The Effect of Extracurricular Activities on Soft Skill Development of Vocational School Students in Jakarta

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Abstract. This study aims to examine the effect of extracurricular activities on the development of soft skills among vocational school students in Jakarta. Amid increasing demands for non-technical skills in the workplace such as communication, teamwork, leadership, and adaptability extracurricular activities offer a potential avenue for character and competence development. Using a quantitative descriptive approach, data were collected through questionnaires distributed to 61 students from a vocational high school who actively participated in various extracurricular programs. The instrument passed both validity and reliability testing, with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.893, indicating high internal consistency. Results showed a strong tendency among students to agree that their involvement in extracurricular activities contributed positively to their soft skill improvement. The most developed aspects included communication, cooperation, initiative, and responsibility. These findings underscore the strategic role of well-managed extracurricular programs in supporting students' holistic development and provide insights for educators and policy makers to enhance extracurricular implementation in vocational schools.

Keywords: extracurricular activities, soft skills, vocational students, student development, Jakarta.

Introduction

In the last decade, the world of work has undergone a significant transformation due to technological developments, globalisation, and changing industry dynamics. These changes demand a workforce that not only has technical skills (hard skills) but also non-technical skills (soft skills) such as effective communication, teamwork, leadership, and adaptability. In Indonesia, especially in Jakarta as an economic and educational centre, the need for SMK graduates who are competent in soft skills is increasing.

However, various studies show that the development of soft skills in the SMK environment is still not optimal. For example, research at SMKN 59 Jakarta revealed that students' interest in extracurricular activities, which is one of the means of developing soft skills, is low. Factors such as lack of facilities, support from families, and the role of trainers are the main causes of low student participation in these activities (Ardiyansyah et al., 2023).

On the other hand, research at SMK Plus Munirul Arifin showed that extracurricular activities can effectively improve students' soft skills. Through participation in various activities, students learn to develop initiative, work ethics, critical thinking ability, and interpersonal skills (Said et al., 2024)This suggests that with proper management, extracurricular activities can be an effective tool in soft skills development.

In addition, the school culture approach also plays an important role in soft skills development. Habituation

of values such as religiosity, discipline, and responsibility through daily activities at school can strengthen students' character and soft skills (Nurlaili Wathoni, 2021).

However, challenges have arisen during the COVID-19 pandemic, where extracurricular activities have stopped or switched to a brave format. This resulted in limited student social interactions and opportunities to develop soft skills directly.

Nevertheless, some schools have attempted to integrate soft skills development into courageous learning, although its effectiveness still needs to be further evaluated (Iman & Aidatul Azpah, 2022).

Against this background, it is important to further investigate how extracurricular activities can contribute to the development of soft skills of vocational students in Jakarta. This study aims to identify the relationship between participation in extracurricular activities and soft skills improvement, as well as the factors that influence the effectiveness of these activities. The results of this study are expected to provide recommendations for schools, teachers, and policy makers in designing effective extracurricular programmes for students' soft skills development.

Methods

1. Time and Place of Research

This research was conducted from February to May 2025. The stages of research implementation started from the preparation of research instruments, preliminary surveys, main data collection, to data analysis and writing the final report. The whole process was carried out gradually and systematically so that the research results could describe the actual conditions in the field.

The place of research implementation focused on several Vocational High Schools (SMK) located in the Special Capital Region of Jakarta, including public and private SMK spread across various city administrative areas. The selection of locations was carried out purposively, namely by considering several criteria, including: the existence and diversity of active extracurricular activities, the openness of the school to research activities, as well as the availability of data and the accessibility of researchers to school locations.

In its implementation, the researcher made a direct approach to the school to obtain permission to collect data, either through interviews with extracurricular coach teachers, distributing questionnaires to students, or direct observation of activities related to student participation in extracurricular activities. This was done in order to obtain data that was valid and relevant to the research objectives.

2. Research Design

This research uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. The qualitative approach was chosen because it is able to describe in depth a social phenomenon based on the experiences, views, and understandings of the participants involved. Qualitative research allows researchers to obtain data naturally and contextually, so it is very appropriate to explore complex and dynamic social realities.

The qualitative descriptive method aims to describe and explain the phenomenon under study systematically and factually, without any manipulation of the variables involved. In this case, researchers try to understand and describe in detail how a phenomenon occurs based on data from the field.

Data collection was carried out through several techniques, including:

1. Participatory Observation, namely by directly observing the situation or activity that is the focus of the research.
2. In-Depth Interview, by involving relevant informants, such as students, teachers, or other related parties.
3. Documentation Study, by collecting and reviewing supporting documents relevant to the research

topic.3

3. Population of the Sample

The population in this study is all vocational students who actively participate in extracurricular activities at SMK Negeri Jakarta in the 2024/2025 academic year. This study focuses on students in grades XI and XII who have participated in extracurricular activities for at least one semester, because they are considered to have sufficient experience to reflect on the impact of these development activities on soft skills.

The characteristics of the selected sample were students who:

- Actively participated in one or more extracurricular activities (student council organisation, Scout, PMR, Paskibra, art club, etc.).
- Have an active role in the activity (e.g. as an active member, administrator, or chairperson).
- Willing to be a participant in the research (through interviews or group discussions).

The unit of analysis in this study is individual SMK students as subjects who have experience in extracurricular activities.

The number of samples in this research is not determined from the beginning, because it uses a qualitative approach. The sample will be determined gradually through a snowball sampling technique, namely by asking for recommendations from the initial participants to identify other informants who are relevant and fulfil the research criteria. This technique was chosen because it is considered effective to explore students who have in-depth experiences and insights into soft skills development through extracurricular participation.

4. Instrument Development

In this study, the instrument used was a questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale, which aims to measure the extent of students' participation in extracurricular activities as well as their level of soft skills development. Before compiling the item statements, the researcher first determined the operational definitions of each research variable as follows:

Sample Research Questionnaire

Measurement Scale

The instrument was structured using a five-point Likert Scale with the following ranges:

- 1 = Strongly Disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Neutral
- 4 = Agree
- 5 = Strongly Agree

Instrument Distribution

The questionnaire will be distributed boldly using Google Form to facilitate distribution to students, while saving time and costs. The link to the questionnaire will be distributed through the respective class or extracurricular groups.

5. Data Collection Techniques

In this study, the data collection techniques used were questionnaires, surveys and data processing.

1. Questionnaire
   Researchers distributed questionnaires to students who participated in extracurricular activities. This questionnaire contains statements that must be filled in by students, usually by choosing answers such as ‘strongly agree’ to ‘strongly disagree’. The aim was to find out students' opinions about extracurricular activities and their influence on their abilities (soft skills).
2. Surveillance
   Surveillance is conducted by distributing messages directly to respondents, either online or in person at schools. This made it easier for researchers to collect data from many students in a short period of time.
3. Data Processing
   Once the numbers are collected, all the answers are calculated and explained with the help of calculation

tools such as Microsoft Excel or other statistical applications. From here, researchers can see how many students agree, disagree, and so on, and draw conclusions from the data.

6. Data Analysis Techniques

Data processing in this study was carried out after all questionnaires from the survey distributed to respondents were collected. The data obtained in the form of the results of the answer choices from the Likert scale questionnaire, then processed quantitatively using the following steps:

1. Questionnaire Checking (Editing)
   The first step is to re-examine the questionnaire that has been filled in by the respondent to ensure the completeness and clarity of the answers. Questionnaires that are incomplete or not according to the instructions will be excluded from the data processing process.
2. Coding
   After the questionnaire is checked, each answer choice is given a number code according to the Likert scale as follows:
   - Strongly Disagree (STS) = 1
   - Disagree (TS) = 2
   - Neutral (N) = 3
   - Agree (S) = 4
   - Strongly Agree (SS) = 5
3. Data Entry (Entry)
   Data that has been coded is then entered into a worksheet using Microsoft Excel. Each respondent was entered as a row of data, while each questionnaire statement item was entered as a column.
4. Data Tabulation
   After data entry, tabulation was carried out to count the number of respondents for each answer choice. The data obtained is arranged in the form of frequency tables and percentages to make it easier to analyse.
5. Calculation of Descriptive Statistics
   The tabulated data was then analysed by calculating the total and average scores of each indicator. This analysis aims to determine the tendency of respondents' answers to each statement. In addition, calculations such as maximum, minimum, and standard deviation values are also carried out.
6. Data Presentation
   The results of data processing are presented in the form of tables and graphs accompanied by narrative explanations. This aims to provide a clear picture of the research results and facilitate conclusions.

Result and Discussion

Data Description

Respondents in this study totalled 60 students from one of the Vocational High Schools (SMK). The characteristics of the respondents collected include gender, age, and class. Based on gender, the respondents consisted of male and female students, whose numbers and percentages will be presented in tabular form after the data is collected. For the age category, the respondents are in the age range of 14 years to more than 20 years, which includes three categories, namely 14-16 years, 17-19 years, and ≥ 20 years. Meanwhile, based on grade level, respondents came from grades X, XI, and XII.

Research Instrument Test

1. Validity Test

The validity test was conducted to determine the extent to which the statement items in the questionnaire were able to measure what should be measured. This study employed Pearson Product Moment

correlation analysis using SPSS software version 22 to test the validity of the research instrument (Sugiyono, 2016; Hidayat & Lestari, 2020).

The number of respondents involved in this study was 61 students. According to the instrument criteria, a statement item is considered valid if the Pearson correlation coefficient (r-count) is greater than 0.30 and the significance value (Sig.) is less than 0.05 (Nursalam, 2020; Hidayat & Lestari, 2020).

The following are the results of the validity test of the research instrument:

Tabel 1: Validity Test Results

No	Enquiry	r-hitung (Pearson)	Sig. (2-tailed)	Keterangan
1	X1	1.000	0.000	Valid
2	X2	0.722	0.000	Valid
3	X3	0.571	0.000	Valid
4	X4	0.574	0.000	Valid
5	X5	0.410	0.001	Valid
6	Y1	0.502	0.000	Valid
7	Y2	0.539	0.000	Valid
8	Y3	0.427	0.001	Valid
9	Y4	0.491	0.000	Valid
10	Y3	0.639	0.000	Valid

Based on the validity test results shown in Table 1, it is evident that all statement items have an r-count value greater than 0.30 and a significance value (Sig.) less than 0.05. This confirms that each statement item in the questionnaire instrument used in this study is valid (Hidayat & Lestari, 2020; Sugiyono, 2016).

Thus, all questionnaire statements are deemed appropriate for measuring the variables of extracurricular activities and students' self-development.

2. Reliability Test

Tabel 2: Reliability Test Result

No	Description	Value
1	Cronbach's Alpha	0,893
2	Number of Statement Items	10

The reliability test was conducted to determine the extent to which the research instrument provides consistent

results when used under the same conditions repeatedly. In this study, the Cronbach's Alpha technique was employed using the SPSS software to assess the internal consistency of the instrument (Sugiyono, 2016). Based on the results shown in Table 2, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient obtained was 0.893 with a total of 10 statement items.

According to Sugiyono (2016), the interpretation of Cronbach's Alpha values is as follows:

- ≥ 0.60 = Reliable
- ≥ 0.70 = Quite reliable
- ≥ 0.80 = Good
- ≥ 0.90 = Very good

With a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.893, the research instrument falls under the "good" category. Therefore, it can be concluded that the instrument used in this study is highly reliable and appropriate for use as a data collection tool (Hidayat & Lestari, 2020).

3. Statistical Description

Tabel 3: Statistical Description Result

No	Enquery	N	Min	Maks	Mean	Std. Dev
1	X1	61	1	5	4.28	0.819
2	X2	61	1	5	4.34	0.793
3	X3	61	1	5	4.41	0.824
4	X4	61	1	5	4.26	0.722
5	X5	61	1	5	4.18	1.198
6	Y1	61	1	5	4.39	0.766
7	Y2	61	1	5	4.20	0.842
8	Y3	61	1	5	4.16	0.916
9	Y4	61	1	5	4.18	0.827
10	Y5	61	1	5	4.48	0.698

Based on the results of descriptive statistical analysis of 10 statements related to student participation in extracurricular activities, it was found that the mean scores were relatively high, ranging from 4.16 to 4.48. These values suggest that respondents generally agreed or strongly agreed with the positive statements about extracurricular involvement.
Some important findings include:

- The highest mean score was recorded on the statement: *"My experience in extracurricular activities is beneficial for life outside of school"* (Mean = 4.48, SD = 0.698). This indicates that students perceive their participation in extracurricular activities as providing meaningful and lasting benefits beyond the school environment.
- The lowest mean score was found in the statement: *"I find it easier to socialise with friends after taking part in extracurricular activities"* (Mean = 4.16, SD = 0.916). Although students generally agreed with this statement, the relatively lower mean and higher standard deviation suggest some variation in perceived social impact among students.
- The highest standard deviation appeared in the statement: *"I have participated in more than one type of extracurricular activity"* (SD = 1.198), indicating considerable diversity in students' levels of involvement across different extracurricular programs.

These findings are in line with prior research that highlights the role of extracurricular activities in enhancing students' personal, social, and academic development (Cortellazzo et al., 2021; Uzun & Bolat, 2023).

4. Person Correlation Test

Tabel 4: Person Correlation Test Result

Variabel	X	y
X1	1	.539**
Y1	.539**	1

= 61
Description:
r = .539, Sig. (2-tailed) = .000
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Based on the results shown in the table above, a Pearson correlation coefficient (r) of 0.539 was found between the statement *"I actively participate in extracurricular activities at school"* and *"Extracurricular activities help me understand the importance of teamwork."* The significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) is 0.000, which is below the 0.01 threshold. This indicates that the relationship between the two variables is statistically significant at the 1% level.

The correlation value of r = 0.539 suggests a moderate positive relationship between students' active participation in extracurricular activities and their understanding of the importance of teamwork. In practical terms, the more students are involved in extracurricular activities, the more likely they are to recognize and appreciate collaborative values such as teamwork.

This finding supports existing literature stating that participation in structured group activities outside of the classroom—such as sports, clubs, or student organizations—plays a key role in enhancing soft skills, particularly in team collaboration, communication, and social responsibility (Mahoney et al., 2005; Larson, 2011; Cortellazzo et al., 2021).

Conclusion

Based on the results of research conducted on 61 students regarding the influence of extracurricular activities on self-development, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The research instrument was declared valid and reliable. All statement items in the questionnaire show a significant correlation value to the total score (Sig. <0.05) and have a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.893, which means that the instrument has very good internal consistency.
2. The results of descriptive statistics show that most students gave positive responses to extracurricular activities. The average response scores ranged from 3.56 to 4.51, which means that most students agreed to strongly agreed that extracurricular activities had a positive impact on self-development, especially in terms of communication and leadership.
3. The results of the Pearson correlation test show that there is a moderate, positive, and significant relationship between actively participating in extracurricular activities (variable X) and students' understanding of the importance of Soft Skills in the world of work (variable Y), with a value of r = 0.539 and Sig. = 0,000. This indicates that the more active students are in extracurricular activities, the higher their understanding of teamwork.

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