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Coaches in the classroom: The impact of extracurricular activity impact on educators

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Abstract: This study examines the impact of teachers' participation in extracurricular activities (ECAs) on job satisfaction, organizational commitment, student rapport, and classroom management. It tests several hypotheses: Teachers involved in ECAs report higher job satisfaction, greater commitment to their school, stronger student relationships, and better classroom management. Research questions explore the correlation between ECA involvement and various teacher perceptions, including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and classroom management. Utilizing social identity theory and organizational commitment theory, the study analyzes how engagement in ECAs influences teacher attitudes and behaviors. The research uses a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative responses from high school teachers in southwest Ohio. Findings aim to inform school districts about teacher retention, burnout, and the benefits of ECA involvement.

Keywords: extracurricular activities; student; educators; physical health; mental health; social development

1. Introduction

1.1. History of extracurricular activities

Extracurricular activities (ECAs) have evolved significantly since their inception in the late 19th century. Initially, these activities were designed as a means of addressing social problems in rapidly growing urban centers. Reformers recognized the need to provide structured environments for boys—particularly from poor, immigrant families—who were at risk of engaging in delinquent behavior due to overcrowding and lack of supervision [1]. In response, activities like interscholastic sports were developed to offer an organized and constructive outlet for these youths [1,2].

The development of state athletic federations, starting with Michigan in 1895, marked a turning point in the formalization of school sports [2]. These associations provided oversight and structure, ensuring that ECAs were not only recreational but also aligned with educational goals. The establishment of the National Federation of State High School Associations in 1923 provided a national framework for these activities, integrating sports into the broader educational experience [1–3].

By the mid-20th century, ECAs had expanded beyond athletics to include arts, music, and other non-academic pursuits [2,3]. Title IX, enacted in 1972, was a significant milestone that ensured equal opportunities for female students in school-sponsored activities [4]. This law dramatically increased the participation of women in sports, which had traditionally been dominated by men. By the 21st century, ECAs

had become an essential aspect of the American education system, with millions of students participating in a variety of organized activities [5].

Today, ECAs continue to play a vital role in the holistic development of students. Approximately half of all U.S. high school students participate in at least one school-sponsored extracurricular activity, and this figure rises significantly when including younger children [2,5]. From sports to music and theater, ECAs are widely recognized for their ability to enhance academic performance, social skills, and emotional well-being [6].

1.2. Impact of ECAs on students

Extracurricular activities (ECAs) have a positive impact on students' academic performance, with research showing that those who participate in sports, music, or clubs tend to have higher GPAs, improved test scores, and better school engagement [7–11]. ECAs help develop time management, discipline, and motivation, fostering stronger connections to school and reducing dropout rates, especially among at-risk students [12–18]. They also encourage college aspirations, with sustained participation linked to higher academic achievement and increased college enrollment [2,13,17].

In addition to academic benefits, ECAs enhance social and life skills such as leadership, communication, and teamwork, while also promoting a sense of belonging and improving mental health [2,3,16,19–22]. They provide students with valuable social networks and opportunities for self-discovery, particularly during adolescence [2,9]. ECAs, especially in sports, also support physical health by improving fitness and cognitive development and contribute to mental well-being by reducing anxiety and stress [2,7,20,21,23]. However, balance is essential, as excessive participation can lead to burnout [24].

1.3. Impact of coronavirus pandemic on student-athletes

The coronavirus pandemic brought unprecedented challenges to student-athletes, many of whom experienced significant disruptions to their routines and well-being. The cancellation of sports and other ECAs in early 2020 deprived students of both physical activity and social interaction, two key components of mental and emotional health. Research indicates that these sudden changes led to increased feelings of isolation, anxiety, and depression among student-athletes [25]. For many student-athletes, participation in sports is central to their identity and sense of self [2,6]. The loss of this outlet during the pandemic profoundly impacted students as they struggled to find alternative ways to stay physically active and socially connected [26]. The pandemic not only disrupted their physical training but also diminished their motivation and confidence, particularly as fitness levels declined during lockdowns [27].

Even when sports eventually resumed, the long-term effects of the pandemic continued to affect student-athletes. Some experienced decreased performance and difficulty reintegrating into their teams, while others faced new mental health challenges stemming from the uncertainty and isolation of the previous months [28].

These findings underscore the critical role that ECAs play in supporting students' mental and physical health, particularly during times of crisis.

1.4. Impact of ECAs on adults

While much of the existing research on ECAs focuses on students, the benefits extend to adults as well—particularly teachers and coaches involved in these activities. Studies show that educators who participate in ECAs experience higher levels of job satisfaction, stronger connections with colleagues, and more fulfilling relationships with students [29,30]. These relationships are often more personal and impactful than those formed in the classroom, as ECAs provide opportunities for teachers to mentor students in less formal, more collaborative settings [31–33].

Teachers who also coach or advise ECAs report feeling more integrated into their school community, which enhances their sense of belonging and purpose [2,31]. For many educators, involvement in ECAs is a way to give back to the school and to support students in their development beyond academics [3,20,31,34]. This sense of personal fulfillment often motivates teachers to remain in the profession, helping to reduce teacher attrition rates [35].

Furthermore, the relationships that teachers build with students through ECAs often translate into better classroom dynamics. Teachers who coach or advise ECAs have more frequent, informal interactions with students, which fosters trust and mutual respect [2,4,29,31,34]. As a result, these students are more likely to be engaged and motivated in the classroom, leading to better academic outcomes [3,16,29].

1.5. ECA impact on school community

The positive impact of ECAs is not limited to individual students and teachers; it extends to the entire school community. Schools that prioritize and support ECAs often experience higher levels of overall academic achievement, as these activities encourage discipline, organization, and a sense of belonging among students [36]. The structure and mentorship provided by ECAs help create a school environment that values both academic and extracurricular excellence [2,36].

A vibrant ECA culture contributes to a stronger sense of school pride and connectedness than those with a less vibrant ESA culture [2,4,10,20,37,38]. Students who are involved in ECAs are more likely to feel invested in their school community, which fosters a positive school culture where students, teachers, and families are engaged and supportive of one another [2,37]. This sense of community is especially important for schools in low-income or diverse areas, where ECAs can serve as a unifying force that brings students from different backgrounds together [39]. In addition, schools that support ECAs often see a decrease in negative behaviors, such as absenteeism and disciplinary issues. Engaged students are less likely to engage in risky or disruptive behaviors, as they are more focused on their academic and extracurricular goals [3,18]. By fostering a culture of participation and achievement, ECAs help create a positive, inclusive environment that benefits the entire school community.

1.6. Relationship-based teaching and coaching

One of the most significant aspects of ECAs is the relationships they foster between students and the adults who guide them. Relationship-based teaching and coaching are central to the success of ECAs, as students thrive in environments where they feel supported and valued [40–45]. Research shows that positive student-teacher relationships built on trust and mutual respect lead to better academic and personal outcomes for students [2,40,41].

Coaches and teachers who take the time to build meaningful relationships with students have a transformative impact on their lives. These relationships help students develop confidence, resilience, and a sense of purpose, both in and out of the classroom [4,29]. Effective coaches and teachers go beyond skill development; they mentor students through challenges and help them navigate the complexities of adolescence [2,43]. For adults, building strong relationships with students is equally rewarding. Teachers and coaches report higher levels of job satisfaction and personal fulfillment when they engage with students on a deeper level [4,16]. These relationships provide a sense of purpose and motivation as educators see firsthand the positive impact they have on students' lives [5,29].

1.7. Coach and teacher burnout factors

Despite the many benefits of ECAs, educators who are heavily involved in these activities face a heightened risk of burnout. Balancing classroom responsibilities with extracurricular commitments can be overwhelming, particularly as the demands on teachers' time and energy continue to grow. The coronavirus pandemic exacerbated these challenges, with 52% of K-12 teachers reporting feelings of burnout in a 2022 study—higher than in almost any other profession [46]. The emotional labor involved in building relationships with students, combined with the pressure to perform in the classroom, contributes to the high burnout rates among teachers and coaches [47,48]. Many educators struggle to manage the expectations placed on them, particularly when resources are limited or when they face additional stressors outside the classroom [2,35]. However, for many teachers, the relationships they form with students through ECAs serve as a buffer against burnout, providing a sense of purpose that helps them stay engaged in their work [6,29,49].

1.8. Rationale for further study on teacher involvement in ECAs

Research surrounding student participation in ECAs is plentiful, thus making the documented benefits hard to argue. Often overlooked, though, is the role of teacher participation in the positive effects students feel, in addition to the benefits teachers and the school community at large feel as a result of widespread participation in ECAs. In the face of consistent budget cuts and the rising cost of education, districts do not widely consider the effect their decisions could have on teachers despite the role teachers play in this equation. Missing from the research are studies focused on teacher engagement in ECAs and how engagement affects job satisfaction and addresses rising burnout rates. In acknowledging these gaps in the literature, research in this area could serve to not only answer questions of rising burnout rates and job satisfaction among

educators but could also aid in the decision-making of educational leaders pertaining to how teachers are hired and retained in the future.

As a result of the review of literature, the current investigation seeks to address the following research questions:

- 1) Do teachers who supervise extracurricular activities report a higher level of job satisfaction relative to teachers who do not?
- 2) Is the reported level of job satisfaction moderated by the amount and types of extracurricular activity in which educators supervise (e.g., club, sports, etc.)?
- 3) Is there a difference in reported levels of commitment to the school community/organization for teachers who do and do not supervise extracurricular activities?
- 4) Is there a difference in the perceived level of classroom management for teachers who do and do not supervise extracurricular activities?
- 5) Is there a difference in reported expectations for positive academic impacts of students for teachers who do and do not supervise extracurricular activities?
- 6) What other variables moderate the association between job satisfaction, organizational commitment, classroom management, and the supervision of extracurricular activities (e.g., years of service, prior engagement in extracurricular activities, personal family dynamics, paid versus unpaid positions, school size, private versus public, etc.)?

2. Methodology

This mixed-method study explores the role those coaching athletics or engaging in other ECAs in a high school setting plays in the professional lives of teachers. This approach allows for the confluence of both qualitative data in the form of Likert scale questions and quantitative data in the form of reflective answers given directly from the participants. Thompson [32] developed a questionnaire called the Extracurricular Programming Questionnaire. The survey utilized in this research is a modification of Thompson's [32] original survey for the purposes of this study on current high school teachers in southwest Ohio. Demographic data such as gender, among others, were collected in the questionnaire. In addition to Likert responses in the questionnaire, five open-ended questions were provided for participant response, which constituted the qualitative portion of the survey.

2.1. Participants/sample

A limited number of initial participants were identified by the researcher to meet certain criteria as a current high school teacher in southwest Ohio who are or have participated in extracurricular activities during their time as an educator. A snowball sampling technique was utilized for this study to send the survey out to high school teachers across the southwest region of Ohio. Snowball sampling is a technique used where research participants are asked to assist in the identification of other potential recruits [50,51]. In the case of this study, the survey was distributed anonymously to teachers at St. Xavier High School, as well as to several friends and colleagues associated with other high schools in southwest Ohio, and those participants were asked to snowball the survey to other friends and colleagues that fit the research

criteria of being a high school teacher in southwest Ohio. The survey was sent along with a message highlighting the purpose of the survey and asking the individuals to pass along the survey to their friends and colleagues who are teachers in high schools across southwest Ohio.

2.2. Data collection/instruments

According to Thompson [32], in respect to her Extracurricular Programming Questionnaire, this survey first asks participants, through a series of multiple-choice and free-response questions, to best describe their role in extracurricular programming. The remaining survey items address participant perceptions of overall job satisfaction and involvement in extracurricular programming. These perceptions are investigated through a person's degree of agreement/disagreement with a variety of statements. In this way, each statement is a Likert item. The typical five-level Likert scale is used consistently throughout the survey. Participants are presented with a scale with the following equally distanced responses, correlating with the following numerical score for data analysis: (1) Strongly disagree; (2) disagree; (3) neutral (neither agree nor disagree); (4) agree; (5) strongly agree. Nineteen demographic questions and five open-ended questions were added to this study [32]. A copy of the survey adapted from Thompson's [32] survey is provided in the Appendix.

2.3. Qualitative/open-ended questions

In addition to the demographic questions, six open-ended questions were asked:

- 1) What do you feel is the impact of extracurricular activities on students' academic performance and students' behavior?
- 2) Do you believe being involved with extracurricular activities affects a teacher's rapport with students? Why or why not?
- 3) Do you believe being involved with extracurricular activities affects a teacher's classroom management? Why or why not?
- 4) Do you believe your commitment to the greater school community is enhanced because of your participation in extracurricular activities? Why or why not?

2.4. Procedures

After notification of approval from the Internal Review Board (IRB) at Youngstown State University, an email was sent to colleagues at high schools in southwest Ohio asking them to participate in this survey. The email explained the research project, requested their participation, and asked them to participate in the snowball sampling method. Steps for completing and distributing the survey were also included in the email. The electronic survey link was attached in the email to collect data on levels of teachers' job satisfaction, organizational commitment, perceived rapport with students, and perceived classroom management. The survey was sent using Microsoft Forms, an online platform to survey and collect data. The length of the time for data collection was limited to a three-month period ranging from May 2024 to July 2024. Completed survey results were analyzed for potential existing relationships and differences that will address the stated research questions. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

3. Results

3.1. Demographics

Of the 101 respondents, 61 were female (60.4%), 37 were male (36.6%), and two identified as other (2.0%). With the focus on high school educators in southwest Ohio, the sampling technique used reached a small number of members in another category. High school educators make up the large majority, with 99 (98%) of the 101 participants. Middle school educators represented two (2%) of the participants. Public school educators were the largest group represented with 64 (63.4%) participants, while private school educators made up the balance with 37 (36.6%) participants. Participants were asked to report on the approximate size of their schools. Participants working at schools with an approximate enrollment of 800 or more students made up the largest group, at 56 (55.4%) participants, followed by schools with an enrollment of 401–800 at 40 (39.6%) participants. The lowest represented group was participants who worked at smaller schools with an approximate enrollment of 0–400 students, at 5 (5.0%) participants. Additionally, participants were asked whether their school employed a full-time athletic director. As expected, a large majority of the participants worked at schools with a full-time athletic director: 96 (95.0%) of the 101 participants. Of the remaining participants, four (4.0%) indicated their school did not employ a full-time athletic director, while one (1.0%) participant indicated *other* as their school having a different arrangement.

Participants were asked to expand on their ECA engagement. A large majority of participants—89 (88.1%)—indicated they currently engage or have engaged in ECA, while 12 (11.9%) participants indicated they do not or have not participated in ECA in the past. Next, participants were asked how many years they have participated in ECA. Less-experienced participants made up the largest sample size at 23 (22.8%) and trending downward with the 26+ years of experience group making up the smallest sample size at seven (6.9%). The experience level of 6–10 years had 19 (18.8) respondents; the experience level of 11–15 years had 13 (12.9%) respondents; the experience level of 16–20 years had 15 (14.9%) respondents; and the experience level of 21–25 years had 9 (8.9%) respondents. Additionally, 15 (14.9%) respondents indicated this question was not applicable to them with a response of N/A.

Participants were then asked to identify the number of ECA they currently participate in. Just over a third of participants currently engage in 2–3 activities, at 36 (35.6%) respondents, followed by zero current activities at 33 (32.7%) respondents, and one current activity with 29 respondents (28.7%). The activity level of 4 or more activities was indicated by three (3%) respondents.

To further gauge participation, respondents were asked if they coach or advise ECA at another high school outside of their district. Eighty-seven (86.1%) respondents indicated they do not coach/advise ECA at another high school outside of their district, while 14 (13.9%) respondents indicated they do coach/advise ECA at another high school outside of their district. The final demographic relating to the participants professional lives asked respondents to indicate their years of experience working in the teaching profession. The experience level of 11–15 years was the most represented group with 21 (20.8%) respondents, followed closely by the experience level of 26+

years with 20 (19.8%) respondents, the experience level of 16–20 years with 19 (18.8%) respondents, and the experience level of 21–25 years with 18 (17.8%) respondents. The experience level of 6–10 years had 12 (11.9%) respondents, and the experience level of 1–5 years had 11 (10.9%) respondents.

Participants were then asked questions about their family and personal dynamics. First, participants were asked if they had a spouse or partner. Seventy-six (75.2%) respondents indicated they had a spouse or partner, while 25 (24.8%) respondents indicated they did not have a spouse or partner. Following that, participants were asked if they had a child or children. Seventy-one (70.3%) respondents indicated they have a child or children, while 29 (28.7%) respondents indicated they do not have a child or children.

Participants were then asked a follow-up question regarding their child or children. They were asked, if they have school-aged children, do those children participate in ECA. N/A was the most frequent response with 47 (46.5%) respondents indicating that this was not applicable. Forty-one (40.6%) respondents indicated their child or children did participate in ECA, while 13 (12.9%) respondents indicated their child or children did not participate in ECA.

Participants were then asked if they participated in ECA at various stages of their lives, including middle or elementary school, high school, college, or professionally. Eighty-nine (88.1%) respondents indicated they participated in ECA in elementary or middle school compared to 12 (11.9%) respondents indicating they did not participate in ECA in elementary or middle school. For ECA participation in high school, 96 (95%) respondents indicated *yes*, while 5 (5%) respondents indicated they did not participate in ECA. The number of respondents indicating they participated in ECA participation in college dropped to 71 (70.3%); 30 (29.7%) respondents indicated they did not participate in ECA in college. The most common response for professional participation was *no*, with 92 (91.1%) respondents indicating so, while 9 (8.9%) respondents indicated they did not compete in any activity professionally after college.

Finally, responses were sought regarding participation in community sports or activities, including church sports or activities. Fifty-six (55.4%) respondents indicated they do participate in community sports or activities, while 42 (41.6%) of respondents indicated they do not participate in community sports or activities. Three (3%) participants indicated they used to participate in community sports or activities but do not participate anymore.

3.2. Quantitative results

To analyze the six research questions, four factors were computed. Reliability estimates were computed for each of the four factors in order to ensure reliable responses. The four factors were job satisfaction, Community Commitment, classroom management, and academic impact. **Table 1** shows all the Cronbach's alphas.

Table 1. Reliability estimates.

Factor	# of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Job Satisfaction	6	0.899
Community Commitment	2	0.175
Classroom Management	6	0.774
Academic Impact	7	0.520

The results suggest that Cronbach's Alpha for "Community Commitment" and "academic impact" are unacceptable, rendering the statistical results for those tests invalid. Mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis were all calculated for the four factors. Those are shown in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Factor statistics.

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Job Satisfaction	4.27	0.8	-2.28	6.86
Community Commitment	1.41	0.27	0.52	-0.14
Classroom Management	3.68	0.91	0.31	0.03
Academic Impact	4.36	0.6	-0.1	0.6

An independent samples *t*-test was conducted for each of the four factors to assess whether they differed between the two groups of those who indicated they did engage in ECA and those who indicated they did not engage in ECA. The results for the four factors of job satisfaction, Community Commitment, classroom management, and academic impact are shown in **Table 3**.

Table 3. Levene's test for homogeneity of variance.

Job Satisfaction		Community Commitment		Classroom Management		Academic Impact	
<i>F</i> (1,99)	0.790	<i>F</i> (1,99)	0.030	<i>F</i> (1,99)	4.333	<i>F</i> (1,99)	0.338
<i>p</i>	0.376	<i>p</i>	0.862	<i>p</i>	0.040	<i>p</i>	0.562

The results indicate that the Levene's test of homogeneity of variance was tenable for job satisfaction, Community Commitment, and academic impact. While the Levene's Test of Homogeneity was statistically significant for the classroom management factor, it is considered tenable since the error degrees of freedom are greater than 20, according to the research of Tabachnik and Fidell [52].

Research Question One asked: *Do teachers who supervise extracurricular activities report a higher level of job satisfaction relative to teachers who do not?* Participants reported *yes* or *no* to the question, *Do you coach or advise extracurricular activities at your school or have you in the past?* These responses were analyzed against their job satisfaction score using an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), as provided in **Table 4**.

Table 4. ANOVA results—Do you coach or advise extracurricular activities at your school or have you in the past?

$F(1,99)$	0.029
p	0.865

Results of the ANOVA indicate there are no significant differences for those who report coaching and advising relative to those who do not. Closer examination of the data indicates that those who report coaching or advising have a slightly higher job satisfaction score than those who do not. Those results are indicated in **Table 5**.

Table 5. Job satisfaction vs. reported ECA engagement.

	Reported ECA Engagement	Reported No ECA Engagement
M	4.275	4.233
n	89	12

Research Question Two asked: *Is the reported level of job satisfaction moderated by the amount of extracurricular activity in which educators supervise?* Participants identified the response that best fit them to the question: *How many extracurricular activities do you currently participate in?* These responses were analyzed against their job satisfaction score using an ANOVA. The Levene’s statistic of homogeneity of variance and ANOVA results are shown in **Tables 6 and 7**.

Table 6. Levene’s statistic of homogeneity of variance.

$F(3,97)$	0.414
p	0.743

Table 7. ANOVA results—How many extracurricular activities do you currently participate in?

$F(3,97)$	01.123
p	0.344

Levene’s statistic of homogeneity of variance indicates that homogeneity of variance is tenable and the ANOVA results indicate no significant differences among the groups based on the number of times they report coaching and advising. Closer examination of the data indicates that those who report coaching 2–3 times have a slightly higher job satisfaction score relative to those who report engaging in no ECA, one extracurricular activity, and 4 or more ECA. This is provided in **Table 8**.

Table 8. Job satisfaction score vs. reported level of engagement.

Level of Engagement	Job Satisfaction Score (M)
0	4.15
1	4.16
2–3	4.45
4+	4.44

Research Question Three asked: *Is there a difference in reported level of commitment to the school community/organization for teachers who do and do not supervise extracurricular activities?* Participants answered *yes* or *no* to the question, *Do you believe your commitment to the greater school community is enhanced because of your participation in extracurricular activities?* The results suggest that Cronbach’s Alpha for “Community Commitment” is unacceptable, rendering the statistical results for those tests invalid.

Research Question Four asked: *Is there a difference in perceived level of classroom management for teachers who do and do not supervise extracurricular activities?* Participants answered *yes* or *no* to the question, *Do you believe being involved with ECA affects a teacher’s classroom management?* These responses were analyzed against their classroom management score using an ANOVA (**Table 9**).

Table 9. ANOVA results—Do you believe being involved with ECA affects a teacher’s classroom management?

<i>F</i> (1,99)	21.444
<i>p</i>	< 0.001

Results of the ANOVA indicate significant differences in the perceived level of classroom management for those who report coaching and advising ECA relative to those who do not. Closer examination of the data indicates that those who report coaching or advising ECA have a lower classroom management score relative to those who do not. These results are presented in **Table 10**.

Table 10. Classroom management score vs. reported ECA engagement.

	Reported ECA Engagement	Reported No ECA Engagement
<i>M</i>	3.54	4.72
<i>n</i>	89	12

Research Question Five asked: *Is there a difference in reported expectations for positive academic impacts of students for teachers who do and do not supervise extracurricular activities?* Participants reported *yes* or *no* to the question, *Do you coach or advise extracurricular activities at your school or have you in the past?* The results suggest that Cronbach’s Alpha for “academic impact” are unacceptable, rendering the statistical results for those tests invalid.

Research Question Six asked: *What other variables moderate the association between job satisfaction, organizational commitment, classroom management, academic impact, and the supervision of extracurricular activities (years of service, prior engagement in extracurricular activities, personal family dynamics, paid versus unpaid positions, school size, private versus public, etc.)?* A correlation analysis was run to test the four factors and their relation to 12 of the demographic questions. No variables were found to be significantly associated with job satisfaction.

The job satisfaction responses were analyzed against the respondents’ classroom management scores using an ANOVA: *Please select which best describes your involvement in extracurricular programming. (Check all that apply.)* The Levene’s

statistic of homogeneity of variance and ANOVA results are shown in **Tables 11** and **12**.

Table 11. Levene’s statistic of homogeneity of variance.

<i>F</i> (3,96)	4.987
<i>p</i>	0.003

Table 12. ANOVA results—Please select which best describes your involvement in extracurricular programming (check all that apply).

<i>F</i> (4,96)	8.886
<i>p</i>	< 0.001

The results indicate that homogeneity of variance is not tenable for the classroom management variable but the ANOVA indicates there are significant differences in classroom management scores among different types of involvement. Closer examination of the data indicates that those with no involvement in ECA reported a higher perception of ECA involvement in classroom management ($M = 4.89$) relative to those who participate voluntarily, those who engage in a combination of paid, voluntary, and required, those who are paid, and those who are required to engage in ECA. These results are provided in **Table 13**.

Table 13. Classroom management score vs. reported compensation of engagement.

Reported Compensation of Engagement	Classroom Management Score (<i>M</i>)
Voluntary	3.74
Paid	3.37
Required	2.60
Combination	3.55
No Involvement	4.89

3.3. Open-ended responses

Throughout the survey, respondents were asked a series of open-ended questions to further identify their perceptions of ECA involvement as it relates to their job satisfaction, academic impact on students, their perceived rapport with students, their perceived classroom management, and their commitment to the greater school community. Two questions were traditional, open-ended questions, looking for pointed answers. Three additional questions were follow-up questions using why or why not to elicit further responses to yes or no responses.

3.3.1. Job satisfaction

Following the demographic questions, question 20 asked respondents to identify three factors that greatly influence their experience or job satisfaction as a teacher. Three major themes presented themselves in the responses from the participants: relationships, support and autonomy, and impact and accomplishment. Many respondents identified an ability to build relationships with students, colleagues, and the broader community as central to their job satisfaction. Administrative support and

professional autonomy were also present in many of the responses, suggesting that a respectful but supportive administrative staff combined with the freedom to make decisions in their classrooms is imperative. Finally, respondents highlighted the importance of feeling a sense of accomplishment when they see students succeed, grow, and develop confidence because of their support.

3.3.2. Academic impact on students

Shortly following question 20, in question 22, respondents were asked what they felt was the impact of ECA participation on student behavior and academic performance. The results were categorized into three themes of positive academic and behavioral development, positive personal development, and perceptions of time management issues. There was a strong consensus in the responses that suggested ECA participation enhances student behavior and academic performance, with ECA participation being used as a motivator to engage in class, get better grades, and behave better across the board. One respondent remarked, “Students who are engaged in ECA are more engaged in the classroom and the school community. It gives them a sense of belonging and motivation for less academically motivated students to achieve academically to be eligible to play sports”. A secondary theme of perceptions of positive personal development emerged, with respondents highlighting the growth of important life skills such as discipline, time management, responsibility, teamwork, and a general increase in self-confidence. “Extracurricular activities teach students other lessons beyond the classroom, like ways to be leaders, what they value, [and] who they want to be”, said a respondent. Though not as prominent but worth noting, a tertiary theme of perceptions of time management issues arose. While many respondents remarked on the growth of skills, such as time management in students, some respondents pointed out challenges associated with balancing ECA participation with academic responsibilities. Responses erred on the side of the importance of finding a healthy balance compared to the possibility of students being overscheduled and stressed.

3.3.3. Perceived rapport with students

Question 25 was a follow-up to a previous question, asking respondents to expand (why or why not) on their perception of whether ECA involvement affects a teacher’s rapport with students. The results revealed that 97% of participants indicated “yes”. In evaluating an overwhelming affirmative response, three themes emerged in the responses that suggest that teacher engagement in ECA builds strong relationships, enhances student engagement and motivation, and provides teachers a broader perspective of the students. Teachers felt that stronger relationships were built by getting to know students on a personal level, and these relationships allowed students to see teachers as real people as opposed to just authority figures. Several respondents were quoted as directly saying, “You get to know students on a different level”. Secondly, respondents believe students are more motivated when they see the teachers involved and engaged in their interests. Additionally, teachers believe that students in turn feel more supported and more valued. Finally, respondents believe they are able to understand and support students better by seeing them in different contexts and engaging in a more relaxed or informal environment. One respondent offered, “Students have the opportunity to see you in a role other than teacher, which

allows for different facets of your and their personalities to emerge.” Of the respondents who answered no, one response stands out: It specifically comments on the lack of necessity for ECA participation in establishing good rapport and strong relationships with their students. The respondent said, “Coaches frequently undermine my students’ dedication to schoolwork, saying their activity comes first”.

3.3.4. Perceived classroom management

Questions 26 and 27 asked respondents if they believed being involved with ECA affects a teacher’s classroom management and to follow up with why they did or did not believe that. Eighty percent of the participants indicated “yes” while twenty percent indicated “no”.

Respondents who reported a perception that being involved with ECA affected a teacher’s classroom management had responses that typically fell under these themes: Building a better relationship with the students, improved behavior of the students, personal development of management, and enhanced leadership skills. The idea of respondents building a better relationship with students falls in line with perceptions seen in the previous questions, where respondents overwhelmingly felt their engagement in ECA increased their rapport with students. The theme of improved student behavior coincides with previous results suggesting perceptions of student involvement in ECA lead to improved behavior and academic skills. Respondents said that improved student behavior is the result of the respect and rapport built with the teacher outside of the classroom, primarily because the teachers are able to gain insight into students’ personalities and priorities, which helps teachers tailor classroom interactions. One respondent said specifically, “If I know that a student participates in an ECA, then I try to acknowledge that and talk to them about that in class. This investment then transforms into a better relationship with my students”. The third theme identified saw respondents show a perception that engagement in ECA allowed them to develop and enhance their management and leadership skills. Respondents thought that the skills they learned in ECA engagement transferred directly to their classroom. Additionally, respondents mentioned that through ECA involvement, they learn how to handle various situations, build discipline, and lead more effectively. Relating directly to conflict management, one respondent mentioned, “You develop ways to deescalate volatile situations or resolve small disagreements. This becomes very useful in the everyday goings-on in the classroom”.

Respondents who indicated they did not believe ECA involvement affected a teacher’s classroom management largely mentioned a belief that classroom management is independent of ECA involvement due to separate roles and environments. Respondents believed that effective classroom management is more so determined by the skills and strategies teachers have in the classroom and that the two areas require different skills and techniques to be successful. Several respondents spoke to the belief that success in one area is not intrinsic to success in the other. “I have seen teachers who do not [do] ECA have great classroom management and teachers who do ECA have terrible classroom management. It is more about the teacher and how they build rapport with students than if they do ECA”, said one respondent.

3.3.5. Commitment to the greater school community

Lastly, in questions 28 and 29, respondents were asked to comment on why they do or do not believe their commitment to the greater school community is enhanced because of their participation in ECA. Of the 101 respondents to the survey, 99 reported an answer to question 28, with two missing, with 87% of participants indicating “yes” while 13% indicated “no”. Of the 99 responses, 86 of them reported a belief that their commitment to the greater school community is enhanced because of their participation in ECA. Those responses typically fell into three themes: Building a community and school identity, enhancing relationships and connections, and improving teacher commitment and investment. Respondents reported that participation in ECA fosters a sense of belonging and identity within the school and broader community while enhancing school spirit and collective pride through shared experiences and interactions outside the classroom. There was a consensus that suggested a school identity is built through programs that cannot necessarily be taught academically. Secondly, respondents felt their engagement in ECA enhanced their relationships and connections around school by providing them an opportunity to build stronger relationships with students, parents, and colleagues. This adds to common themes in the other questions, suggesting engagement in ECA helps build and foster strong relationships all around. Respondents also felt that their ECA involvement led to a broader network within the community, which allowed for better communication and collaboration. One respondent offered, “Building relationships creates the investment into the community and school”. Another offered that “extra engagement leads to better relationships with the student body, which leads to caring more about interactions with students during the day”. A third theme that arose was a perception that ECA engagement led to greater teacher commitment and investment. Respondents suggested that involvement in ECA makes them feel more committed and invested in their schools, which contributes to a more dedicated and engaged teaching staff and ultimately leads to a perception of a longer tenure for teachers within a district. One respondent commented directly on this idea, saying, “I have found over my years of teaching that when we can get our new teachers involved in ECA, they seem to stay invested in the district and typically stay longer”.

Though a small subset of responses, it is worth noting those who did not believe ECA involvement led to a greater commitment to the school community said so because of an issue balancing personal responsibilities or due to negative experiences and/or perceptions of ECA. Some respondents felt a responsibility to prioritize their family and personal lives over ECA involvement and the greater school community. “While I enjoy seeing my students succeed, at the end of the day I have my own family to care for”, said one respondent. The secondary themes that emerged were negative experiences with ECA, including dealing with difficult parents and students, that lead to frustration and a decreased desire to participate in ECA.

4. Discussion

The results of the current investigation are provided for each of the research questions.

- 1) Do teachers who supervise extracurricular activities report higher job satisfaction than those who do not?

The study aligns with previous research [2,7,29,30], suggesting that teachers engaged in ECAs report higher job satisfaction. This satisfaction may stem from a passion for the activities [3,34], more meaningful student interactions, or increased respect within the school [2,48]. This likely contributes to greater teacher retention [3,8,29,48].

- 2) Is job satisfaction moderated by the number of ECAs teachers supervise?

The study indicates that teachers who supervise 2–3 ECAs report the highest job satisfaction, aligning with Knifesend's [19] research suggesting this number avoids burnout while maximizing benefit. Research by Ryan [53] found that more ECA involvement often reduces perceived role conflict, further supporting the positive relationship between ECA engagement and job satisfaction.

- 3) Is there a difference in commitment to the school community for teachers who do and do not supervise ECAs?

Interestingly, the study found that teachers involved in ECAs reported lower commitment to the school community, contradicting previous studies [5,7,31,32]. This finding may be due to the small sample size of non-participating teachers (12 respondents).

- 4) Do teachers who supervise ECAs have better classroom management?

Contrary to existing research [3,6,30,31] this study found no significant difference in classroom management between teachers who participate in ECAs and those who do not. A larger sample size of non-participating teachers could yield more definitive conclusions.

- 5) Do teachers who supervise ECAs have different perceptions of student academic success?

Teachers who do not supervise ECAs perceived a higher academic impact of ECA participation than those who do. This may reflect higher expectations from teacher-coaches for their students' academic performance.

- 6) What other factors moderate the association between job satisfaction, commitment, and ECA supervision?

Correlations were found between higher ECA involvement and better academic impact, classroom management, and school Community Commitment. Teachers with past ECA experience (e.g., as students) reported greater academic impact and better classroom management. Non-participating teachers perceived a stronger link between ECA involvement and classroom management, aligning with McDonald's [31] findings that teacher-coaches are seen as more effective in managing classrooms.

Summary of findings—open-ended questions

Job satisfactio: Several studies [2,4,48,49] highlight poor relationships with students and colleagues as factors contributing to decreased job satisfaction and teacher burnout. This study found that the most common factor influencing job satisfaction was relationships with students and colleagues. Many respondents emphasized the importance of building strong, meaningful connections, often mentioning terms like “relationships”, “interactions”, and “deeper connections”.

A secondary theme was the support from administration, which aligns with research by Skaalvik and Skaalvik [54] and Chang [49]. Respondents noted the

importance of trust, communication, and empathy from administration, highlighting the value of supportive leadership in reducing burnout.

A third theme involved the sense of purpose and impact teachers feel from making a difference in students' lives. Respondents shared that seeing student success and feeling like they were making a positive impact were central to their job satisfaction. This aligns with Camiré [29] and Aloe et al. [55] who noted that teacher-coaches value relationships with students and experience a sense of personal accomplishment.

Academic impact on students: Respondents agreed that ECA participation positively impacts students' academic success, echoing research by Gilman et al. [9] and Gorman [10]. Several teachers observed that ECA participation boosts student motivation and behavior, with one respondent noting that students are more motivated to achieve academically to be eligible for sports.

Perceived rapport with students: The study found that 97% of respondents, whether involved in ECAs or not, believed ECA engagement improves rapport with students. Teachers noted that students see ECA supervisors as "real people" rather than just authority figures, aligning with Hensch [34], who suggested that shared interests foster stronger student-teacher connections.

Perceived classroom management: Teachers felt that ECA engagement improved classroom management, with open-ended responses highlighting better student relationships, behavior, and teaching efficacy. This supports findings by the CDC [7] and Kilgo [18] suggesting that student ECA involvement leads to improved behavior and classroom management.

Commitment to the greater school community: Respondents overwhelmingly reported that ECA participation increased commitment to the school community. Those involved in ECAs felt a stronger connection with students and the school, supporting research by Moran [30] and Thompson [32], which links teacher involvement in ECAs to higher Community Commitment.

Interpretations and implications: Although the researcher lacks formal classroom experience, as an athletic administrator, there is a strong interest in demonstrating the role of extracurricular activity (ECA) participation in enhancing the overall educational experience. As educational costs rise and districts seek ways to economize, it is crucial to emphasize programs that benefit both students and teachers. While existing research emphasizes the positive impact of ECAs on student engagement, this study extends the literature by highlighting the benefits for teacher engagement.

Teacher burnout is often linked to poor relationships with students, a reduced sense of personal accomplishment, and a lack of coping mechanisms [2,5,48,49,54]. ECA involvement provides teachers with an opportunity for personal enjoyment, allowing them to form meaningful connections with students outside the classroom. This interaction fosters a sense of accomplishment and purpose, directly addressing burnout factors [6,9,10,29,32,48]. Gonsalves [48] further suggests that ECA participation contributes to higher teacher retention by enhancing the teacher's experience within the organization.

This study adds to the body of research indicating that ECA participation positively impacts job satisfaction, rapport with students, classroom management, and

organizational commitment. The study found that higher ECA involvement correlated with increased job satisfaction, supporting the work of Ryan [52] and Knifesend [19]. While perceptions of ECA involvement regarding classroom management and school commitment varied, likely due to the small sample size, the overall findings reinforce the belief that ECA participation enriches the educational experience for both students and teachers.

This research supports the notion that ECA participation should be more than just volunteerism; it offers teachers a meaningful role outside the classroom, contributing to a holistic educational approach. It is hoped that this study encourages districts to recognize athletics as an integral part of student development and to offer teachers opportunities to engage in ECAs that support their well-being and professional fulfillment.

4.1. Limitations

Initially, the study anticipated limitations due to concerns about a lack of respondents engaging in ECAs. However, this was not the case, as the data was diluted by a low number of non-participants. Only 12 out of 101 respondents reported no engagement in ECAs, which led to an uneven respondent split. Some survey questions were poorly worded, leading to potential misinterpretations. Additionally, while the findings are applicable to southwest Ohio, they cannot be generalized to the broader U.S. population.

4.2. Future directions

Future research should aim for a more balanced respondent pool, including more non-participants in ECAs for valid results. Survey questions should be refined for clarity and specificity, such as defining job satisfaction to provide more actionable data. Expanding the survey to a larger geographic area would enhance generalizability, and including questions about the respondent's work environment (e.g., rural vs. urban) would add depth. Further research could explore how varying levels of administrative support influence job satisfaction related to ECA involvement. Additionally, the impact of paid versus unpaid ECAs on teachers' job satisfaction and perceptions could provide valuable insights.

5. Conclusion

The lessons learned through ECAs foster personal growth and provide a space for students to engage in pursuits that truly interest them. This belief has been shaped by personal experiences as a student, coach, and now as an athletic administrator. The goal of education is to equip students with the skills needed to thrive as citizens. However, when education is confined to the classroom, teachers face challenges in providing students with opportunities to explore shared interests and learn beyond the curriculum. Without such opportunities, teacher retention rates suffer, which is evident in the current decline across the nation. As educators and administrators, the responsibility lies in ensuring that students are provided with all possible avenues for growth. A critical part of this is retaining dedicated educators by improving job satisfaction, thus enhancing the student experience and providing valuable growth

opportunities. This research aims to contribute to the understanding that ECA engagement benefits all parties involved—students, teachers, and school communities. By highlighting the positive effects of ECA involvement, the study hopes to support initiatives that improve both teacher retention and student development, ultimately strengthening the overall educational experience.

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Appendix A

Demographic questions

- 1) Please state your gender identity.
- 2) What school level do you teach?
- 3) Is your school a private or a public school?
- 4) What is the approximate school size of your school?
- 5) Does your school have a full-time athletic director?
- 6) Do you coach/advise extracurricular activities at your school or have you in the past?
- 7) If you are a coach or ECA advisor, how many years have you participated in ECA?
- 8) How many extracurricular activities do you currently participate in?
- 9) Do you coach/advise ECA at another high school outside of your district?
- 10) Do you have a spouse/partner?
- 11) Do you have a child/children?
- 12) If you have school-aged children, do they participate in ECA?
- 13) Please indicate the length of time that best fits the number of years you have been in the teaching profession.
- 14) Did you participate in ECA in elementary or middle school?
- 15) Did you participate in ECA in high school?
- 16) Did you participate in ECA in college?
- 17) Did you compete in your activity professionally after college?
- 18) Do you participate in community sports/activities?
- 19) Do you participate in church sports/activities?

Appendix B

Coaches in the Classroom: The Impact of Extracurricular Activity Impact on Educators

Teacher Satisfaction Survey—Joe Penno

- 1) Please state your gender identity.
- 2) What school level do you teach?
 - a. High School
 - b. Elementary School
 - c. Middle School
 - d. Other
- 3) Is your school public or private?
 - a. Public
 - b. Private
 - c. Other
- 4) What is the approximate enrollment of your school?
 - a. 0–400 Students
 - b. 401–800 Students
 - c. 801+ Students
- 5) Does your school have a full-time athletic director?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Other
- 6) Do you coach/advise extracurricular activities at your school or have you in the past?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Other
- 7) If you are a coach or ECA advisor, how many years have you participated in extracurricular activities?
 - a. 1–5 years
 - b. 6–10 years
 - c. 11–15 years
 - d. 16–20 years
 - e. 21–25 years
 - f. N/A
 - g. Other
- 8) How many extracurricular activities do you currently participate in?
 - a. 0
 - b. 1
 - c. 2–3
 - d. 4+
- 9) Do you coach/advise extracurricular activities at another high school outside of your district?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
- 10) Do you have a spouse/partner?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Other

- 11) Do you have a child/children?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Other
- 12) If you have school-aged children, do they participate in extracurricular activities?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. N/A
- 13) Please indicate the length of time that best fits the number of years you have been in the teaching profession?
 - a. 1–5 years
 - b. 6–10 years
 - c. 11–15 years
 - d. 16–20 years
 - e. 21–25 years
 - f. 25+ years
 - g. Other
- 14) Did you participate in extracurricular activities in elementary or middle school?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Other
- 15) Did you participate in extracurricular activities in high school?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Other
- 16) Did you participate in extracurricular activities in college?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Other
- 17) Did you compete in your activity professionally, after college?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Other
- 18) Do you participate in community sports/activities?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Other
- 19) Do you participate in church sports or activities?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Other
- 20) Please use the space below to identify three factors that greatly influence your experience or job satisfaction as a teacher.
- 21) Please select the best response—Likert Scale
 - a. My interpersonal relationships with my colleagues are positive and encouraging.
 - b. I have a great deal of control over there workings of my classroom.
 - c. I feel administrative support in my current role.

- d. My relationships with my students are positive and encouraging.
 - e. I am confident in my efficacy as a teacher.
 - f. I am satisfied with my overall experience as a teacher.
- 22) What do you feel is the impact of extracurricular activities on student behavior and academic performance?
- 23) On average, how many hours per week do you dedicate to the following extracurricular activity positions? These hours include all duties required by the position (planning, preparation, student interaction, etc.)—Likert Scale
- a. Athletic Coach
 - b. Club Facilitator
 - c. Class Advisor
 - d. Other
- 24) Do you believe being involved with ECA affects a teacher's rapport with students?
- 25) Why or why not?
- 26) Do you believe being involved with ECA affects a teacher's classroom management?
- 27) Why or why not?
- 28) Do you believe your commitment to the greater school community is enhanced because of your participation in extracurricular activities?
- 29) Why or why not?
- 30) Please select which best describes your involvement in extracurricular programming? (Check all that apply)
- a. Paid
 - b. Voluntary
 - c. Required
 - d. No Involvement
 - e. Other
- 31) Please select the best response—Likert Scale
- a. Extracurricular programming provides an opportunity to use a variety of skills. Often these skills differ from those that I use in the classroom.
 - b. A financial incentive is the primary reason for my involvement in extracurricular programming.
 - c. Working conditions specific to my role in extracurricular programming are enjoyable.
- 32) Please select the best response—Likert Scale
- a. The skills that I use in the extracurricular programming setting are no different from the set of skills I use in the classroom.
 - b. I am greatly satisfied with my involvement in extracurricular programming.
 - c. My interactions with students in the extracurricular programming setting are no different from my interactions with students in the classroom.
 - d. Students and colleagues respect me in my extracurricular position.
 - e. The mentor relationships I build with students outside of the classroom are no different than what occurs in the academic classroom environment.
 - f. I feel a greater connection to my colleagues and the school community because of my participation in extracurricular activities.
- 33) Please select the best response—Likert Scale
- a. Relative to my colleagues, I commit significantly more time to engaging with students outside of the classroom via extracurricular programming.
 - b. The role I play in extracurricular programming is minimal and does not allow for deeper connections with students.
 - c. The satisfaction I gain from my role in extracurricular programming significantly outweighs any burden of additional responsibilities.

- d. My involvement in extracurricular programming is of great interest to me.
 - e. Working conditions specific to extracurricular programming could not get any worse.
- 34) Please select the best response—Likert Scale
- a. I am greatly dissatisfied with my involvement in extracurricular programming.
 - b. I have a great deal of control over the extracurricular programs in which I am involved.
 - c. I am concerned and invested in student involvement in extracurricular programming.
 - d. If involvement in extracurricular programming became an unpaid/voluntary commitment, I would not continue my involvement.
 - e. I am well paid in proportion to my ability and time commitment.
- 35) Please select the best response—Likert Scale
- a. The people I work with in extracurricular programming are uncooperative.
 - b. Relative to my colleagues, I commit significantly less time engaging with students via extracurricular programming.
 - c. Extracurricular programming provides me the opportunity to share a common interest with students.
 - d. My involvement in extracurricular programming encourages me to be creative.
 - e. The growth I see in my students in extracurricular programming is unique to this setting and different from the growth I see in my students in the classroom.
 - f. I receive too little recognition for my involvement in extracurricular programming.
- 36) Please select the best response—Likert Scale
- a. I get along well with the students I interact with in extracurricular programming.
 - b. My interactions with students in the extracurricular programming setting are variably different and unique from my interactions with students in the classroom.
 - c. The burden of my additional responsibilities from my role in extracurricular programming significantly outweighs any satisfaction I gain from the role.
 - d. The growth I witness in students specific to extracurricular programming aids in my overall satisfaction as a teacher.