-mission	160	36.1
Single sex	139	31.4
Mixed	304	68.6
Boys school	79	17.8
Girls school	60	13.5
Private	105	23.7
Public	338	76.3
Day	303	68
Boarding	140	31.6