

Recreational activity leading to academic interest: A qualitative-narrative study

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Abstract

The effect of pandemic goes beyond inadequacy of acquisition of competency especially in modular distance learning, to non-attendance to school and non-enrolment in school. With the release of DepEd Order No. 34 series of 2022, the start of 5-day classes in all public schools nationwide has become a way of inviting learners who failed to enroll last school year because of non-readiness for distance learning become heightened. With this return of face-to-face interaction, recreation activity for kids last vacation before the start of school year 2022-2023 has become one way of increasing learners' interest in social interaction. Lumban Central Elementary School took the opportunity to encourage the participation of intermediate learners, especially those who were out-of-school last year, in a badminton training organized by Lumban Badminton Club. This study focused on narrating the journey of the learners who joined a specific type of recreational activity (badminton training) and their interest in coming back to school. The reason for the establishment of the sports club was detailed in this paper, the three-week program provided to them from orientation to graduation, and the impact of the recreation activity to the learners as evidenced by their enrolment this school year and their continuing study at present. This qualitative, narrative research highlights the importance of recreational activities like sports in heightening the desire of children to socialize, and that includes participation in academic activities which will boost their confidence to achieve something in life. A program of instituting recreational activity for learners with their family was laid down in this study, as the school can implement family day in school compound or in the community this school year or in the coming years as the pandemic totally subsides. Day-to-day teaching episodes is also suggested as continuous improvement project. Recommendation to teachers, school heads, parents and community, high officials and future researchers were laid down at the end of the study.

Keywords: recreation, learners, education, academic, school, family, community

1. Introduction and Rationale

Nowadays, students have lost interest in academic activities and have become apathetic towards their studies. In other words, there is a low level of commitment to schoolwork and a lack of interest in learning new things. Students these days no longer have any motivation to learn and aren't really interested in academics. Their enthusiasm for schooling has been dwindling as new technologies, including social networking apps, have taken their attention away. This trend has been observed in many countries around the world, and it seems that it has been increasing over time.

Considering this, the researcher has concluded that encouraging pupils to participate in sports and other recreational activities will pique their interest in academics. Recreational activities are an effective way

to encourage students to engage in their studies. These include more than just sports; they can include dance, music, the arts, and many more. Many students are very interested in learning a new skill, which makes it more likely that they will remember what they have learned. Recreational activities give students a new way to express themselves, which results in better self-esteem. When they are more confident, they feel free to try new things that they might not have tried before and enjoy them.

The best way to make studying more enjoyable is to engage in fun activities. Students are more likely to look forward to studying when they are doing something they enjoy. With that being said, participating in recreational activities arouses students' interest in studying for many reasons. Recreational activities like sports are a common activity in many schools. It is a great way to stay active and meet new people. Engaging in such activities can help students get exercise, and when they are physically active, they are also mentally and emotionally active. Additionally, this can help students make friends and spend time with them as well. Because sometimes it is a competitive activity, students will push themselves to practice hard and get better at this, which can also translate to studying.

Attention span is a major issue for students and teachers alike. Students who struggle to concentrate in class often resort to sleeping during the day or staying up late at night. This can lead to poor grades and a lack of motivation, which in turn can lead to more sleepiness. Sports are a great way to help students increase their attention span and stay focused on their goals and objectives. Sports have been shown to improve focus, concentration, and memory retention in adults. They also help build character by requiring players to focus on both their physical and mental skills. The students who have the most success is those who can keep their minds on task and focus their attention. For this to happen, they need a fun activity that will help them stay focused. Students can engage in sports like badminton or basketball, which are known for being able to reduce stress and improve concentration levels.

The implementation of recreational activities in the educational curriculum not only improves the development of the learners, but also the teachers. This is because it enhances the development of the whole individual as it supplements the academic curriculum. It relieves the student of stress and other unhealthy emotions, thus improving their performance. It also stimulates their minds and bodies, which creates better learners and contributes to the eradication of learning barriers.

2. Literature Review

Several studies have already established the effect of recreation activity to different factors related to learners and learners' performance. An exploration by Bayazit (2014) included 20 girls in adolescence period. Recreational activities program included bowling, patenga, orienteering, basketball, volleyball, badminton, ping-pong, dance, fun athletics. This program lasted for 90 min a day, 2 days a week for 10 weeks. It was found out that there is a significant difference between self-esteem pretest and self-esteem posttest scores. The self-esteem of the learners increased as a result of the recreational activities introduced to the adolescents.

Hermassi, et. al. (2021) entitled "Physical Fitness and Academic Performance in Normal Weight, Overweight, and Obese Schoolchild Handball Players in Qatar: A Pilot Study". The relationship between cardiorespiratory fitness and academic success has been the primary focus of this research, concluding higher cardiorespiratory fitness is associated with superior academic achievement in children.

In an article written by Devi (n.d.), she summarized the impact of recreational activities in the educational curriculum. Recreational activities...

"help in overall development of a student's physically, mentally, and emotionally. It not only helps to gather knowledge but to use it ethically to lead a healthy and better life. It teaches one to think with reason and live with a more practical approach to life. It also enhances ones all round development, thus helping to achieve success in one's endeavour."

A study by Aksoy and Arslan (2019) to determine the effect of recreational activity on leisure barriers to students. The study was conducted on a total of 497 students, 248 men participating in recreational sports activities and 249 men who did not participate in any recreational activities. As a result, statistically significant differences were found between the students participating in sportive recreation activity in the field and those who did not participate in any recreational activity in terms of leisure time barriers in terms of Individual Psychology, Social Environment, Service and Transportation, Time, Lack of Friends and Lack of Interest.

Not only that recreational activity aids learners in having increased level in some psychological factors, it also help academic staff in their personal well-being. This is true in the study conducted by Peter–Ajayi, et. al. (2021). The findings of the study revealed that recreational activities have influence on well-being of academic staff, on their cardiovascular health, and on alleviation of their stress. The researchers recommended that higher institutions of learning should encourage academic staff to participate in recreational activities so as to bring about healthy living and well-being.

The good effect to performance of learners can be said to depend on the type of recreational or leisure activity where the students are involved. This can be observed in the study made by Corpuz, et. al. (n.d.). Their study, which involved 287 midshipmen, utilized the descriptive-correlation research design. The respondents' degree of involvement in playing computer games and billiards, though low, may pull down their academic performance. The less the respondents are involved in computer games and billiards, the better their academic performance can be.

Even for medical students, recreational activities have a way of boosting their performance. This is reflected in the study made by Slade and Kies (2015). In their study, students who make large decreases in their recreation use are likely to decrease their exam scores, rather than increase them. Students who make decreases in their recreation, on average, are likely to decrease their exam scores. These findings suggest that medical students may be able to boost their achievement through wellness interventions, even if they are struggling with exams.

For learning competencies in Science, recreational activities play an important role. Quantitative and qualitative method were employed by Sawangmek (2019). The results of this research indicate that the participants' science learning motivation and attitude toward participating with the recreational activities after participating in the program of recreational activities were highest level. This suggests that the designed recreational activities cloud be as extracurricular science-related activities for students have not only satisfaction in the recreational activities but also promotion of science learning motivation.

Not only physical is under recreational activity. Psychosocial activities have also its way of assisting learning uplift their academic performance. That is why, UNRWA Department of Education (n.d.) published or issued "Psychosocial Support Recreational Activities Resource Guide" with various psychosocial recreational activities for learners. Protracted conflict and displacement across UNRWA's five Fields of operation means that many Palestine refugee children and youth are living under difficult conditions, which affects all areas of their life. To address the educational needs of Palestine refugees during emergencies and build upon the strength of the UNRWA education system, UNRWA has developed a holistic and innovative program through recreational activities.

A qualitative study authored by Amerijckx and Humblet (2015) revealed benefits of children's recreational activities. Individual and contextual factors do appear to produce various perspectives and practices among families concerning the use of recreational services for their children. Parks and playgrounds on the other hand are used by all families. Nevertheless, the Amerijckx and Humblet ICEP (2015) 9:11 Page 15 of 17 potentially socially driven nature of the use of such services begs for more research. The acknowledgment of a diversity of perspectives on the added value of recreational activities, as elective

activities, to children's wellbeing leads to the recognition of a diversity of practices and of needs.

An article published by Spotivity (n.d.) claims that "recreational activities have a considerate effect on the mind and the overall health of an individual. Recreation helps manage stress, boosts physical activity and ultimately contributes towards improving the overall quality of life." Through recreational activities, muscles are being relaxed and the mind is being renewed in its passion and horizon as brief escape from work or routine creates a way for social, mental and physical relaxation and enjoyment.

Not only teachers have the power and responsibility to introduce recreational activities to learners, but parents has equal responsibility and influence with regards to this aspect. The study made by Modak (2015) revealed that there is a connection between parental involvement and children's participation in sport activities. Parents can serve as a major influence in their children's participation in sports activities.

The above-mentioned readings are relevant and provides link to the analysis of the findings that resulted out of the investigation in this study.

2.1. Research Questions

This study focused on highlighting the effect of recreational activity, specifically the badminton organized events, in uplifting the academic interest of grade level learners of Lumban Central Elementary School this school year 2022-2023.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. Why is the recreation activity, specifically badminton tournament, organized in Lumban, Laguna?
2. How many learners from Lumban Central Elementary School joined the event, and what are their profiles?
3. What are the series of activities implemented so as to enjoin children in their participation in badminton event?
4. What is the result of joining the badminton event specifically in the aspect of academic interest?
5. What intervention or program can be created to sustain the success of this recreational activity and other activities of this kind?

2.2. Scope and Limitation

Recreation activity ranges from physical to mental activities, and it even includes emotional and psychological activities which are viewed as leisure or fun events. It may be inside or outside the classroom, within the context of learning situation. But in this study, the recreation activity is confined to sports, particularly badminton training and tournament. Also, the recreation activity explored as to possible connection to academic interest was conducted not during school days and outside school campus. Rather, it was conducted during the vacation days before the start of school year 2022-2023. Nevertheless, it can be considered as having the purpose of motivation learners for academic resilience because the primary participants are intermediate pupils with their teacher/s in school as coach for the said event.

3. Research Methodology

Being a qualitative-narrative study, this study was accomplished through the conduct of the intervention (recreational sports activity, i.e., badminton training and tournament), the documentation of the event, and the notetaking of the impact to learners. All the aspect of the training was noted, and the academic interest of the student-participants were recorded through their enrolment in the succeeding school year. Their continuation to focused study was also observed as part of the report for their academic interest.

3.1. Sampling

There were 16 learners from the intermediate level (grades 4-6, second key stage of learning) coming from Lumban Central Elementary School who participated in the badminton training and tournament. Ten among the 16 participants have not attended school last year, and they were the main target of the recreational activity to have their morale boosted with regards to attending school. They had stopped schooling due to COVID-19 pandemic, with their parents consent of not entering school last school year.

3.2. Data Collection

The three-week period of documentation for the badminton training and tournament was the main data for this qualitative-narrative study. All the parts of the program were noted here, and even the objectives of the event were laid down. From the narrative of one of the authors, the impact to academic interest due to the recreational activity done was documented.

3.3. Ethical Issues

In the entire duration of this study, from orientation till graduation, the following ethics were considered to protect the participants from any violation of rights connected to the conduct of academic study:

1. **Parents' consent** was secured for every participant of the badminton training and mini tournament.
2. **Non-inclusion of pictures of learners** captured from the badminton training and tournament was observed, though the original narrative contains pictures of learners for documentation purposes.
3. **Identity of the learners are protected** as their names were not reported in this paper.
4. **Non-use of force** so that learners would enroll in school after the badminton training and tournament was implemented. The learners freely chose to be back in school after their participation in badminton training and tournament.
5. **Parents of learners returned to school** were informed that this study was being conducted to investigate on the impact of recreational activities to the academic interest of learners.

3.4. Data Analysis

Since this study employed the qualitative-narrative method of doing research, the data gathered in the form of narrative were plainly and academically reported in this paper. Analysis comes in the form of knowing what happened to the learners who participated in the badminton training and tournament – whether they enrolled this school year or not, and whether they are continuing to study at present or have dropped after several weeks.

4. Discussion of Results, Recommendations and Reflection

4.1. Organization of Badminton Tournament in Lumban, Laguna

During the pandemic, badminton was one of the first sports open to the public. There were only a few badminton players that started playing again at the local court. As time passed by, more interested people joined and were warmly welcomed by the small group of badminton players. Subsequently, the players begin to train newcomers and teach badminton fundamentals. Eventually, the badminton group grew and became a community. This group refers to themselves now as the Lumban Badminton Club.

The town of Lumban has a lot of reserves of unrealized potential. In the streets, you can see young bloods swinging their rackets, rallying, feeling a sense of thrill with every return.

Interest is what they have in the sport of badminton. This is an asset worth investing in for a kid's bright future. However, sports are centered on basketball and volleyball, which results in a few skilled, trained, and experienced badminton players.

The Lumban Badminton Club noticed the interest that people have in the sport of badminton. With no training programs available in Lumban, the club took on the initiative of creating a badminton clinic. The club now looks forward to expanding and bringing more individuals into the sport of badminton.

The Lumban Badminton Club purpose is to:

- Create a safe space for aspiring Badminton players where they can learn, develop, and improve their skills and unleash their potentials in the sport.
- Discover future athletes.
- Promote a healthy and active lifestyle.
- Involve the youths in social activities and teach them social responsibilities.

The objective of the Lumban Badminton Club is to continue and develop the training program to produce high quality athletes.

This vacation time before school year 2022-2023 started, Lumban Central Elementary School (LCES) was able to join the club with learners who were willing to train and participate in short tournaments. They were coordinated by one of LCES teachers, Mr. Lagrada, who is also one of the authors of this study.

4.2. Learner Participants of Badminton Club from LCES

There were 16 learners who participated in Lumban Badminton Club. The table below highlights the profile of the 16 learners who were also prospective students of Lumban Central Elementary School. The term “prospective” means that some of these learners were not able to enter schooling last school year 2021-2022, but they were enjoined to be part of Lumban Badminton Club with the vision they will be interested to go back schooling after having the recreational activity this last vacation.

Incoming Grade 11	Male	Female	Total
Grade 4	3	2	5
Grade 5	4	1	5
Grade 6	5	1	6
Total	12	4	16

4.3. Series of Activities for the Recreational Activity (Badminton Training and Events)

The vacation training program basically was contained in three-week activities. Below is the training program for the first week, second week, and the mini-tournament and graduation on the third week.

4.3.1. First Week Training Program

Orientation was held during the first day of meeting after registration. Getting to know each other was done through introduction of the coaches and team leaders. The importance of Badminton to our health and how they learn, improve, and develop their skills in the sports was shared to all the participants.

The first week of training focuses on conditioning the body and practicing proper footwork and strokes in badminton.

Days	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
	Warm up exercises	Warm up Exercises	Warm up Exercises	Warm up Exercises	Warm up Exercises	Warm up Exercises
1st Week of Training	2 basic Grips in Badminton	4 basic Strokes in Badminton	Shuttle Control Exercise	Shuttle Control Exercise	Shuttle Control Exercise	Shuttle Control Exercise
	4 basic Strokes in Badminton	Cooldown Exercises	Footwork drills	Footwork drills	Footwork drills	Footwork drills
	Cooldown Exercises		Cooldown Exercises	Cooldown Exercises	Cooldown Exercises	Cooldown Exercises

The warm-up exercises included Dynamic Stretching and Body Conditioning Drills. This was done daily, and the laps of the body conditioning drills increased as the day progressed. Included in the program was the teaching of the proper grips in badminton. There are two basic grips in badminton, and they are the forehand grip and the backhand grip. To execute particular shots correctly, proper badminton stroke technique was practiced. For footwork drills, there were different types of drills for footwork, but every drill surely hit the proper footwork needed in badminton. Positioning in the court was taught. Foot works in the three parts of the court were also included. The following foot works that were taught and practiced were forward footwork, backwards footwork, sideways footwork, changing directions, and the lunge and recovery. Cooldown exercises included a few laps of jogging and then proceeded to static stretches. The static exercises were seated groin stretch, seated straddle, seated side, seated spinal twist, pigeon stretch, reclined, knee hugs, child's pose, back extension, side trunk stretch, forward lunge, side lunge, wrist flexion, posterior shoulder stretch, overhead shoulder, neck side, and neck front and back.

4.3.2. Second Week Training Program

The focus of the 2nd week of training is more on badminton technical skills such as lifting, clearing, dropping, smashing etc. The trainees in the second week will also experience matches to gain first-hand knowledge and experience.

The warm-up exercises included Dynamic Stretching and Body Conditioning Drills. This was done daily, and the laps of the body conditioning drills for 2nd week stayed the same for every session. Dynamic stretches included ankle and wrist rotation, bouncing calf stretch, ankle shift, full knee bending, knee rotation outward, hip push stretch, hip rotation, trunk twist, elbow out, arm rotation backward, arm rotation inward, arm swing, forearm rotation, neck rotation, toe touches and high kicks. Body conditioning drills on the other hand consists of toe walking, heel walking, jog, lateral shuffle, diagonal shuffle forward, diagonal shuffle backward, kangaroo jump forward, kangaroo jump backward, sprint, standing broad jumps to sprints and lunges. Footwork drills were the same as the first week. For badminton technical skill exercises, the following mimicked what happens inside the court, so these exercises provided knowledge when encountered inside the court and allowed players to respond with great practice: (1) serve exercises (short to long), (2) clear exercises, (3) pre-game plus match, (4) front of net drop exercises, (5) drive and (6) smash exercises.

Days	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
	Warm up exercises	Warm up Exercises	Warm up Exercises	Warm up Exercises	Warm up Exercises	Warm up Exercises
2nd Week of Training	Footwork Drills	Front of Net Drop Exercises	Footwork Drills	Clear Exercises	Net Drop Exercises	Clear Exercises
	Serve Exercises (Short-Long)	Front of Net Lob (Lift) Exercises	Serve Exercises (Short-Long)	Drop Exercises	Serve Exercises (Short-Long)	Front of Net Lob (Lift) Exercises
	Clear Exercises	Pre-Game + Match	Drive Exercises	Smash Exercises	Drive Exercises	Smash Exercises
	Pre-Game + Match	Cooldown Exercises	Front of Net Lob (Lift) Exercises	Pre-Game + Match	Pre-Game + Match	Pre-Game + Match
	Cooldown Exercises		Cooldown Exercises	Cooldown Exercises	Cooldown Exercises	Cooldown Exercises

4.3.3. Third Week Mini-Tournament and Graduation

To expose the aspiring players to an actual badminton match and to showcase what they've learned from the Badminton Clinic, players competed in a mini tournament. And after all the hard work and determination to finish the programs of the Badminton Clinic, the aspiring players were rewarded with a Graduation Ceremony along with the presentation of the Certificate of Completion and Athletic Participation.

4.4. Impact of Recreation Activity

Out of 16 prospective learners of Lumban Central Elementary School (LCES), there were 10 who did not attend schooling last school year 2021-2022. During the enrolment this school year 2022-2023, these 10 learners (6 male and 4 female) were seen to enroll and up to now, they are continuing to attend face-to-face classes in LCES. It was indeed noteworthy to mention that recreation activity led these learners who were out-of-school last year to have academic interest as shown in their passion in learning at present. Findings in this study compliment that of Sawangmek's (2019), in that, recreational activity makes the learners' academic motivation be at its highest. It boosts learners' anticipation to achieve success not just in sports or recreational activities but in academic aspect as well, as their desire to grow is nurtured in such activity, may it be inside or outside school campus.

4.5. Recreational Program for Academic Interest Sustenance

Because of the success of the recreation activity done this last vacation, leading the learners to enroll and have academic interest, it is suggested that the school should have a regular recreational activity, if not during vacation, for every end of a quarter. The whole school can initiate not just a recreational activity for learners, but for family as well, with of course the obedience to proper health protocol. This family recreation activity can also be done in the community where the immediate surroundings would inculcate important

participation or collaboration of external stakeholders.

Aside from this family activity, a continuous-improvement project can be initiated by the school that focuses on the institutionalization of recreation activity inside the classroom, incorporated in teaching episodes. Recreation activity can serve as motivation, activity to enhance understanding of the topic, or application group dynamics to develop life-long learning.

5. Recommendations and Reflection

5.1. Recommendations

With the impact of recreation activity documented in this paper, the following recommendations to target persons are provided here:

1. **School teachers** should include recreation activities in classroom teaching. This recreation activity does not necessarily comprise a sport event, but just simple activities requiring group effort, mind-maze, puzzles, and other sorts which is considered fun, exciting, and also educational.
2. **School heads** needs to develop programs or projects that would institutional recreational activity as part of school norm or procedure in delivering competencies and quality education for the youth.
3. **Parents and community** should seek ways on how to collaborate with the school in building significant recreational activities for the learners.
4. **DepEd high officials** should awaken the schools in incorporating recreation activities now that the pandemic is soon to subside because of the effective government program on vaccination and health protocols.
5. **Future researchers** can explore other recreational activities aside from sports, to determine the possible good effect to the different aspect of learning and learners' performance.

5.2. Reflection

The importance of recreational activities in education is something that has been seen by the researcher. There are many benefits that come from participating in recreational activities. One of the most important benefits is that it gets students interested in learning. It's no secret that getting students interested in learning is a challenge. The author learned that students who participate in recreational activities like athletics, music, and art are more likely to be interested in their schoolwork than those who do not participate in these types of programs. Before, when the students are only studying in the comfort of their home, they tend to lose interest in studying. However, now that schools are conducting face-to-face classes with the introduction of various recreational activities, students' interest in academics has been aroused. It has been shown that involvement in activities of this kind may help students improve their academic performance at school and can also assist them in learning more about themselves and the world around them. Now that the significance of recreational activities in academics has been recognized and investigated, it is critical to note that these must be integrated and reinforced by various schools while adhering to health protocols as the country is still not completely free of the virus. The value of recreational activities can't be understated. Every school employee and stakeholder must recognize the value of recreational activities. These will not only benefit the students and the teachers, but also the community. Recreation is a way of life, and it involves doing things that are fun or enjoyable. Sports and other activities are an excellent way of building character and developing teamwork. Moreover, recreational activities are a great way to bring out the creativity and energy in students, as well as their teachers. They are also an excellent way to boost morale and rekindle enthusiasm in employees who are becoming dissatisfied with their jobs. It is important for the students to do recreational

activities because it will help them develop their creative thinking and make them more engaged in their studies. Recreational activities lead the learners to enroll in school. A learning environment with recreational activities will lead learners to take an interest in their studies. This should be a part of the curriculum of any educational institute.

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