EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS: SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

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by

Mary Laura Lariviere

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DEDICATION

In the three years that I have been engaged in doctoral work have been some of the most difficult, tumultuous, yet rewarding of my life. Through it all, God has protected me from my own feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt, and blessed me with the strategic influence of several cherished people. The following individuals have encouraged and supported me, strengthened my faith, and fortified my desire to complete this journey, and it is to them that this accomplishment is dedicated.

The esteemed members of Cohort 30 have evolved into what I consider a second family. During this program, they have seen me through a promotion, more than a few disappointments, the birth of two children, and the loss of my mother. They have served as advisors, confidants, editors, counselors, and my personal cheering section. I will be forever grateful for the gift of their friendship, and my sincerest hope is that all of us will remain friends for a lifetime.

Additionally, I have the privilege of calling some of the most caring and selfless women I have ever encountered, friends. They provide me with continued emotional support, a mechanism to relieve stress, and comic relief when I need it most. My friends have been so accepting of the fact that I have probably not been a great friend to them, and certainly have not returned their care and compassion during the last three years as study, research, and writing have overtaken my social calendar. I am so thankful and truly blessed to have a wonderful network of supportive women in my life.

My husband, Benjamin Lariviere, epitomizes perseverance and dedication. He has served as my constant cheerleader and encourager, repeatedly encouraging me to keep going, even through my continuous threats to give up and abandon this goal. In

tearful late-night conversations, amidst scattered research articles and books, he gently, lovingly, emphatically, and sometimes annoyingly, urged me forward. He held me steadfast to my goal, and refused to let me abandon it. He was my strength when I was too tired and overwhelmed to conjure my own, my desire when my own faltered, my lamp when sadness stamped out the light, my accountability when I wanted to turn my attention to other pursuits, and my motivation when mine was lacking. Without his continued support and love, this accomplishment would have never become a reality. It is because of his unyielding dedication to me through this process that my children had the opportunity to witness their mother, confronted with obstacles and adversity, persevere to achieve a goal, a gift that I am so proud to have the ability to give to them.

Throughout my lifetime, my parents have been my biggest supporters. My father, John Sowell, has always been forthcoming with sentiments of the pride he has felt in my various accomplishments. Although I have always seen myself in my father, the past year has marked a turning point in our relationship, as I have witnessed in him a strength I never knew he possessed. The day that I graduate with my doctorate marks exactly one year since my mother, Janet Sowell, passed away. This year has been fraught with a raw emotion and an emptiness that I have never before experienced, but through it all I have stood in awe of the resilience and resolve of my father. He has taken on life without my mother with such determination and positivity, and has inspired me to persist in the accomplishment of this goal, not in spite of my own sadness, but because of it, and because it is what my mother would have wanted for me.

I can so clearly envision my mother's beaming smile, her eyes glistening with tears of pride, as she declares, "Congratulations, Dr. Lariviere." Although this scene can

exist only in my mind, it is, nevertheless, precious, and serves as a continuous reminder of her delight in an accomplishment that she was not physically able to witness. While I still yearn to hug her and share with her the details of my life, there is not a day that passes that I do not feel her love and influence at the very core of everything I do. This dissertation is ultimately dedicated to her, as she has been, and continues to be, the single most influential person in life.

ABSTRACT

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Purpose

The primary purpose of this journal-ready dissertation was to determine the degree to which differences existed in extracurricular participation rates among students as a function of status as an English Language Learner. Additionally, the extent to which participation was related to socioeconomic status and length of time in U.S. schools was examined. The secondary purpose of this journal-ready dissertation was to ascertain to what extent participation in extracurricular activities related to English language acquisition, academic performance, and certain behaviors related to school connectedness among English Language Learners.

Method

A non-experimental, causal-comparative research design was utilized for this journal-ready dissertation. Archival data were obtained from a large district in southeast Texas. Specific information obtained was inclusive of student status as an English Language Learner, student status as economically disadvantaged, student ethnicity, student years in U.S. schools, and course enrollment. In addition, scores on the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System, scores on the State of Texas Assessment for Academic Readiness, attendance rates, grade point average, student status for honor roll, and number of disciplinary infractions were analyzed as a function of extracurricular activity participation.

Results

Revealed in the analyses was that English Language Learners did not engage in extracurricular activities at a rate that was comparable to their English proficient peers. Further, economic status and length of time in U.S. schools was not related to participation among English Language Learners. Participation in extracurricular activities was also not related to progress toward or attainment of language fluency. However, participation in extracurricular activities was statistically significantly negatively related to reading and mathematics achievement for English Language Learners. For all of the school connectedness factors examined (i.e., student grades, student attendance, and student discipline), statistically significant relationships were present for English Language Learners who participated in extracurricular activities. Results were not congruent with the extant literature regarding extracurricular activity participation and school performance. Suggestions for future research, as well as implications for policy and practice, were provided.

KEY WORDS: Extracurricular Activities, School Connectedness, English Language Learner, Limited English Proficient, Second Language Acquisition, School Involvement

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I cannot imagine affiliating myself with any doctoral program other than Sam Houston State University's Department of Educational Leadership. The faculty and staff of this department have been unparalleled in their professionalism and support. Specifically, I would like to acknowledge Dr. Julie P. Combs for continuing to encourage me, even when I was being unnecessarily hard on myself for not meeting self-inflicted expectations. Also, Dr. Rebecca Bustamante was instrumental setting me on the right path on my dissertation. Her support and encouragement have meant so much to me.

I was so fortunate to have two wonderful professors serve on my dissertation committee. First, I want to acknowledge Dr. Cynthia Martinez-Garcia for her beautiful sprit of servant leadership. Dr. George W. Moore has been one of the most thoughtful and kind professors I have ever had the privilege to know. His genuine concern for his students is ever-apparent in every interaction. I am truly grateful to both of these leaders for their commitment to me and to this program.

As I entered this program, the primary aspect that intimidated me the most was statistics. Little did I know that I would be fortunate enough to have Dr. John R. Slate as a professor for these difficult classes. Not only did he immediately put me at ease with the straightforward way that he presented complex concepts, but he also immediately showed a personal interest in my life. Dr. Slate has been, perhaps, the most influential professor I have encountered in all of my academic endeavors. I have no doubt that I would have had a difficult time completing this project had it not been for the hard work and dedication of Dr. Slate. The unyielding commitment that he shows to all of his doctoral students is something that all professional educators should strive to emulate. I have learned so much about not only research and writing from him, but also about integrity. I have grown immensely as a leader, and as a scholar, during my time in the doctoral program in educational leadership at Sam Houston State University. I am forever indebted to the wonderful professionals who have helped mold me into the leader and practitioner that I am today.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2002, profoundly changed the way K-12 students in the United States were instructed and assessed (Murray, Fix, & Zimmermann, 2007). The No Child Left Behind legislation required each state to (a) approve, develop, and implement an accountability system based on standards; (b) conduct annual evaluation of student achievement; and (c) guarantee that all students were mastering academic content standards. This work was mandated to be completed by 2014. Two of the specified goals of the No Child Left Behind Act were to close achievement gaps in standardized test scores and to certify that traditionally underserved groups such as students from certain racial and ethnic groups, English Language Learners, and students with learning disabilities attain satisfactory levels of academic ability on state performance tests. In addition, states were charged with ensuring that English Language Learners gained English proficiency and developed high levels of academic achievement comparable to their English-speaking peers. These new mandates were especially important given the growth in the immigrant population in elementary and secondary public schools in the United States at that time (Batalova, Fix, & Murray, 2007).

In 2012, and in response to the No Child Left Behind Act, the Texas Education Agency reformed the accountability standards for school districts to include language acquisition, as measured by the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS), of students labeled as Limited English Proficient in the state of Texas accountability system, or referred to as English Language Learners in the academic literature. Texas accountability requirements, paired with federal accountability

measures, namely the Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAO), place great importance on the academic performance of English Language Learners.

Background of the Study

In the last several decades, the demographic landscape of the United States has changed. Between 1990 and 2013, the number of non-native English speakers in the United States grew from nearly 14 million to 25.1 million (Aud, Fox, & KewalRamani, 2010). Of the approximately 49.9 million students enrolled in U.S. public schools during the 2007-2008 school year, 10.7% were classified as English Language Learners (Aud et al., 2010). Batalova and McHugh (2010) estimated that 11 million, or 21% of all enrolled students, reported speaking a language other than English in the home. Further, according to parent surveys, about 25% of these students had difficulty with the English language. Texas has been identified as one of four states with the largest number of English Language Learners (Batalova & McHugh, 2010). Ruiz-Soto, Hooker, and Batalova (2015) reported that approximately 15% of students enrolled in Texas public schools were identified as English Language Learners.

Increases in the immigrant population led to this dramatic growth in the number of English Language Learners (Zong & Batalova, 2015). Of the nation's immigrant English Language Learner population, most were born to immigrant parents (Zong & Batalova, 2015). When compared to their native-born peers, children born outside of the United States are much more likely to be English Language Learners. In 2013, 50% of immigrants were considered to be English Language Learners, whereas only 2% of the native-born population could be classified as English Language Learners (Zong & Batalova, 2015). Batalova et al. (2007) reported that first generation immigrant students

were about three times more likely to struggle with English than second generation immigrants, and 18 times more likely to be identified as English Language Learners than third generation children of immigrants. At the national level, 57% of all children characterized as English Language Learners were native-born (Batalova et al., 2007). Of English Language Learners who are native-born, as many as 27% of the English Language Learners are second generation immigrants, and 30% English Language Learners are third generation. In Texas, native-born students account for a larger percentage of the total population of English Language Learners than that of the national average. Eighty-five percent of English Language Learners in Grades K-5 and 59% of English Language Learners in upper grades were born in the United States (Flores, Batalova, & Fix, 2012). The number of native-born English Language Learners in public schools would indicate that although many English Language Learners are educated exclusively in U.S. schools, these students do not demonstrate the native-like English fluency that might give them equal opportunity in the educational accountability systems (Batalova et al., 2007).

In terms of ethnic group membership and language nativity on a national scale, individuals who struggle with the English language were much more likely to be identified as Hispanic or Asian than their English-proficient counterparts. Although 63% of the population of English Language Learners is comprised of Hispanic students, only 12% of the English-proficient population is Hispanic (Zong & Batalova, 2015). Following this trend, Spanish is the predominant language spoken by both the immigrant and native-born English Language Learners population in the United States. Approximately 64% of students who are classified as English Language Learners speak

Spanish (Zong & Batalova, 2015). In Texas, the percentage of English Language Learners who speak Spanish (i.e., 84%) is much higher than the national average (Pandya, Batalova, & McHugh, 2011).

Large numbers of native-born adolescents continue to be classified as English Language Learners in secondary schools. These students sometimes are referred to as long-term English Language Learners, indicating that many children who are identified as English Language Learners are not developing sufficient English proficiency after many years in the U.S. school system (Batalova et al., 2007). In a study involving third-generation immigrants in public schools, Batalova et al. (2007) contended that English Language Learners pose major challenges for states and districts to meet the standards mandated by the No Child Left Behind Act. Exacerbating this challenge is the increased number of immigrant children who are older when they enter U.S. schools. Immigrant students entering the U.S. school system later in adolescence might find it more difficult to achieve English language proficiency because resources and time to develop fluency are limited (Capps et al., 2005). Short and Fitzsimmons (2007) suggested that many secondary schools have not been equipped with the adequate resources needed to bring newly arrived immigrant students to a necessary level of English and academic proficiency to be successful in school.

Increasingly, educational leaders are charged with the daunting task of advancing students' language acquisition so that students show progress from year-to-year and perform satisfactorily on state tests (Texas Education Agency, 2016b, 2016c). In Texas, no exclusion exists from taking state tests in English at the secondary grade levels for English Language Learners, regardless of length of time in U.S. schools or functional

level of English Acquisition (Texas Education Agency, 2016b, Texas Education Agency, 2016c). Due to the nature of both the federal accountability system and the Texas accountability system, the performance of English Language Learners is factored multiple times when calculating accountability ratings of schools. Moreover, the English proficiency of English Language Learners is not only measured and reported through the TELPAS, but students' proficiency also influences performance on other state assessments, such as the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR). Performance on the state reading and writing assessments, as well as the state English language proficiency assessment, are both used in determining accountability for schools. Both assessments were designed to measure the academic English proficiency of English Language Learners (Short, Echevarria, & Richards-Tutor, 2011). For this reason, educational leaders must focus their efforts on improving the language acquisition of English Language Learners by ensuring several factors are in place to support academic English language proficiency, including participation in extracurricular activities at school.

Statement of the Problem

English Language Learners, who are often immigrants of low socioeconomic status, pose a great challenge for schools in that their academic performance is often contingent upon their ability to acquire native-like English language proficiency (Short et al., 2011). English Language Learners have been reported to have lower test scores and higher dropout rates than their English speaking peers (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2009). Despite the increased importance of the performance of students in this population, little research is available on factors involved in school connectedness of English Language

Learners. Because English Language Learners bring the added obstacle of second language acquisition to school accountability, school administrators must have a clear idea how school involvement could potentially motivate student achievement. Subsequently, the limited English proficiency of English Language Learners often diminish the likelihood that they will participate in extracurricular activities (Peguero, 2011). Connections between participation in extracurricular activities, student achievement, and school connectedness have been examined extensively (e.g., Diaz, 2005; Farb & Matjasko, 2012; Stearnes & Glennie, 2010).

In addition, information related to the participation of students representing specific populations (e.g., low economic status and immigrants), have been explored (Garcia, 2012; Peck, Roeser, Zarrett, & Eccles, 2008; Peguero, 2010; Suarez-Orozco, Pimentel, & Martin, 2009). For instance, upon exploring available literature, a myriad of studies about extracurricular involvement involving students who were immigrants was uncovered (Okamoto, Herda, & Hartzog, 2012; Peguero, 2010). Additionally, several studies related to the involvement of Hispanic students are available (Garcia, 2012; Peck et al., 2008; Peguero, 2010; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2009). However, one student population that has not been examined adequately in the available literature on student participation in extracurricular activities is the student population considered to have limited English proficiency. Specifically, limited research is available in which the relationship between participation in extracurricular activities and English language acquisition is explored. This specific topic of study could be valuable to educational leaders, especially in light of theories related to the benefits of participation in extracurricular activities and language acquisition.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this journal-ready dissertation was to determine the degree to which differences existed in extracurricular participation rates among English Language Learners, students recently reclassified from English Language Learner status, and students who are not English Language Learners. Additionally, the extent to which participation was related to socioeconomic status and length of time in U.S. schools was examined. The secondary purpose of this journal-ready dissertation was to ascertain to what extent participation in extracurricular activities related to English language acquisition, academic performance, and certain behaviors related to school connectedness among English Language Learners.

Theoretical Frameworks

A theoretical framework for this journal-ready dissertation was provided by two separate, but related theories. First, suggested in the social interactionist theory of language acquisition is that language development is not solely biological or cognitive (Dolati, 2012). Social interactionists assert that children learn language through their desire to socialize and communicate with one another (Dolati, 2012). According to the social interactionist theory, "communicative interaction with others, not just language input, is crucial" to language development (Hoff, 2012, p. 20). Grounded in this theory is the notion that English Language Learners need more than just academic exposure to language for acquisition to occur. Instead, the ability of English Language Learners to acquire the target language is increased as they are given the opportunity to develop interpersonal language through social contexts. Secondly, Krashen (1982), in his Affective Filter Hypothesis, suggested students can only acquire a second language if

their emotional states allow for the biological function of language acquisition to occur. Krashen (1982) argued that the affective filter, a psychological barrier to language acquisition, influences the English Language Learner's ability to take in available language input. Negative feelings serve as obstacles to the effective processing of language inputs (Ni, 2012). Conversely, students who have positive feelings and low anxiety in educational environments have a greater capacity to process and acquire available language inputs (Ni, 2012). English Language Learners who demonstrate low levels of motivation, lack of self-confidence, or high levels of anxiety have high affective filters that limit their ability to process available language inputs to acquire the second language in an effective manner. Introducing English Language Learners to social experiences through which they can learn a second language in a comfortable and non-threatening way will allow the English Language Learners to learn from the language inputs with greater ease. By providing motivation and fostering a comfortable learning environment, students may benefit from an ideal setting for language acquisition through extracurricular activity participation.

Definition of Terms

Used in this study, the following terms are defined to provide background for the reader, and to facilitate understanding the context of this investigation.

Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs)

Under the No Child Left Behind Act, districts that accepted Title III funds for students identified as English Language Learners were held accountable for student progress by three federal accountability measures, AMAOs (Texas Education Agency, 2012). Used to determine student progress in the English language, the AMAO 1 was

calculated by the percentage of students who increased one proficiency level in one year's time. The measure that was used to determine student attainment of English proficiency was the AMAO 2 (Texas Education Agency, 2012). For this accountability measure, students were divided into two sub-groups, (a) students with one to four years in U.S. schools and (b) students with five or more years in U.S. schools. Students who attained an Advanced High proficiency rating on TELPAS were considered to be fluent in the English language. Measured by AMAO 3 was the percentage of students in both sub-groups who attained an Advanced High rating on the TELPAS. Lastly, AMAO 3 was used to determine the academic achievement of English Language Learners. The percentage of students meeting passing standards on STAAR Reading and STAAR Mathematics was represented in AMAO 3.

New federal legislation, the Every Student Succeeds Act, was passed in December of 2015 (Walen, 2015). One of the most notable differences between the No Child Left Behind Act and the Every Student Succeeds Act is the shifting of accountability for English Language Learners from Title 3 to the larger Title 1 (Carnock, 2016). With this change, the AMAOs under the No Child Left Behind Act were suspended (Carnock, 2016; Walen, 2015). Under new mandates outlined in the Every Student Succeeds Act, however, both student academic achievement and the progress of English Language Learners toward the attainment of English proficiency are required in state accountability systems. These mandates are closely related to the previous AMAOs (Carnock, 2016). For that reason, and for the purposes of the second study in this journal-ready dissertation, the federal AMAOs were used as a foundation.

Attendance Rates

Attendance rates are reported in the Academic Excellence Indicator System based on student attendance and the number of days enrolled. In this study, locally reported attendance rates using the same method was utilized. Attendance is calculated by dividing the total number of days students were in attendance by the total number of days students were enrolled (Texas Education Agency, 2014).

Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular activities are sometimes referred to as school-based or school-sponsored activities (Peguero, 2010), and are characterized as activities that are both "structured and supervised" (Peck et al., 2008, p. 136). Extracurricular activities typically constitute participation outside of the school day during a student's spare time (Feldman & Matjasko, 2007). Although voluntary in nature, extracurricular activities, and a student's participation in them, can often be restricted by the sponsoring school (Stearns & Glennie, 2010). Examples of extracurricular activities that have warranted analysis by previous researchers include: (a) athletics, (b) cheerleading or spirit clubs, (c) community service clubs, (d) performance organizations, and (e) academic clubs (Hunt, 2005). Student participation in extracurricular activities is usually measured as either participant or nonparticipant (Hunt, 2005). For the purposes of this study, extracurricular activities were school sponsored and were tied to a school course. Specific courses were included based on after school requirements associated with the courses that had been verified in course descriptions published in the district course catalog. The reader is referred to Table 1.1 for a listing of examples regarding course descriptions that lead to their inclusion. Extracurricular activities excluded were those activities that are

sponsored by community or church organizations, and that were not tied to a specific course. Examples of extracurricular activities that were excluded are community sports, church youth groups, and various clubs and organizations that did not have course requirements within the school.

Table 1.1

Examples of Verbiage in Course Descriptions

Course Title	Extracurricular Activity	Verbiage in Course Description
Band	Arts	Attendance is required at all after-school rehearsals
Orchestra	Arts	All ensembles … require frequent rehearsals and performances after school hours.
Theatre Arts III	Arts	Attendance is required at all after school rehearsals and performances as a part of the graded curricula.
Debate	Academic	students must … compete in at least one competition …that will require… rehearsal time after school hours.
Athletics	Athletic	Athletic classes meet during the school day with seasonal practices also being required outside school hours.
Cheerleading	Athletic	specific preparation for game and competition performances.
JROTC	Leadership	JROTC also offers extracurricular activities such as drill team, color guard, and community service.

Grade Point Average (GPA)

A grade point average is a value that represents accumulated final grades earned by students in courses over time or over the course of a diploma or degree. Grade point averages can be calculated using various methods, which are usually adopted in school board policy. In the district represented in the studies contained in this journal-ready dissertation, GPA is calculated by dividing the total number of course grades by the total number of courses for the semester. Only for purposes of class rank are weighted grades be used in the calculation of GPA. Therefore, GPA examined in the third study did not contain weighted grades.

School Connectedness

School Connectedness is defined as the attachment students experience toward their school environment as a result of a positive interaction and perceived concern from faculty and staff members (Wilson, 2004).

State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR)

The STAAR, which was implemented in the spring of 2012, includes annual assessments in reading and mathematics in Grade 3 through Grade 8, assessments in writing in Grade 4 and Grade 7, assessments in science in Grade 5 and Grade 8, and an assessment in Social Studies in Grade 8. At the high school level, End of Couse (EOC) exams are administered for English I, English II, Algebra I, Biology, and U.S. History. The assessments are used to measure mastery of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), and results of the assessments are factored into state and federal accountability systems (Texas Education Agency, 2016b).

Student Discipline

Student behavior was quantified as the overall number of disciplinary infractions resulting in a disciplinary referral for each student. Student discipline, for the purposes of this journal-ready dissertation, excluded any discipline referrals that resulted from previous offenses. For instance, cases in which students, who were previously assigned detention for a discipline infraction, receive a second referral for ignoring the initial consequence were excluded. No consideration for severity of initial infraction type or consequence occurred in collecting data for the study.

Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS)

The Texas Education Agency designed the TELPAS to assess the progress of English Language Learners in their attainment of the English language (Texas Education Agency, 2016c). The assessment consists of ratings on the four English language proficiency standards: (a) Listening, (b) speaking, (c) reading, and (d) writing. Ratings for Listening, speaking, and writing are determined via holistic rating and teacher observation. The ratings for reading are determined via an online exam (Texas Education Agency, 2016c). Student proficiency level descriptors are: (a) beginner, (b) intermediate, (c) advanced, or (d) Advanced High in each language domain. English Language Learners are assessed using the TELPAS in the spring of each year (Texas Education Agency, 2016c).

TELPAS Composite Score

Ratings for all four of the language components are combined to create a composite score (Texas Education Agency, 2016c). The reading rating comprises 50% of the composite score and writing comprises 30% of the composite score. Listening and

speaking ratings each make up 10% of the total composite score. The composite score is used to determine growth in English language acquisition. An increase of one level is necessary for the student to be considered as making progress. Sweeping changes were made to both the component percentages that made up the composite score and the rigor of the reading assessment between the 2013 and 2014 TELPAS administrations (Texas Education Agency, 2016c).

Literature Review Search Procedures

For the purpose of this journal-ready dissertation proposal, the literature regarding participation in extracurricular activities among English Language Learners was examined. Phrases that were used in the search for applicable literature were: extracurricular activities, school activities, school involvement, school connectedness, Hispanic, English Language Learners, Limited English Proficient, and immigrant. All searches were conducted via the EBSCO Host database. Recent academic journals that contained scholarly peer reviewed articles were reviewed.

Key word searches for extracurricular activities yielded 3,834 results and by narrowing the range from 2000 to 2015 and limiting articles to include only peer reviewed articles, the search was reduced to 1,466. This number was reduced to two results when English Language Learner was added to the search and further reduced to one result when the term Limited English Proficient was added. For this reason, the terms immigrant and Hispanic were used to reduce the search to 14 and 30 articles respectively. Key words school activities were used and 6,305 articles from 2000 to 2015 were displayed. The terms immigrant and Hispanic were used to reduce the search to 51 and 110 articles respectively. Key words school involvement were used and 1,644

articles from 2000 to 2015 were displayed. The terms immigrant and Hispanic were used to reduce the search to 59 and 63 articles, respectively. A key word school connectedness was used and 250 articles from 2000 to 2015 were displayed.

Delimitations

The three studies in this journal-ready dissertation were delimited to a single large suburban district in southeast Texas that includes eight middle schools and five high schools. Specifically addressed in this study was participation in extracurricular activities and its relationship to performance on the STAAR and the TELPAS tests, and factors associated with school connectedness (e.g., student grades, student discipline, and student attendance rates). Data on English Language Learners, who specifically are classified as Limited English Proficient students in the Texas accountability system, were analyzed in this journal-ready dissertation. The three studies were further delimited by excluding extracurricular activities that were not school sponsored and that were not connected to a school course was excluded.

Limitations

In this journal-ready dissertation, relationships were examined between participation in extracurricular activities and the TELPAS performance, STAAR performance, and factors associated with school connectedness (e.g., student grades, student discipline, and student attendance rates). As such, several important limitations were apparent. A major limitation involved the fact that extracurricular activity participation was restricted to school-sponsored activities connected to a school course. This limitation does not allow for the inclusion of community, church, or private activities, and it also excluded participation in activities that were school-sponsored, but

were not connected to a school course. In addition, performance on state mandated assessments was analyzed. As such, discrepancies in reporting student data to the state or in the accurate identification of students in terms of English Language Learner status could have occurred. This limitation, however, should be marginal because the Texas Education Agency audits district data provided by campuses and institutes consequences for schools that do not provide correct data. Another limitation was that only quantitative data were used to determine the relationship between participation in extracurricular activities on student academic performance and connectedness to school. A final limitation involved the use of archival data. In causal-comparative studies using archival data, no determination of a cause can be made (Creswell, 2014). Factors other than participation in extracurricular activities may contribute to differences in student academic performance and connectedness to school that might be revealed through analyzing data related to this journal-ready dissertation.

Assumptions

An underlying assumption in this journal-ready dissertation was that the data reported to the Texas Education Agency were accurate. A second assumption made was that students classified as English Language Learners were appropriately labeled and reported into district databases. Therefore, any adjustments to these assumptions could result in inaccuracies and contradictory findings. Additionally, it was assumed that course descriptions provided in course catalogs were accurate because these descriptions were used to determine which school courses contained the expectation of after school participation.

Procedures

Following approval of the journal-ready dissertation proposal by the dissertation committee, an application was submitted to Sam Houston State University's Institutional Review Board. The application included a letter of cooperation that was requested from the school district for purposes of obtaining data. Once a letter of approval was received for this journal-ready dissertation, archival data for the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years for students in Grade 6 through Grade 12 in a large Texas public school north of the Houston area were collected. Once data were configured in MS Excel, they were then converted into a data file used in a statistical analysis software program. The statistical software program that was used to address the research questions in the three studies was IBM's Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS- Version 23).

Organization of the Study

This journal-ready dissertation is composed of five chapters. Included in Chapter I are the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of this study, significance of the study, theoretical framework, definitions of terms, assumptions, delimitations, and limitations of the three research studies. Chapters II, III, and IV are comprised of a background of the study, statement of the problem, and purpose of the study, research questions, and methods for each of the first, second, and third empirical research investigations respectively. Chapter V contains a discussion of the practical relevance of the three research studies, including connection to the theoretical framework, implications for policy and practice, and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER II

DIFFERENCES IN PARTICIPATION IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AS A FUNCTION OF ENGLISH PROFICIENCY FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

This dissertation follows the style and format of *Research in the Schools (RITS)*.

Abstract

In this investigation, data were obtained from the databases of a large, suburban district in southeast Texas for all students who were enrolled in Grades 6 through 12 for the 2014-2015 school year. Specifically analyzed was the degree to which differences were present in participation in extracurricular activities among three student groups (i.e., students labeled as English Language Learners, students recently reclassified from English Language Learner status, and students not labeled as English Language Learners). Participation in extracurricular activities was examined by comparing economic status and length of time in U.S. schools. English Language Learners and students recently reclassified from English Language Learner status did not engage in extracurricular activities at a comparable rate to their non-English Language Learner peers. Students in these groups were half as likely to participate in extracurricular activities then students who were not identified as English Language Learners. Economic status and length of time in U.S. schools were not statistically significantly related to extracurricular activity participation. Suggestions for research and policy were discussed.

Keywords: Extracurricular Activities, English Language Learners, Limited English Proficient

DIFFERENCES IN PARTICIPATION IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AS A FUNCTION OF ENGLISH PROFICIENCY FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

In recent years, the demographic landscape of the United States has changed. Between 1990 and 2013, English Language Learners in the United States increased from nearly 14 million to 25.1 million. Of the approximately 49.9 million students who were enrolled in U.S. public schools during the 2007-2008 school year, 10.7% of these students were classified as English Language Learners (Aud, Fox, & KewalRamani, 2010). Batalova and McHugh (2010) estimated that 11 million, or 21% of all enrolled students, reported speaking a language other than English in the home. Further, according to parent surveys, about 25% of these students had difficulty with the English language. In terms of ethnic group membership and language nativity on the national scale, individuals who struggle with the English language were much more likely to be identified as Hispanic or Asian than their English-proficient counterparts. Sixty-three percent of identified English Language Learners is comprised of Hispanics, whereas only 12% of the English-proficient population is Hispanic (Zong & Batalova, 2015). Following this trend, Spanish is the predominant language spoken by both the immigrant and native-born English Language Learner population in the United States. Approximately 64% of students who are classified as English Language Learners speak Spanish (Zong & Batalova, 2015). In Texas, the percentage of English Language Learners who speak Spanish, 84%, is much higher than the national average (Pandya, Batalova, & McHugh, 2011).

Extracurricular activities are sometimes referred to as school-based or school-sponsored activities (Peguero, 2010), and both are characterized as activities that are "structured and supervised" (Peck, Roeser, Zarrett, & Eccles, 2008, p. 136). Extracurricular activities typically constitute participation outside of the school day during a student's spare time (Feldman & Matjasko, 2007). The benefits of student participation in extracurricular activities have been explored in a vast array of research studies. Revealed in the academic literature regarding extracurricular activities is a connection between participation in extracurricular activities and increased academic performance, increased levels of school connectedness, and decreased risk behaviors.

As public schools in the United States have provided more and more diverse avenues for students to participate in extracurricular activities, researchers (e.g., Stearnes & Glennie, 2010) recognized a positive relationship between the level of student participation in extracurricular activities and the rate at which students performed at grade level. To this point, much of the research in the academic literature tended to be supportive of developmental gains associated with extracurricular activities involvement (Farb & Matjasko, 2012; Feldman & Matjasko, 2005). The fact that students, through participation in extracurricular activities, are afforded opportunities to increase both academic and nonacademic skills while establishing and maintaining positive relationships with both teachers and peers provides some explanation for the correlation between academic performance and participation in extracurricular activities (Stearnes & Glennie, 2010). According to Diaz (2005), students who participated in extracurricular activities had an increased connection to school and to the adults working in schools. Further, participation in extracurricular activities has been correlated to the overall

student perception that school faculty is committed to creating a positive school environment for the students (Diaz, 2005). Moreover, students might motivated by these perceptions to forge positive relationships within school settings. Present in the current literature is the indication that as students, especially newcomer immigrant students, engaged in extracurricular activities, positive relationships with faculty members within the school setting, academic engagement and academic achievement increased (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2009).

Similarly, a negative relationship exists between student participation in extracurricular activities and involvement in risky behaviors (Covay & Carbonaro, 2010; Farb & Matjasko, 2012). Kort-Butler and Martin (2015) documented that students who participated in extracurricular activities in high school were less likely to engage in negative behaviors, such as binge drinking and drug use in their emerging adulthood. The authors posited that this relationship could be a result of the development of social identity and social relationships that form through participation in extracurricular activities. Findings presented by Molinuevo, Bonilla, Pardo, Doval, and Torrubia (2010) were supportive of prior research that indicated that participation in extracurricular activities and better overall emotional adjustment in students were positively related.

Overall, the academic literature on the topic of extracurricular activities participation extensively supports the benefits gained by students who are involved in extracurricular activities. More specifically, several studies involving immigrant and Hispanic students can be retrieved (Garcia, 2012; Okamoto, Herda, & Hartzog, 2012; Peck et al., 2008; Peguero, 2010; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2009). Less abundant is information about extracurricular activities in regard to English Language Learners.

However, as supported by demographic data, the population of English Language Learners in Texas comprises a high percentage of students who are labeled as Hispanic or immigrant. Because notable overlap exists in these student populations (Batalova et al., 2007; Flores et al., 2012; Pandya et al., 2011; Zong & Batalova, 2015), exploring literature regarding participation in extracurricular activities among immigrant and Hispanic students is beneficial.

Reasons for Lack of Participation

Aud et al. (2010) reported that between 1990 and 2007, the percentage of immigrants living in the United States increased from 8% to 14%. Also, the predominance of foreign-born students enrolled in U.S. public schools has increased. In 2007, about 5% of school-age children in the United States were not native born (Aud et al., 2010). Although the number of foreign-born students in the United States could be construed as a relatively inconsequential percentage as compared to the entire student population, it is important to note the potentially negative academic influence immigrant students have on schools (Aud et al., 2010, p. 10). Indicated in research is that "foreign-born children and children of foreign-born parents, …may not perform as well as their U.S.-born peers on measures of academic achievement and tend to have higher dropout rates" (Aud et al., 2010, p. 10). Examining the rates of participation in extracurricular activities among this group of students might provide insights into the group's low academic performance. Although research exists through which general trends in extracurricular activities participation among immigrant students is explored, few researchers (Garcia, 2012; Peguero, 2010) have explored the possible reasons for their lack of participation. However, Peguero (2010) cited student socioeconomic status,

immigrant status, and English language acquisition as contributing factors to noninvolvement in extracurricular activities extracurricular activities among immigrant students.

In reviewing the research literature, student economic status appears to be a significant indicator of participation in extracurricular activities. This trend is particularly important considering that immigrant students "tend to be of lower socioeconomic status than their U.S.-born peers" (Peck et al., 2008, p. 136). Peguero (2010) determined that as the socioeconomic status of an immigrant family increased, so did student participation in school-based activities, regardless of the type of activity. In addition, secondary students from families of low socioeconomic status were reported to be more likely to be employed after school. In fact, nearly 25% of the participants in the study were employed on a part-time basis (Peguero, 2010). Garcia (2012) examined patterns of student employment and their effect on participation in extracurricular activities. The author used data collected from the 2002 Educational Longitudinal Study which consisted of 11,280 students who represented 659 secondary schools across the United States. Garcia (2012) revealed that as the number of work hours increased for immigrant students, the rate of participation in extracurricular activities decreased.

Several researchers (e.g., Okamoto et al., 2012; Peguero, 2010) have indicated that student immigrant status can serve as a predictor of anticipated levels of participation in extracurricular activities. Okamoto et al. (2012) conducted a quantitative study in which rates of student participation in extracurricular activities extracurricular activities in secondary schools with different economic statuses were compared. The researchers used data (n = 14,139) from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health

(2012) to compare patterns of participation in school sponsored activities of students who were immigrants and with patterns of participation among native born students. Okamoto et al. (2012) determined that immigrant students were less likely to participate in school-sponsored extracurricular activities than their native-born peers. Hispanic immigrants were 50% less likely to participate in extracurricular activities regardless of the socioeconomic status of the school (Okamoto et al., 2012). Students who were Asian immigrants, on the other hand, exhibited lower rates of nonparticipation. The lack of participation among immigrant students was apparent particularly in schools where students had a higher socioeconomic status, which indicated a level of perceived alienation on the part of the immigrant students in these schools. Peguero (2010) explained that first-generation Latinos were less likely to participate in school-based clubs and activities than their native-born Latino peers. Additionally, the author established that this trend was accurate regardless of the type of extracurricular activities examined. Peguero (2010) suggested that it "may be prudent for school educators and administrators to acknowledge students' immigrant status and …encourage Latino immigrant children to participate in extracurricular activities, a vital resource that may lead to educational success" (p. 69).

English language proficiency also emerged as a contributing factor to both determining rate of extracurricular activities participation and predicting academic resilience among immigrant students. The majority of immigrant newcomers arrives with deficiencies in social and academic English, and must not only acquire the English language, but also adjust to a sometimes vastly different school setting than they might be accustomed. Often, immigrant newcomers also must gain fundamental academic skills

(Suarez-Orozco, Pimentel, & Martin, 2009). These educational deficiencies could be cited as contributing factors to rates of nonparticipation in extracurricular activities among newcomer immigrant students.

Theoretical Framework

Beyond the natural and cognitive process associated with second language acquisition, another major aspect is associated with sociocultural considerations (Collier, 1995). Vygotsky, through his zone of proximal development, examined the role of social interactions in the development of language (Díaz-Rico, 2004). It is within the zone, between natural cognitive ability and potential cognitive growth, that social interactions exist (Díaz-Rico, 2004). Grounded in the work of Vygotsky, Schumann hypothesized an important second language acquisition theory, the Acculturation Model, through which he posited that language acquisition is central to the general process of acculturation (Freeman & Freeman, 2001). Collier (1995) contended that at the center of development lies the individual student who is influenced by the sociocultural process.

Further, Krashen (1982) contended that as second language learners acculturate into the culture of the target language, more opportunities for language input arise and motivation towards second language learning increases. Saunders and O'Brien (2006) asserted that the frequency with which language learners interact with natives of the target language has an influence on language development. Moreover, exposure to the target language in isolation is not as important as the nature of the interaction between native language speakers and second language learners (Saunders & O'Brien, 2006).

Creating educational policy through which English Language Learners would be encouraged to acculturate, for instance through participation in extracurricular activities,

could result in increased exposure to second language models and increased motivation to communicate within the target language. To this end, obstacles to participation should be identified. Doing so might empower school leaders to seek innovative ways to encourage higher rates of extracurricular participation by students who are English Language Learners. Through increased participation in extracurricular activities, English Language Learners could acquire the critical social and academic language that is needed to be successful in school at a more expedited rate.

Statement of the Problem

Students who are labeled as English Language Learners in state accountability systems have lower test scores and higher dropout rates than their native speaking peers (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2009). Despite the increased importance on the academic performance of students in this population, little research is available on factors involved in school connectedness of English Language Learners. Because English Language Learners bring the added obstacle of second language acquisition to school accountability, school administrators must have a clear idea how school involvement could potentially motivate student achievement.

English Language Learners, who also are often immigrants of low socioeconomic status, pose a challenge for schools in that their academic performance is often contingent upon their ability to acquire native-like English language proficiency (Short, Echevarria, & Richards-Tutor, 2011). Subsequently, the limited English language abilities of English Language Learners often diminish the likelihood that they will participate in extracurricular activities (Peguero, 2011). Connections between participation in extracurricular activities, student achievement and school connectedness has been

examined extensively (Diaz, 2005; Farb & Matjasko, 2012; Stearnes & Glennie, 2010). In addition, information related to extracurricular activities and specific to unique student groups (e.g., students of low economic status and immigrant) has been explored (Garcia, 2012; Peck et al., 2008; Peguero, 2010; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2009). For instance, upon exploring available literature, a myriad of studies about extracurricular involvement involving students who were immigrants was uncovered (Okamoto et al., 2012; Peguero, 2010). Additionally, several studies related to the involvement of Hispanic students are available (Garcia, 2012; Peck et al., 2008; Peguero, 2010; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2009). However, one student group whose extracurricular activities involvement has not been examined adequately in the available literature is students who are English Language Learners or those students classified as having limited English proficiency in the Texas state accountability system. For purposes of this study, the phrase, English Language Learners, was used in lieu of the Limited English Proficient terminology present in the Texas accountability system.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which differences existed in extracurricular participation rates among English Language Learners, students recently reclassified from English Language Learner status, and students not labeled as English Language Learners. A second purpose was to determine to degree to which participation in extracurricular activities for students in each group was related to economic status. Lastly, the third purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which length of time in U.S. schools was related to participation in extracurricular activities for English Language Learners.

Significance of the Study

Considering that students who are English Language Learners are the fastest growing student population in the United States (Batalova & McHugh, 2010), school administrators and district leaders may benefit from more research related to this student population. Provided in this study was information specific to the population of English Language Learners, regarding participation in extracurricular activities as compared to the participation of students who were not labeled as English Language Learners and students who had recently been exited from English Language Learner status. The amount of available research on the benefits and participation trends associated with extracurricular activities is exhaustive. However, research regarding the level of school connectedness for English Language Learners is limited. Through this study, data were obtained that could provide valuable information concerning the nature of extracurricular activity participation of English Language Learners, an aspect that could provide educational leaders with insight into the level of school connectedness for English Language Learners. Analyzing trends in school connectedness for English Language Learners by examining their participation in extracurricular activities would add to the current body of literature on school connectedness. By informing school administrators, policymakers, and legislators with research concerning potential inequities in extracurricular activities participation of students who are English Language Learners, school practices encouraging participation might be improved. The information that was provided through this study could provide campus administrators with findings that might drive programmatic changes and the development of instructional strategies to increase student levels of participation and promote inclusive and equitable practices.

Additionally, results and recommendations that emerge from this study have the potential to inform education policy. Currently, the primary section of the Texas Education Code that governs the Texas Education Agency and district policy regarding English Language Learners is Texas Administrative Code Chapter 89.9. Students served in either bilingual or English as a second language programs should be afforded the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities with other students (Texas Education Agency, 2015). Although inclusion of this verbiage is necessary for equitable consideration of English Language Learners to participate in extracurricular activities, the information obtained through this study could provide a rationale for extending this section of the Texas Education Code to include the promotion and encouragement of participation in such activities for students who participate in language programs.

Research Questions

In this empirical investigation, the following research questions were addressed: (a) What is the difference in extracurricular participation rates as a function of English Language Learner classification (i.e., students identified as English Language Learners, reclassified from English Language Learner status, and students not identified as English Language Learners); (b) What is the difference in extracurricular participation rates of English Language Learners as a function of economic status?; (c) What is the difference in extracurricular participation rates of students who have been reclassified from English Language Learners status as a function of economic status?; (d) What is the difference in extracurricular participation rates of students not identified as English Language Learners as a function of economic status?; and (e) For English Language Learners, what is the

difference in extracurricular participation rates as a function of length of time in U.S. schools?

Method

Research Design

The design of this study was non-experimental, causal-comparative due to the fact that no manipulation or treatment of the independent variable occurred (Creswell, 2014; Johnson & Christensen, 2014). The independent variables had already occurred at the time of analysis. In addition, extraneous variables were not controlled. The archival data utilized in this study were representative of past events (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). The independent variables analyzed were student status as English Language Learners (i.e., English Language Learner, non-English Language Learner, and reclassified), student economic status (i.e., economically disadvantaged and not economically disadvantaged), and length of time in U.S. schools (i.e., one through four years and more than five years). The dependent variable was participation in extracurricular activities as determined by content analysis of student transcripts.

Participants and Instrumentation

Archival data from a large school district in Southeast Texas were obtained for the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years. The data that were analyzed herein included demographic information, including economic status and status as English Language Learners of all students in Grades 6 through 12. Economic status of students was coded as either economically disadvantaged or not economically disadvantaged. Students who were economically disadvantaged were those students who had applied and qualified for free and reduced lunch. Student participation in a language program was coded as

English Language Learners, non-English Language Learners, or reclassified. Students classified as English Language Learners included students who reported speaking a language other than English and whose English language assessment results were indicative of language abilities that were not considered fluent. Students classified as non-English Language Learners were students who reported speaking only English, as well as the students who reported speaking a language other than English, but whose language assessment results were indicative of language abilities that were considered fluent. The non-English Language Learner category of students was comprised of students who were formerly English Language Learners, but who met exit criteria based on English fluency. The reclassified student category constituted students who were previously identified as English Language Learners, but met exit criteria based on English fluency in the prior two academic years.

The sample on whom data were obtained and analyzed was approximately 21,000 students, with roughly 5% of the sample consisting of students who were English Language Learners or who had recently been reclassified from English Language Learner status. Participation in extracurricular activities was determined by performing content analysis on both student transcripts and course descriptions published in the district course guides. Course numbers that corresponded to course descriptions that contained verbiage which indicate the extracurricular nature of the course were noted. Specific courses were included based on after school requirements associated with the courses that had been verified in course descriptions published in the district course catalog. For the purposes of this study, only extracurricular activities that were school sponsored and that were tied to a school course were included.

Procedures

In this cross-sectional, explanatory study, participation in extracurricular activities among English Language Learners, students recently reclassified as non-English Language Learners, and students not labeled as English Language Learners who attend school in a diverse district of suburban Houston were examined. In previous research investigations, extracurricular activities have been categorized as sports, academic clubs, volunteer organizations, arts clubs, and social clubs (Bodovski & Durham, 2010; Peck et al., 2008; Peguero, 2011; Simpkins, O'Donnell, Delgado, & Becnel, 2011). Incorporating similar methods, student schedules were analyzed to establish the rates of extracurricular activities participation within the school district.

To create the dataset for this study, several steps were employed. Demographic data were collected for all Grade 6 through Grade 12 students in the school district. Information, such as economic status, ethnicity, and status as English Language Learners, were obtained for all students in the sample. To determine student levels of participation in extracurricular activities, course guides for both middle and high schools were analyzed. Course codes for courses that included specific verbiage pertaining to mandated after school involvement were recorded for use in the study. Once the list of applicable courses is compiled, student lists by course code were accessed and coded using Microsoft Excel. Students who participated in extracurricular activities, regardless of type were assigned a code of 1, while students who did not participate in extracurricular activities were assigned a code of 2. Data concerning participation were merged into the data set containing student demographic information.

Results

To determine whether differences existed in participation in extracurricular activities between the student groups (i.e., students identified as English Language Learners, reclassified from English Language Learner status, and students not identified as English Language Learners) represented in the research questions, a series of Pearson chi-square procedures were conducted. Chi-square procedures are the ideal statistical procedure for research questions in which both the dependent and independent variable are nominal. Additionally, with adequate sample size for each research question, the available cases per cell exceeded the limit of five. Therefore, the assumptions for utilizing the chi-square were met (Field, 2005; Slate & Rojas-LeBouef, 2012).

For the first research question regarding differences in extracurricular activity participation by English Language Learner status, the result was statistically significant, $\chi^2(2) = 103.20$, $p < .001$. The effect size for this research question, Cramer's V, was trivial, .07 (Cohen, 1988). With respect to participation in extracurricular activities, the highest percentage of involvement was present for students who were not identified as English Language Learners, compared to similar percentages for students who were recently reclassified as English Language Learners, 26.1%, and English Language Learners, 24.6%. Delineated in Table 2.1 are the frequencies and percentages of involvement in extracurricular activities by English Language Learner status.

Insert Table 2.1 about here

With respect to differences in extracurricular activity participation as a function of economic status for English Language Learners, the result was not statistically significant, $\chi^2(2) = 0.49$, $p = .48$. Regardless of economic status, English Language Learners had similar rates of extracurricular activity participation. Delineated in Table 2.2 are the frequencies and percentages for this analysis.

Insert Table 2.2 about here

Similarly, with regard to students recently reclassified from English Language Learner status, the result was not statistically significant, $\chi^2(2) = 2.24$, $p = .14$. Extracurricular activity participation rates were similar for students recently reclassified from English Language Leaner status, regardless of their economic status. Table 2.2 contains the frequencies and percentages for this analysis.

For the research question regarding differences in extracurricular activity participation as a function of economic status for students who were not identified as English Language Learners, the result was statistically significant, $\chi^2(2) = 308.55$, $p < .001$. The effect size, Cramer's V, for the non-English Language Learner group, was small, .12 (Cohen, 1988). For students who were not English Language Learners and who were economically disadvantaged, student participation in extracurricular activities

was 15% less likely than for students who were not English Language Learners and who were not economically disadvantaged.

For the research question regarding differences in extracurricular activity participation for English Language Learners as a function of how long they had been enrolled in U.S. schools, the result was statistically significant, $\chi^2(1) = 21.73$, $p < .001$, Cramer's V of .18. Using Cohen's (1988) criteria, this value reflected a small effect size. English Language Learners who had attended U.S. schools for five years or more were 20% more likely to participate in extracurricular activities than were English Language Learners who had attended U.S. schools for less than five years. Table 2.3 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Insert Table 2.3 about here

Discussion

In this empirical investigation, the degree to which extracurricular activity participation differed by English Language Learner status, by economic status, and by time enrolled in U.S. schools was addressed. Students who had been identified as English Language Learners, as well as students who had recently been reclassified from English Language Learner status, were statistically significantly less likely than students not identified as English Language Learners to participate in extracurricular activities. For English Language Learners and for students who had recently been reclassified, their economic status was not related to their extracurricular activity rates. Students who were not English Language Learners and who were economically disadvantaged were less

likely to participate in extracurricular activities than were students who were not English Language Learners and who were not economically disadvantaged. For this group of students, as their economic status improved, so too did their participation in extracurricular activities. With respect to the time of enrollment in U.S. schools, English Language Learners who had been in U.S. schools for less than five years exhibited similar rates of participation as their peers who had attended U.S. schools for five or more years.

Connections with Existing Literature

These findings were partially congruent with prior research. Peguero (2010) contended that student English language acquisition could contribute to a lack of participation. Further, English language proficiency emerged as a contributing factor to determining rate of extracurricular activity participation. However, students who had recently been reclassified from English Language Learner status demonstrated low rates of participation that were comparable to the English Language Learner group, despite the fact that these students previously met criteria indicated by the State of Texas regarding English fluency.

Indicated in prior research, economic status was related to participation in extracurricular activities (Garcia, 2012; Peck et al., 2008; Peguero, 2010; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2009). Although findings in this study were consistent with prior research for the non-English Language Learner population, economic status was not statistically significantly related to extracurricular activity participation for English Language Learners, nor for students who were recently reclassified from English Language Learner status.

Connection to Theoretical Framework

Given the obstacles that school administrators face in promoting second language acquisition and content mastery, participation in extracurricular activities might be advantageous for students identified as English Language Learners. Collier (1995) identified a major aspect of second language acquisition to be sociocultural in nature. Grounded in the work of Vygotsky, who asserted that learning is a combination of natural cognitive predisposition and potential learning that occurs through collaboration with capable peers. Díaz-Rico (2004) asserted the space between natural and potential ability consists of interactions between students, teachers, and peers.

Schumann, in his Acculturation Model, contended that the affective and emotional aspects of learning are important to the sense of belongingness experienced by a learner, as well as the receptiveness to and willingness to engage in language (Collier, 1995). Based on the results of this study, English Language Learners, as well as students who had been recently reclassified from English Language Learner status, could be missing prime opportunities to engage in social contexts that are supportive of these theories of second language acquisition by not participating in extracurricular activities at a rate comparable to their native English-speaking peers. English Language Learners who are encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities along with capable language models could benefit from exposure to the target language, a more fully developed sense of belonging in the educational environment, and an increased willingness to engage in language output in the target language. With these potential advantages, English Language Learners could realize increased academic achievement and educational success.

Implications for Policy and Practice

School administrators are encouraged to develop policies and practices that are more culturally and linguistically inclusive to increase school connectedness among students in this population. Developing educational policy by which English Language Learners would be encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities, could potentially increase the student exposure to target language models and increase student motivation to engage in that target language. In addition, English Language Learners might benefit from an increased sense of belongingness in the school environment through participation in extracurricular activities. For these reasons, impediments experienced by English Language learners that would act as barriers to participation in extracurricular activities should be identified. Once these barriers have been determined, school leaders could generate strategies to increase extracurricular participation among English Language Learners. Through increased participation, English Language Learners could attain critical social and academic language necessary to the context of school more readily.

Recommendations for Future Research

In this study, the definition of extracurricular activities was limited to activities that were both school sponsored and tied to a school course. Expanding that definition to include school sponsored activities that occur outside of the school day exclusively would be beneficial particularly because it would provide a more complete picture of student participation. Furthermore, expanding the definition of extracurricular activities to include activities that are community-based (e.g., community sports teams and classes, dance and cheerleading classes, church groups, music lessons, and other academic

pursuits) and not school sponsored would be advantageous, as the nature of extracurricular activity participation would be more fully represented. Researchers are encouraged to extend this study to students enrolled in elementary grade levels to ascertain the degree to which results from this investigation are generalizable to the elementary school setting.

Conducting similar studies in different geographical areas, across multiple school districts, and school types would further extend the available research regarding this topic and student population. Analyzing the research questions by race/ethnicity, gender, and age could provide some valuable information regarding potential reasons that English Language Learners and students who had been reclassified from English Language Learner status did not participate in extracurricular activities at rates comparable to their non-English Language Learner peers. Moreover, analyzing the research questions specific to English Language Learners by English proficiency would give valuable clues about whether language development and participation in extracurricular activities among this student group were associated. Conducting a qualitative study in which student and teacher perceptions were analyzed regarding participation in extracurricular activities by students identified as English Language Learners, especially barriers to participation, would be particularly relevant.

Conclusion

The purpose of this investigation was to ascertain the degree to which differences might be present in extracurricular activity participations for three student groups (i.e., English Language Learners, students recently reclassified from English Language Learner status, and students not labeled as English Language Learners). Data on these

three student groups were examined further by comparing economic status and length of time in U.S. schools to level of participation. English Language Learners and students recently reclassified from English Language Learner status did not engage in extracurricular activities at a rate that was comparable to their non-English Language Learner peers. Further, economic status and length of time in U.S. schools were not related to participation among English Language Learners and students recently reclassified from English Language Learner status.

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Table 2.1

Frequencies and Percentages of Extracurricular Activity by English Language Learner Status

Status	Participated *n* and %age	Did Not Participate *n* and %age
English Language Learner	(*n* = 174) 24.6%	(*n* = 532) 75.4%
Recently Reclassified	(*n* = 80) 26.1%	(*n* = 226) 73.9%
Not an English Language Learner	(*n* = 8,229) 41.1%	(*n* = 11,772) 58.9%

Table 2.2

F*requencies and Percentages of Extracurricular Activity Participation by English Language Learner Status and Economic Status*

English Language Learner and Participation Status	Economically Disadvantaged		Not Economically Disadvantaged	
	n	%	*n*	%
English Language Learner				
Participated	131	25.3%	43	22.8%
Did not Participate	386	74.7%	146	77.2%
Recently Reclassified				
Participated	59	28.8%	21	20.8%
Did not Participate	146	71.2%	80	79.2%
Not an English Language Learner				
Participated	1,494	30.4%	6,735	44.6%
Did not Participate	3,416	69.6%	8,356	55.4%

Table 2.3

Frequencies and Percentages of Participation in Extracurricular Activities Among English Language Learners by Length of Time in U.S. Schools

Time in the United States	Participated *n* and %age of Total	Did Not Participate *n* and %age of Total
Less Than Five Years	(*n* = 5) 5.4%	(*n* = 87) 94.6%
Five or More Years	(*n* = 168) 28.0%	(*n* = 431) 72.0%

CHAPTER III

DIFFERENCES IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AS A FUNCTION OF PARTICIPATION IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

This dissertation follows the style and format of *Research in the Schools (RITS)*.

Abstract

In this study, differences in academic performance on the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System and State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness as a function of participation in extracurricular activities for English Language Learners were examined. Data obtained from a large, suburban district in southeast Texas for all students who were enrolled in Grades 6 through 12 for the 2014-2015 school year were analyzed. Patterned after the federal Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives for English Language Learners, participation in extracurricular activities for English Language Learners was not related to second language acquisition or the attainment of English fluency. Conversely, in regard to performance on state assessments in reading and in mathematics, English Language Learners who were not involved in extracurricular activities had higher scores than English Language Learners who were involved in extracurricular activities. Suggestions for research and policy were provided.

Keywords: Extracurricular Activities, English Language Learner, Limited English Proficient, English Language Acquisition, TELPAS, STAAR, academic achievement, AMAOs

DIFFERENCES IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AS A FUNCTION OF PARTICIPATION IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 altered the manner in which Grade K-12 students in the United States were instructed and evaluated (Murray, Fix, & Zimmermann, 2007). One of the aims of the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) was to decrease achievement gaps in standardized test scores and to assure that historically marginalized student groups experienced academic growth. Specifically, states were challenged with ensuring that students identified as English Language Learners acquired English language proficiency and developed academic skills at levels similar to their English-speaking peers. These mandates were especially challenging in light of the growing immigrant population in the United States which resulted in an influx of students identified as immigrant and English Language Learners in both elementary and secondary schools (Batalova, Fix, & Murray, 2007).

Background of the Study

In response to the No Child Left Behind Act, the Texas Education Agency transformed accountability criteria for school districts to include English language acquisition of English Language Learners. The Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) was the measure used to evaluate growth in the English language (Texas Education Agency, 2016c). Accountability requirements in Texas, paired with federal accountability measures, specifically the Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAO), placed much importance on the performance of this vulnerable student group (Texas Education Agency, 2012). Under the No Child Left

Behind Act, districts that accepted federal Title III funds for students identified as English Language Learners were held to three federal accountability measures, or AMAOs (Texas Education Agency, 2012). The AMAO 1 was used to determine progress in English language acquisition as measured by the TELPAS, which includes four proficiency level indicators (i.e., Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, and Advanced High). Performance on the AMAO 1 was determined by the percentage of students who increased one proficiency level in a year's time. The AMAO 2 was used to determine the percentage of student who attained proficiency in the English language as indicated by Advanced High performance on the TELPAS. Students who reached Advanced High are considered to have achieved fluency in the English language. For this accountability measure, students were divided into two sub-groups: students with one to four years in U.S. schools and students with five or more years in U.S. schools. The AMAO 3 was used to evaluate student performance on the state assessment, State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR), to determine the academic achievement of English Language Learners (Texas Education Agency, 2012).

New federal legislation, the Every Student Succeeds Act, was passed in December of 2015 (Walen, 2015). One of the most notable differences between the No Child Left Behind Act and the Every Student Succeeds Act is the shifting of accountability for English Language Learners from Title 3 to the larger Title 1 (Carnock, 2016). With this change, the AMAOs under the No Child Left Behind Act were suspended (Carnock, 2016; Walen, 2015). Under new mandates outlined in the Every Student Succeeds Act, however, both student academic achievement and English Language Learner progress toward the attainment of English proficiency are required in

state accountability systems. These mandates are closely related to the previous AMAOs (Carnock, 2016). For that reason, the federal AMAOs were used as a foundation for this investigation.

Regardless of the directives introduced though the No Child Left Behind Act, and extended in the Every Student Succeeds Act, by which districts and states are charged with ensuring that English Language Learners develop academic English proficiency and realize academic achievement, revealed in data on third-generation English Language Learners is the fact that schools have faced major challenges in accomplishing these directives (Batalova et al., 2007). The number of immigrant children enrolling in U.S. schools in upper grade levels exacerbates the issue. Older immigrant students entering the U.S. public school system might experience more difficulty in achieving English language proficiency due to the fact that resources are scarce at the secondary level and time to recuperate lost content prior to high school graduation is limited (Capps et al., 2005). Short and Fitzsimmons (2007) proposed that many secondary schools have not been provided with sufficient resources needed to support recent immigrants in attaining required levels of academic English proficiency.

School administrators are challenged with the task of increasing student language attainment to show sufficient student growth each year and perform at grade level on state exams (Texas Education Agency, 2012, 2016b). Due to the overarching construction of both the federal accountability system and the Texas accountability system, the performance of English Language Learners influences the accountability ratings of schools in multiple ways and across multiple subgroups. Student achievement on the STAAR in all content areas, as well as on the TELPAS, is used to determine

accountability ratings for schools. Performance of English Language Learners on both assessment measures, however, is predicated on the English proficiency of English Language Learners (Short, Echevarria, & Richards-Tutor, 2011). For this reason, educational leaders must concentrate their efforts to advance the language acquisition of English Language Learners.

Second Language Acquisition

Perhaps one of the most valuable theories related to language acquisition is the acquisition-learning distinction. According to Krashen (1982), adults have two manners through which language can be acquired. Both ways are unique and independent. The first way that a second language is developed is through language acquisition (Krashen, 1982). Freeman and Freeman (2001) asserted that almost all language development occurs naturally through language acquisition and not through explicit learning of a language. Natural second language acquisition is similar to the way that children first acquire primary language in that the acquisition occurs naturally within the context of a subconscious process. Moreover, in acquired language, the speaker does not consciously recognize grammatical rules. Instead, the grammatical structures are internalized (Krashen, 1982).

The second manner in which language is developed is through language learning. Language learning refers to a conscious knowledge of a language, including having knowledge of grammatical rules and structures necessary to consciously self-correct language errors (Krashen, 1982). Although error correction is thought to be of little consequent to subconscious acquisition, it is useful to language learning, and helps the learner to induce correct grammatical structures (Krashen, 1982).

Language Input and Output

Krashen (1982) posited that a key aspect of language acquisition is the amount, quality, and relevancy of the language input to which second language learners are exposed. Optimal language input is input that is comprehensible to the second language learner. If the language input is not understood by the second language learner, language acquisition will not occur. Although language output is not necessary for language acquisition, language output provides and indirect contribution to the overall process of language acquisition, particularly where academic language is important (Krashen, 1982). For English Language Learners in the United States, the development of oral language is essential. Moreover, many researchers (e.g., Baker, 1998; Cummins, 1979; Krashen, 1996) agreed that oral language fluency comprises a vital part of the overall education and success of English Language Learners.

In short, engaging in conversation with native speakers is likely more effective than simply eavesdropping on conversations for overall second language acquisition. The importance placed on affective and emotional considerations of the learning community plays a critical part in lowering the affective filter and increasing both receptiveness to language input and willingness to engage in language output (Collier, 1995). Providing opportunities for English Language Learners to rehearse and cultivate oral language in a variety of academic and social settings is an important consideration for teachers and educational leaders (Saunders & O'Brien, 2006).

Affective Considerations to Language Learning

In his Affective Filter Hypothesis, Krashen (1982), expanding upon the work of Dulay and Burt (1977), conveyed that a variety of affective variables play a part in, or act

as barriers to, second language acquisition. These variables include motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety. Captured through The Affective Filter Hypothesis is the notion that a relationship exists between effective second language acquisition and these affective variables. For instance, second language learners with attitudes more conducive to language acquisition, meaning learners with strong motivation and self-confidence, will both seek and obtain more comprehensible input from native speakers than those second language learners who are unmotivated or who lack self-confidence (Krashen, 1982).

In addition, language learners with high anxiety and fear might have exposure to quality language inputs, but be rendered unable to acquire language as a result of those inputs because the affective filter acts as a barrier to the natural process of language acquisition. Freeman and Freeman (2001) further explained that the affective filter acts as an impediment to the process of language acquisition, and when the second language learner has a high affective filter, language inputs cannot reach the area of the brain where acquisition occurs. Whereas the affective filter to language inputs is limited in Krashen's theory, Freeman and Freeman asserted that the same affective block can occur as language output is attempted. Implied by The Affective Filter Hypothesis is that the role of language instruction, particularly in schools, is not just to provide quality language input, but also to create a learning environments through which the affective filter can be lessened, optimizing the opportunity for language acquisition to occur (Krashen, 1982).

The Role of Interaction in Language Acquisition

Krashen (1982) used the term acquisition to account for the natural psychological process of language development, but because language is used in social interactions, it is important to explore the role that interaction plays in language acquisition. Expanding Krashen's work, Gee (1992) confirmed that "acquisition is a process of acquiring something subconsciously by exposure to models, a process of trial and error, and practice within social groups, without formal teaching" (p. 113). Freeman and Freeman (2001) explained that in social groups, learners receive language input and language modeling from others using the target language. Gibbons (1991) claimed that although being immersed in a target language and having appropriate language models was important to language acquisition, this exposure would not be enough to develop language. Instead, language learners need should have an opportunity to use language through interaction with both peers and adults (Gibbons, 1991).

Extracurricular Activities and Second Language Acquisition

Although the majority of language learning is limited to the language classroom in schools, Krashen (1982) explained that the environment beyond the classroom excels in providing language input and opportunities for language output. Despite the attention educators place on creating classroom environments that are natural for language acquisition to occur, "there is no way the classroom can match the variety of the outside world" (Krashen, 1982, p. 59). Collier (1995) contended that in schools with strong support for language learning among language minority students, educational leaders have a commitment to empowering language learners by providing opportunities for meaningful extracurricular activities. Because students learn better in an atmosphere that

is supportive, Díaz-Rico (2004) advocated for educational environments by which language learners can develop integrative motivation, or the desire to affiliate with peers from the target language group. Being comfortable with and capable of eliciting cooperation from the target language group is vital to second language acquisition (Díaz - Rico, 2004).

Further, McWhorter (1995) asserted that language learners who participate in extracurricular activities are more likely to be successful in school than those individuals who do not participate. Language learners who participate in extracurricular activities have presented themselves as cultural participants, and have made a commitment to acculturate with the target language group. Accordingly, Saunders and O'Brien (2006) argued that children who are engaged in social interactions may possess language learning advantage in that they seek out more interactions with native speakers. Following this idea, it stands to reason that language learners who engage in social interaction with members of the target language group will engender more language input, output, and language acquisition opportunities.

Extracurricular Activities

As schools have provided more varied opportunities for students to participate in extracurricular activities, researchers (Covay & Carbonaro, 2010; Farb & Matjasko, 2012; Feldman & Matjasko, 2005; Stearnes & Glennie, 2010) have revealed positive relationships between student participation and the degree to which students performed at grade level. Supported in the research literature is that developmental achievements tend to be related to extracurricular activities involvement (Farb & Matjasko, 2012; Feldman & Matjasko, 2005). As examined by Covay and Carbonaro (2010), the link between

student socioeconomic class and academic attainment is influenced by participation in extracurricular activities.

The connection between extracurricular activities participation and academic achievement is derived from evidence of increased development of non-cognitive skills that is accomplished through participation. In support of this finding, Lipscomb (2007) conducted an examination of mathematics achievement and completion of college degrees as a function of extracurricular activities participation. Positive relationships were revealed between both variables and participation in extracurricular activities. In a study in which data collected in the Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 were utilized, Morris (2015) determined that when mathematics performance of students representing a range of socioeconomic classifications were compared based on participation in extracurricular activities, students who participated in extracurricular activities had statistically significant higher levels of academic performance. Furthermore, students of low-income families who participated in extracurricular activities demonstrated greater academic achievement scores in mathematics than students belonging to higher-income families who did not participate in extracurricular activities.

Extracurricular Activity Participation of Immigrant and Hispanic Students

Though research is available in which the overall tendencies for extracurricular activities participation among immigrant students is described, remarkably few researchers (e.g., Peguero, 2010) have expressed possible explanations for their lack of participation. Peguero (2010), however, noted immigrant status and English language acquisition as underlying influences of noninvolvement in extracurricular activities among immigrant students. Indicated in the current research literature is that student

immigrant status can predict participation in extracurricular activities. In a qualitative study, Okamoto, Herda, and Hartzog (2012) compared secondary student participation in extracurricular activities as a function of different levels of poverty. Using data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, trends in extracurricular activities participation of students who were immigrants were compared with the participation trends of native-born students (Okamoto et al., 2012). Immigrant students were less likely to participate in extracurricular activities than their native-born peers. Hispanic immigrants were 50% less likely to participate in extracurricular activities, regardless of the socioeconomic status of the school (Okamoto et al., 2012). First-generation Latino students were less likely to participate in extracurricular activities than their native-born Latino peers. Peguero (2010) proposed it "may be prudent for school educators and administrators to acknowledge students' immigrant status and …encourage Latino immigrant children to participate in extracurricular activities, a vital resource that may lead to educational success" (p. 69).

Also revealed in the research literature as a factor that contributed to both extracurricular activities participation and academic perseverance among immigrant students was English language proficiency. Immigrant newcomers often come lacking fundamental academic skills needed to succeed in U.S. schools (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2009). These educational deficits could be identified as contributing factors to the lack of participation in extracurricular activities among newcomer immigrant students. As immigrant students' standardized test scores increased, the likelihood of their participation in extracurricular activities increased as well (Peguero, 2010). Notwithstanding this literature, limited research exists through which the connection

between participation in extracurricular activities and English language acquisition is explored.

Theoretical Framework

Suggested in the social interactionist theory of language acquisition is that acquiring a language is not solely biological or cognitive function (Dolati, 2012). Social interactionists believe that language is acquired through a desire to socialize and communicate with peers (Dolati, 2012). Moreover, interactionists assert that language acquisition occurs as a result of the relationship between the learner and his or her environment (Ellis, 1985). Therefore, interactionists focus on how both language and cognitive development arise from social interaction (Goh & Silver, 2004). Theorists of the social interactionist theory of language acquisition propose that "communicative interaction with others, not just language input, is crucial to language development" (Hoff, 2012, p. 20).

Vygotsky, through his zone of proximal development, examined the role of social interactions in the development of language (Díaz-Rico, 2004). According to Vygotsky, an individual's ability to learn is a combination of natural predisposition of cognitive ability and potential problem development through the guidance of and collaboration with capable peers (Díaz-Rico, 2004). The space between natural ability and potential ability is coined the zone of proximal development. Díaz-Rico (2004) asserted that it is within this zone that collaboration between students, teachers, and peers exist.

Statement of the Problem

English Language Learners have lower standardized test scores and have higher dropout rates than their native English speaking counterparts (Suarez-Orozco et al.,

2009). Often immigrants with low socioeconomic realities, English Language Learners present a challenge for educational leaders in that their academic achievement is often predicated on their ability to acquire English language proficiency comparable to their native English-speaking peers (Short et al., 2011). Relationships between participation in extracurricular activities, academic achievement, and school connectedness have been examined extensively (Diaz, 2005; Farb & Matjasko, 2012; Stearnes & Glennie, 2010). One student group that has not been adequately represented in the existing research literature, however, is students who are English Language Learners. Limited research is available by which the connection between participation in extracurricular activities and English language acquisition is examined. Because English Language Learners present the added impediment of second language acquisition to academic achievement, educational leaders would benefit from evidence on how school involvement could potentially mediate student achievement and increase English proficiency. This specific topic of study could be beneficial to educational leaders, especially in consideration of literature related to the reported benefits of participation in extracurricular activities and theories associated with language acquisition.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which differences existed in English language acquisition as a function of participation in extracurricular activities. The secondary purpose of this study was to determine the degree to which differences were present in English language proficiency of English Language Learners as a function of participation in extracurricular activities. A third purpose of this study was to determine to what extent those differences were associated

with length of time in U.S. schools. Finally, the fourth purpose of this study was to determine the degree to which differences existed in the academic performance of English Language Learners as a function of participation in extracurricular activities.

Significance of the Study

Presented in this study were data specific to English Language Learners, concerning participation in extracurricular activities as it relates to English language development and academic achievement. In the Texas school accountability system, English Language Learners are referred to as Limited English Proficient. Due to the pejorative nature of that term, the phrase English Language Learner was utilized throughout this study. Through this study, data were obtained that could provide valuable insights around the potential effects that extracurricular activities participation might have on indicators present in the federal accountability system for English Language Learners. Considering that English Language Learners represent the fastest growing student population in the United States (Batalova & McHugh, 2010), educational leaders could benefit from additional research involving this student population.

Using the social interactionist theory of second language acquisition as a foundation for this study, English Language Learners may benefit from increased opportunities to communicate in social contexts in the common school language through participation in extracurricular activities. Therefore, trends in the level of participation of English Language Learners in extracurricular activities may provide school administrators with valuable information that has the potential to drive programmatic and instructional strategies to increase English acquisition and access to content material. Structuring English language development programs that offer quality instruction in

content areas and concurrently providing appropriate support for school inclusion may be the impetus to enhance the ability to acquire English language proficiency and attain higher scores on state assessments.

Research Questions

Patterned after AMAO 1, AMAO 2, and AMAO 3 of the federal accountability system, the research questions addressed in this study were: (a) What is the difference in student progress on the TELPAS as a function of participation in extracurricular activities?; (b) For students who have attended U.S. schools for less than five years, what is the difference in student attainment of an Advanced High rating on the TELPAS composite score as a function of participation in extracurricular activities?; (c) For students who have attended U.S. schools for five years or more, what is the difference in student attainment of an Advanced High rating on the TELPAS composite score as a function of participation in extracurricular activities?; (d) What is the difference in English Language Learners meeting passing standard on the STAAR Reading test as a function of participation in extracurricular activities?; and (e) What is the difference in English Language Learners meeting passing standard on the STAAR Mathematics test as a function of participation in extracurricular activities? (f) What is the difference in the STAAR Reading scores of English Language Learners as a function of participation in extracurricular activities?; and (g) What is the difference in the STAAR Mathematics scores of English Language Learners as a function of participation in extracurricular activities?

Method

Research Design

This study was a non-experimental, causal-comparative design because no manipulation of the independent variable occurred (Creswell, 2014; Johnson & Christensen, 2014). The independent variables, participation in extracurricular activities in this study, had already taken place at the time of analysis. In addition, variables were not controlled. The archival data that were analyzed in this study were illustrative of past events (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). The independent variable analyzed in this study was participation in extracurricular activities (i.e., participant or nonparticipant) of English Language Learners. The dependent variables were growth on the TELPAS composite score from the 2013-2014 school year and the 2014-2015 school year, attainment of Advanced High on the TELPAS, the STAAR Reading scores, and the STAAR Mathematics scores.

Participants

Archival data from a large school district in suburban Houston were obtained for the 2014-2015 school year. These data contained demographic information of all English Language Learners in Grades 6 through Grade 12. The sample was inclusive of approximately 1,500 students. Student participation in extracurricular activities, determined by conducting a content analysis of both student schedules and course descriptions printed in the district course guides, was coded as either participant or nonparticipant. For the purposes of this study, only extracurricular activities that were related to a specific curricular course, and for which after school participation was a

requirement, were included. After school requirements associated with the courses was verified in descriptions printed in the district course catalog.

Procedures

Utilizing the federal accountability system for English Language Learners, AMAOs, student performance on the TELPAS, and on the STAAR Reading and Mathematics exams as a function of participation in extracurricular activities were analyzed in this study. Participation in extracurricular activities of English Language Learners in a diverse district of suburban Houston was examined. In related studies, extracurricular activities participation has been categorized as participant and nonparticipant (Hunt, 2005; Okamoto et al., 2012). Employing similar methods, student schedules were analyzed to establish student categories of participant and nonparticipant.

To determine student participation status in extracurricular activities, course guides for both middle schools and high schools were consulted. Course codes for course descriptions that include specific verbiage relating to mandatory after school participation were noted for use in the study. Student schedules for students in all Grades 6 through Grade 12 were cross-referenced using the selected course numbers. Student participation was categorized as participant and nonparticipant, and then was merged into the data set holding other student demographic data into the IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS-Version 23). Data regarding student performance on the TELPAS, the STAAR Reading, and the STAAR Mathematics tests were also included.

Instrumentation

The two student assessments from which data were obtained and analyzed to address the previously delineated research questions were the TELPAS and the STAAR.

The STAAR system, which was implemented in the spring of 2012, includes annual assessments in reading and mathematics in Grade 3 through Grade 8, assessments in writing in Grade 4 and Grade 7, assessments in science in Grade 5 and Grade 8, and an assessment in Social Studies in Grade 8. At the high school level, End of Couse (EOC) exams are administered for English I, English II, Algebra I, Biology, and U.S. History. The assessments are used to measure mastery of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, and results of the assessments are factored into state and federal accountability systems (Texas Education Agency, 2016b).

The Texas Education Agency designed the TELPAS to assess the progress of English Language Learners in their attainment of the English language (Texas Education Agency, 2011). The assessment consisted of ratings on the four English language proficiency standards: (a) Listening, (b) speaking, (c) reading, and (d) writing. Ratings for Listening, speaking, and writing were determined via holistic rating and teacher observation. The ratings for reading were determined via an online exam (Texas Education Agency, 2011). Student proficiency level descriptors were: (a) Beginner, (b) Intermediate, (c) Advanced, or (d) Advanced High in each language domain. Ratings for all four of the language components were combined to create a composite score (Texas Education Agency, 2016c). The reading rating comprised 50% of the composite score and writing comprised 30% of the composite score. Listening and speaking ratings each made up 10% of the total composite score. The composite score was used to determine growth in English language acquisition. An increase of one level was necessary for the student to be considered as making progress. Sweeping changes were made to both the component percentages that made up the composite score and the rigor of the reading

assessment between the 2013 and 2014 TELPAS administrations (Texas Education Agency, 2016c). English Language Learners were assessed using the TELPAS in the spring of each year (Texas Education Agency, 2016c). Psychometric qualities of these assessments, including score reliabilities and score validities, are available for the reader at the Texas Education Agency website (Texas Education Agency, 2016b, 2016c). Using the same standards as AMAOs, language acquisition between the two groups of students (i.e., participant or non-participant) was analyzed.

Results

To determine whether differences existed in the academic performance of English Language Learners as a function of participation in extracurricular activities, a series of Pearson chi-square procedures were conducted. Chi-square procedures are the preferred inferential statistical procedure when both dependent and independent variables are categorical in nature. Additionally, the available cases surpassed the limit of five scores per cell. Therefore, the assumptions for employing the chi-square procedure were met (Field, 2005; Slate & Rojas-LeBouef, 2012).

For the first research question regarding the progress of English Language Learners on the TELPAS by their participation in extracurricular activities, the result was not statistically significant, $\chi^2(1) = 1.20$, $p = .27$. English Language Learners who participated in extracurricular activities had a similar degree of progress on the TELPAS from the 2014 administration to the 2015 administration as did English Language Learners who did not participate in extracurricular activities. Delineated in Table 3.1 are the frequencies and percentages of progress by English Language Learners on the TELPAS by extracurricular activity participation.

Insert Table 3.1 about here

With respect to English language proficiency on the TELPAS as a function of participation in extracurricular activities for students enrolled in U.S. schools for less than five years, the result was not statistically significant, $\chi^2(1) = 1.48$, $p = .22$. Although English Language Learners who participated in extracurricular activities were 20% more likely to reach an Advanced High Rating on the TELPAS than English Language Learners who did not participate in extracurricular activities, the sample size was too small to yield a statistically significant result. The reader is referred to Table 3.2 for frequencies and percentages for this analysis.

Insert Table 3.2 about here

Regarding the third research question on English language proficiency on the TELPAS as function of participation in extracurricular activities for students enrolled in U.S. schools for five or more years, the result was not statistically significant, $\chi^2(1) = 0.03$, $p = .86$. Similar rates of progress on the TELPAS were present for English Language Learners in this study, regardless of participation in extracurricular activities. Revealed in Table 3.2 are the frequencies and percentages for this analysis.

Concerning the fourth research question about English Language Learners who met the passing standard on the STAAR Reading test as a function of participation in extracurricular activities, the result was statistically significant, $\chi^2(1) = 7.45$, $p = .006$.

The effect size for this result was small, Cramer's V of .11. English Language Learners who were not involved in extracurricular activities were more likely to meet the passing standard on the STAAR Reading exam than were their peers who were involved in extracurricular activities. English Language Learners who were involved in extracurricular activities were more than 10% less likely to meet the passing standard on the STAAR Reading test than English Language Learners who were not involved in extracurricular activities. Table 3.3 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Insert Table 3.3 about here

With respect to the fifth research question concerning English Language Learners who met the passing standard on the STAAR Mathematics test as a function of participation in extracurricular activities, the result was not statistically significant, $\chi^2(1) = 3.16$, $p = .075$, at the conventional level of .05 used in education research. Although the result was not statistically significant at the conventional level, English Language Learners who were not involved in extracurricular activities were more likely to meet the passing standard on the STAAR Mathematics exam than their peers who were involved in extracurricular activities. English Language Learners who were involved in extracurricular activities were more than 6% less likely to meet the passing standard on the STAAR Mathematics exam than English Language Learners who were not involved in extracurricular activities. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are revealed in Table 3.3.

Regarding the sixth research question, scaled score on the STAAR Reading test by English Language Learner participation in extracurricular activities, a parametric independent samples *t*-test was calculated. The independent samples *t*-test yielded a statistically significant difference, $t(286.40) = -1.16$, $p = .04$. The difference represented a trivial effect size (Cohen's *d*) of 0.10 (Cohen, 1988). The average score on the STAAR Reading test for English Language Learners who were not involved in extracurricular activities was statistically significantly higher than the average score for English Language Learners who were involved in extracurricular activities. The average STAAR Reading test score for English Language Learners who were involved in extracurricular activities was 1974.44, compared to an average score of 2068.91 for English Language Learners who were not involved in extracurricular activities. Table 3.4 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Insert Table 3.4 about here

Concerning the final research question, scaled score on the STAAR Mathematics test by English Language Learner participation in extracurricular activities, a parametric independent samples *t*-test was conducted. This independent samples *t*-test yielded a statistically significant difference, $t(327.32) = -1.77$, $p = .003$. The difference represented a trivial effect size (Cohen's *d*) of 0.15 (Cohen, 1988). The average score on the STAAR Mathematics exam for English Language Learners who were not involved in extracurricular activities was statistically significantly higher than the average score for English Language Learners who were involved in extracurricular activities. The average

STAAR Mathematics test score for English Language Learners who were involved in extracurricular activities was 1797.01, compared to an average score of 1910.13 for English Language Learners who were not involved in extracurricular activities. Delineated in Table 3.5 are the descriptive statistics for the STAAR Mathematics scores of English Language Learners by participation in extracurricular activities.

Insert Table 3.5 about here

Discussion

The purpose of this investigation was to determine the degree to which extracurricular activity participation was associated with second language acquisition and academic performance of English Language Learners. Inferential statistical analyses revealed that extracurricular activity participation was not related to second language acquisition as measured by progress on the TELPAS composite score. Moreover, participation in extracurricular activities was not statistically significantly related to students having an Advanced High rating on the TELPAS. Readers should note, however, that the TELPAS composite score consists of individual rating of the four components of language (i.e., Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing), and that only 50% of the overall composite score is comprised of the three components, whereas the remaining 50% of the composite score is comprised of the reading proficiency rating (Texas Education Agency, 2016c). As language is acquired, however, proficiency in the language modalities develops independently. Progress in one modality influences progress in another, language progression does not follow a particular sequence (Ellis,

1985). For instance, an English Language Learner can increase proficiency in speaking, a productive language component, before proficiency in reading is attained. The TELPAS composite score, therefore, may not provide an accurate representation of language acquisition.

Inferential statistical analyses also revealed that English Language Learners who were not involved in extracurricular activities had higher scores on the STAAR Reading and STAAR Mathematics tests than English Language Learners who were involved in extracurricular activities. The fact that both the TELPAS Reading assessment and the STAAR Reading test are closely aligned provides an indication that these independent assessments serve as measure of content skill and reading comprehension rather than reading proficiency (Texas Education Agency, 2016c).

Connections with Existing Literature

McWhorter (1995) contended that language learners who were involved in extracurricular activities were more likely to be academically successful than students who were not involved in extracurricular activities. Furthermore, according to several researchers (e.g., Covay & Carbonaro, 2010; Farb & Matjasko, 2012; Feldman & Matjasko, 2005; Stearnes & Glennie, 2010), as opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities increased in the academic environment, the degree to which students performed at grade level also increased. Findings in this study, however, were not congruent with the existing academic literature. Participation in extracurricular activities was not statistically significantly related to English Language Learners' English proficiency or reading ability as measured by the TELPAS or the STAAR Reading tests. In fact, English Language Learners who did not participate in extracurricular activities

performed better on the STAAR Reading test than their peers who had participated in extracurricular activities.

With respect to mathematics achievement, Lipscomb (2007) concluded that a positive relationship existed between achievement in mathematics and participation in extracurricular activities. Similarly, Morris (2015) determined that students who were involved in extracurricular activities demonstrated statistically significant higher levels of academic performance in mathematics. Findings of this study were not congruent with the existing literature regarding mathematics achievement and participation in extracurricular activities. English Language Learners who participated in extracurricular activities were less likely than their peers who did not participate to meet the passing standard on the STAAR Mathematics test.

Connection to Theoretical Framework

According to the social interactionist theory of language acquisition, language acquisition is not exclusively a biological or cognitive task (Dolati, 2012). Instead, social interactionists posit that language acquisition is accomplished through a social need to communicate with peers (Dolati, 2012). Neither the TELPAS nor the STAAR assessments measure informal or social language exclusively. Moreover, because the TELPAS test is closely related to the STAAR Reading test, a measure of content skills and not English proficiency, social language acquisition would not be obtained from data used in this study.

Furthermore, Vygotsky analyzed the influences of social interactions in language acquisition (Díaz-Rico, 2004). An individual's ability to learn, according to Vygotsky, is an amalgamation of natural inclination toward cognitive ability and potential cognitive

growth that is cultivated through collaboration with capable peers (Díaz-Rico, 2004). The zone between natural ability and potential ability, the zone of proximal development, is where interactions between students, teachers, and peers exist (Díaz-Rico, 2004). The amount of learning that transpires within the zone of proximal development is difficult, if not impossible, to quantify. Accordingly, it would be difficult to determine if the English Language Learners who were involved in extracurricular activities benefited from the social interaction as potential learning would be difficult to ascertain.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Contrary to prior literature (e.g., Covay & Carbonaro, 2010; Farb & Matjasko, 2012; Feldman & Matjasko, 2005; Lipscomb, 2007; McWhorter, 1995; Morris, 2015; Stearnes & Glennie, 2010); and to accepted theories of second language acquisition (e.g., Díaz-Rico, 2004; Dolati, 2012), participation in extracurricular activities for English Language Learners in this empirical investigation was not related to academic performance or to second language acquisition. One possible explanation for this phenomena is that the structure of the school environment is such that English Language Learners who participate in extracurricular activities are not provided the academic support necessary to combat the cognitive and linguistic demands of the assessments analyzed in the study. For instance, participating in extracurricular activities might limit student access to after-school tutorials or special intervention programs. Moreover, intervention opportunities and specialized classes designed to mitigate academic deficits, such as strategies and preparatory classes, which are offered during the school day might not be available to students who elect to participate in extracurricular activities that are associated with a school course, as was analyzed in this study. Sufficient academic and

linguistic support necessary for English Language Learners may not have been provided in a way, or to a depth, that would allow students to have full access to the educational environment. Educational leaders must develop policies and implement creative structures that would allow students to participate in school activities without sacrificing access to interventions and targeted assistance needed to develop linguistic and cognitive skills.

Recommendations for Future Research

For the purposes of this investigation, the definition of extracurricular activities was limited to activities that corresponded to course offering within the school curriculum. Extending the scope of the activities to include activities that are offered independent from school courses, as well as community activities, might provide a more comprehensive representation of student participation. Extending the study to students in elementary and middle school settings is also recommended.

One half of the TELPAS composite rating is derived from the reading assessment included in the system (Texas Education Agency, 2016c). Analyzing the separate components of the TELPAS assessment (i.e., Listening, Speaking, and Writing) with extracurricular activity participation might provide useful information. Another suggestion for future research, because the TELPAS Reading test is closely related to the STAAR Reading test, is for researchers to use alternative measures of language acquisition (Texas Education Agency, 2016c). Further, utilizing a variety of assessments geared specifically for measuring English language acquisition is recommended.

To expand the current literature on the potential relationship between extracurricular activity participation and second language acquisition, extending this

study to other school districts is encouraged. This investigation was conducted using student data from one school district in the State of Texas. The degree to which results might be generalizable to English Language Learners in other school districts or in other states is not known. As such, research into the relationships of extracurricular activity participation with the academic achievement of English Language Learners in other school districts and in other states is recommended. A final recommendation is for researchers to gather qualitative data regarding student and teacher perceptions on the perceived advantages and disadvantages of extracurricular activity participation for English Language Learners.

Conclusion

In this study, the relationship of extracurricular activity participation of English Language Learners with their TELPAS and STAAR Reading and Mathematics test scores was addressed. Participation in extracurricular activities was not statistically significantly related to English Language Learner progress toward or attainment of language fluency. In contrast to previous research, extracurricular activity participation was negatively related to English Language Learner performance on the STAAR Reading and Mathematics tests. Implications for policy and practice, as well as suggestions for further research, were discussed.

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Table 3.1

Progress on the TELPAS from the 2014 to the 2015 School Year by Participation in Extracurricular Activities

TELPAS Progress	Participated *n* and %age	Did Not Participate *n* and %age
Made Progress	(*n* = 54) 32.3%	(*n* = 183) 37.0%
Did Not Make Progress	(*n* = 113) 67.7%	(*n* = 331) 63.0%

Table 3.2

Frequencies and Percentages of Student Attainment of an Advanced High Rating on the TELPAS by Participation in Extracurricular Activities

Length of Time in U.S. Schools and TELPAS Rating	Participated		Did Not Participate	
	n	%	*n*	%
Less than Five Years in U.S. Schools				
Attained AH Rating	3	60.0%	29	33.0%
Did Not Attain AH Rating	2	40.0%	58	66.7%
Five Years or More in U.S. Schools				
Attained AH Rating	46	27.4%	115	26.7%
Did Not Attain AH Rating	122	72.6%	316	73.3%

Table 3.3

Frequencies and Percentages of Student Performance on the STAAR Reading and on the STAAR Mathematics Tests by Participation in Extracurricular Activities

STAAR Assessment and Student Performance	Participated		Did Not Participate	
	n	%	*n*	%
STAAR Reading				
Met Standard	37	23.3%	172	34.9%
Did Not Meet Standard	122	76.7%	321	65.1%
STAAR Mathematics				
Met Standard	68	39.1%	249	46.8%
Did Not Meet Standard	106	60.9%	283	55.1%

Table 3.4

Descriptive Statistics for Student Performance on the STAAR Reading Test by Participation in Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular Activity Involvement	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Participated	159	1974.44	69.33
Did Not Participate	493	2068.91	42.55

Table 3.5

Descriptive Statistics for Student Performance on the STAAR Mathematics Test by Participation in Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular Activity Involvement	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Participated	173	1797.01	53.66
Did Not Participate	523	1910.13	34.73

CHAPTER IV

DIFFERENCES IN ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND AT-RISK BEHAVIORS AS A FUNCTION OF PARTICIPATION IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

This dissertation follows the style and format of *Research in the Schools (RITS)*.

Abstract

In this investigation, differences in factors associated with school connectedness (i.e., student grades, student discipline, and student attendance rates) as a function of participation in extracurricular activities for English Language Learners were analyzed. Data for students who were enrolled in Grades 6-12 for the 2014-2015 school year from a large, suburban district in southeast Texas were obtained and analyzed. Incongruent with existing literature on the benefits of student participation in extracurricular activities, English Language Learners who had not participated in extracurricular activities made higher grades in school, had fewer disciplinary referrals, and attended school more frequently than English Language Learners who had participated in extracurricular activities. Policy implications and suggestions for further research were provided.

Keywords: Extracurricular Activities, English Language Learners, Limited English Proficient, School Connectedness, GPA, Discipline, Attendance Rates,

DIFFERENCES IN ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND AT-RISK BEHAVIORS AS A FUNCTION OF PARTICIPATION IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

The level of academic achievement of English Language Learners in the United States has lagged behind native English speakers (Abedi & Gándara, 2006; Batalova, Fix, & Murray, 2007). English Language Learners receive lower grades, are believed by their teachers to have more limited cognitive abilities, and score below their peers on standardized tests (Moss & Puma, 1995). In addition, English Language Learners are two times more likely to drop out of school than their native English peers (Callahan, 2013).

These educational realities are even more concerning in light of federal mandates like the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002, which require schools to be held accountable for the academic achievement of English Language Learners. Increasing the challenge that educational leaders face with regard to English Language Learners are the national demographic trends of this student group. In the United States, the population of English Language Learners grew by nearly 11 million students between 1990 and 2013 (Aud, Fox, & KewalRamani, 2010). In Texas, Ruiz Soto, Hooker and Batalova (2015) estimated 15% of student enrollment of Texas public schools was composed of students who were English Language Learners. Native-born English Language Learners comprise a larger percentage of the total population of English Language Learners in Texas than on the national level. Eighty-five percent of English Language Learners in Grades K-5 and 59% of English Language Learners in secondary grades were born in the United States (Flores, Batalova, & Fix, 2012). Supported by these statistics is the notion that many

English Language Learners continue to realize academic difficulties, possibly stemming from limited English language proficiency, regardless of having been educated solely in U.S. schools (Batalova et al., 2007). The large numbers of native-born adolescents who have not been reclassified as non-English Language Learners by the time they matriculate into secondary schools suggest that many English Language Learners are not developing adequate proficiency in the English language despite having been entirely educated in U.S. school system (Batalova et al., 2007).

Perhaps the most difficult aspect of educating English Language Learners is the fact that they enroll in school with very different educational contests and realities. Christian (2006) explained that although English Language Learners come to U.S. schools with many linguistic resources, they also come with varying ranges of primary and secondary language proficiency, academic skills, and content knowledge. In addition, English Language Learners differ in educational background, scholastic attitude, economic status, age of arrival into U.S. schools, and personal experiences (Christian, 2006). Immigrant students enrolling into U.S. schools might come with strong academic abilities and quality formal education from their home countries, however, many students enroll in schools with substantial educational gaps (Christian, 2006). Short and Fitzsimmons (2007) contended that many secondary schools do not have physical or human resources needed to help recently arrived immigrants attain required levels of English and academic language proficiency to meet the stringent accountability measures of the No Child Left Behind Act (2002).

Students who are raised in the United States, but for whom English is a second language, may not be literate in their native language or have access to strong native

language models (Christian, 2006). Collier (1995) asserted that though strong support for language learning and commitment to empowering language learners by encouraging meaningful extracurricular activities, educational leaders can work toward closing educational and language gaps of English Language Learners. Further, Díaz-Rico (2004) advocated for learning environments by which the development of integrative motivation, or the desire to affiliate with peers from the target language group, is promoted.

Background of the Study

Benefits to students who participate in extracurricular activities have been examined by several researchers (Covay & Carbonaro, 2010; Diaz, 2005; Farb & Matjasko, 2012; Feldman & Matjasko, 2005; Stearnes & Glennie, 2010). Presented in the research literature concerning extracurricular activities is an association between participation in extracurricular activities and improved academic performance, increased connection to the school environment, and decreased risk behaviors (Covay & Carbonaro, 2010; Diaz, 2005; Farb & Matjasko, 2012; Feldman & Matjasko, 2005; Stearnes & Glennie, 2010). All of these factors are important to the educational resilience of English Language Learners.

As schools have provided more varied opportunities for students to participate in extracurricular activities, researchers (e.g., Stearnes & Glennie, 2010) have revealed a positive relationship between student participation and the degree to which students performed at grade level. Supported in academic literature is that developmental achievements tend to be related to extracurricular activities involvement (Farb & Matjasko, 2012; Feldman & Matjasko, 2005). According to Covay and Carbonaro (2010), the positive link between student economic status and academic attainment was

influenced by participation in extracurricular activities. Students who lived in low socioeconomic households, but who also participated in extracurricular activities, regardless of type, tended to perform at a higher academic level and display increased non-cognitive skills, such as tenacity, collaboration, and independence. The idea that the connection between extracurricular activities participation and academic achievement derives from increased development of non-cognitive skills is evidenced in this study (Covay & Carbonaro, 2010). Supporting this finding, Lipscomb (2007) conducted an examination of mathematics achievement and completion of college degrees as a function of extracurricular activities participation. A positive association was revealed between both variables and participation in extracurricular activities.

Schwartz, Cappella, and Seidman (2015) conducted an investigation concerning urban youth transitioning between middle and high school. They documented that students who participated in extracurricular activities earned grade point averages that were higher than the students who did not participate. Morris (2015) noted that when the mathematics performance of students belonging to various economic realities were compared based on participation in extracurricular activities, students who participated extracurricular activities were reported to reach higher academic achievement. Furthermore, students of low-income families who participated in extracurricular activities had greater academic achievement in mathematics than students from higher-income families who did not participate in extracurricular activities.

Providing a basis for the connection between academic achievement and participation in extracurricular activities is the fact that participation affords opportunities for students to improve both academic and nonacademic skills while creating and

preserving positive relationships with teachers and peers (Stearnes & Glennie, 2010). Diaz (2005) reported that students who participated in extracurricular activities described increased feelings of connection to the school and adults employed within the school. Additionally, participation in extracurricular activities has been associated with the student perception that school staff is dedicated to building a positive school environment (Diaz, 2005). Moreover, these perceptions may provide motivation for students to develop positive relationships within school settings. Also presented in the academic literature regarding extracurricular activities participation is the suggestion that as students, and especially newcomer immigrant students, established positive relationships with faculty members, academic commitment and achievement increased (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2009).

Negative relationships exist between student participation in extracurricular activities and engagement in risky behaviors (Covay & Carbonaro, 2010; Farb & Matjasko, 2012). Kort-Butler and Martin (2015) documented that students who participated in extracurricular activities in high school were less likely to be involved in behaviors such as binge drinking and drug use in early adulthood. Kort-Butler and Martin (2015) speculated this connection could be tied to the development of social identity and social relationships that are developed through participation in extracurricular activities. Molinuevo et al. (2010) established that participation in extracurricular activities and improved emotional adjustment in students was positively associated.

Literature on the topic of extracurricular activities involvement is readily available. Studies (Garcia, 2012; Okamoto, Herda, & Hartzog, 2012; Peck et al., 2008;

Peguero, 2010; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2009) can be located regarding extracurricular activities participation among immigrant and Hispanic students. Less plentiful are studies related to extracurricular activities participation in connection to English Language Learners. As supported by demographic data, the English Language Learner population, in Texas schools especially, includes a high percentage of either Hispanic or immigrant students. Because notable overlap in these student populations is present (Batalova et al., 2007; Christian, 2006; Flores et al., 2012; Pandya, Batalova, & McHugh, 2011; Zong & Batalova, 2015), consulting the research literature surrounding immigrant and Hispanic students' participation in extracurricular activities is essential.

Extracurricular Activities and Educational Resilience

Peck et al. (2008) analyzed the benefits of extracurricular activity participation for at-risk students and the extent to which extracurricular activities affected the academic resiliency of participants. This study is important to consider because English Language Learners are considered to be at-risk. Moreover, students who are immigrants are at higher risk for dropping out of school than their native-born peers. Peck et al. (2008) used data collected from the Maryland Adolescent Development in Context Study on students from the age of 14 to the age of 21 who were determined to be at-risk. Participation in activities of students who were determined to be at-risk was statistically significantly correlated to college enrollment rates. Peck et al. determined that students who were identified as at-risk who participated in multiple extracurricular activities were reported to enroll in college at a "dramatically" increased rate (2008, p. 148). Conversely, Peck et al. (2008) also cited that students who were identified as being at risk were statistically significantly less likely to go on to college-level course work if they

held after-school employment and were not involved in extracurricular activities,. A possible explanation into the link between participation in extracurricular activities and educational resilience for these students could be attributed to the notion that involvement has been linked to increased sense of school connectedness (Diaz, 2005). Kort-Butler and Hagewen (2011) established that involvement in extracurricular activities had a positive effect on student sense of self-esteem.

School Connectedness

Although an accepted definition of school connectedness is difficult to locate in the available research, Maddox and Prinz (2003) contended that a personal investment in and commitment to the school environment equates to school connectedness. Participation in school activities, feelings of belongingness to the school, and the feeling that a strong support system exists within the school context are all factors in school connectedness. Several researchers (e.g., Bryan et al., 2011; Neihaus, Rudasill, & Rakes, 2011; Skues, Cunningham, & Pokharel, 2005; You et al., 2008; Young, 2004) have determined that as the school connectedness of students increases, academic achievement, future orientation, and emotional stability follow.

Researchers (e.g., Bryan et al., 2011; Neihaus et al., 2011) have analyzed relationships of school connectedness with academic achievement. Neihaus et al. (2011) documented that students who had the perception of being supported in school demonstrated higher academic achievement than students who did not feel supported. Bryan et al. (2011) established that school connectedness was significantly related to academic achievement. Students who are more connected to school tend to have more positive outlooks for their future than students who are less connected to schools.

Crespo, Jose, Kielpikowski, and Pryor (2013) revealed that adolescents' level of connectedness had a predictive quality in regards to positive views of future orientation. Nasir, Jones, and McLaughlin (2011) determined that students with higher levels of school connectedness were more likely to graduate from high school.

School connectedness has also been connected to emotional health in students. Researchers (e.g., Skues et al., 2005; Young, 2004) have concluded that as student connection to the school environment declines, the potential for falling victim to bullying increases. McNeely, Nonnemaker, and Blum (2002) determined that school connectedness was inversely correlated with substance abuse, displays of violence, and early engagement in sexual activities. Kidger, Araya, Donovan, and Gunnell (2012) documented that students' perceptions of teacher support and overall emotional wellbeing were positively related.

Research studies in which school connectedness for English Language Learners has been examined are limited. Alvarez (2003) posited that in cases where an incongruity between the language of the school and the language preferred by the student existed, connectedness to the school environment was negatively influenced. Similarly, Morrison, Cosden, O'Farrel, and Campos (2003) contended that English Language Learners in general began to display decreased connection to school during the fourth grade year. Thompson et al. (2006) specified among students who were immigrants, connection to school was more prevalent when the immigrant population of the school neighborhood was large. Thomas et al. (2006) reported school connectedness of Hispanic students tended to be more established than with other ethnic/racial groups in neighborhoods with substantial immigrant populations.

Theoretical Framework

In his Acculturation Model, Schumann (1978) commented on the sociocultural aspects of language learning. Two processes that have an influence on the development of language in the context of education are social and cultural in nature. The value placed on the affective and emotional aspects of the learning community plays an important role in a student's sense of belonging and receptiveness to language inputs and willingness to engage in language outputs (Collier, 1995). Another important aspect of language acquisition is the social distance between primary language and secondary language groups, as well as the perceptions that each group holds about the other (Collier, 1995). Freeman and Freeman (2001) asserted that a language learner who is socially distant from members of the second language group might have only limited ability to function fully in the target language. Collier (1995) contended that at the center of development lies the individual student who is influenced by the sociocultural process. If any aspect of development occurs at the expense of another, it could be detrimental to the overall growth and success of the student. Moreover, exposure to the target language in isolation is not as important as the nature of the interaction between native language speakers and second language learners (Saunders & O'Brien, 2006).

Krashen (1982), in his Affective Filter Hypothesis, suggested that students can only acquire a second language if their emotional states allow for the biological function of language acquisition to occur. Krashen argued that the affective filter, a psychological barrier to language acquisition, influences the English Language Learner's ability to take in available language input. Negative feelings serve as obstacles to the effective processing of language inputs (Ni, 2012). Conversely, students who have positive feeling

and low anxiety in educational environments have a greater capacity to process and acquire available language inputs (Ni, 2012). English Language Learners who demonstrate low levels of motivation, lack of self-confidence, or high levels of anxiety, have high affective filters that limit their ability to process available language inputs to acquire the second language effectively.

Wilson (2004) posited that for school to contribute to learning, school connectedness must be present. Proponents of the school connectedness theory (Ortiz, Valerio, & Lopez, 2012; Wilson, 2004; Zullig, Huebner, & Patton, 2012) contend that as positive relationships between peer and adults, students feel more connected to school and, as a result, motivation towards academic, cultural, and civic pursuits increase. In addition, students who are more connected to the educational environment have a higher attendance rate, which is a predicting factor in determining student success within the context of school (Blum, 2015; Schoeneberger, 2012). Finally, Ortiz et al. (2012) asserted that students are less likely to engage in risky behavior, such as criminal or sexual activity, when they feel a strong connection to school. Zullig et al. (2011) explained that nurturing relational aspects of the school environment can help to mediate disciplinary and attendance issues therein.

Developing educational policy by which barriers to participation would be addressed, could lead to increased levels of extracurricular activities participation. Through participation, English Language Learners could more quickly acquire the critical social and academic language needed to be successful. In addition, through participation in extracurricular activities, English Language Learners could develop a deeper

connection to the school environment, potentially resulting in increased attendance, greater academic achievement, and fewer disciplinary issues.

Statement of the Problem

English Language Learners have lower standardized test scores and higher rates of dropout than their native speaking counterparts (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2009). Often immigrants with low socioeconomic realities, English Language Learners present a challenge for educational leaders in that their academic achievement is often predicated on their ability to acquire English language proficiency comparable to their native English-speaking peers (Short, Echevarria, & Richards-Tutor, 2011). Subsequently, deficiencies in the English proficiency of English Language Learners often reduce the likelihood of participation in extracurricular activities (Peguero, 2011). Relationships between participation in extracurricular activities, academic achievement and school connectedness have been analyzed extensively (Diaz, 2005; Farb & Matjasko, 2012; Stearnes & Glennie, 2010). In addition, information related to extracurricular activities participation among traditionally underserved student groups (i.e., students of low economic status and/or students of immigrant status), have been examined (Garcia, 2012; Peck et al., 2008; Peguero, 2010; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2009). Several studies regarding extracurricular activities involvement of students who were immigrants were available (e.g., Okamoto et al., 2012; Peguero, 2010). Additionally, numerous studies (Garcia, 2012; Peck et al., 2008; Peguero, 2010; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2009) related to the extracurricular activities involvement of Hispanic students were available. Despite the mounting importance placed on the academic achievement of English Language Learners in accountability systems, little research is available on factors that could improve their

level school connectedness. Because English Language Learners present the added impediment of second language acquisition to academic achievement, educational leaders would benefit from evidence of how school involvement could potentially mediate student achievement and increase English proficiency. This specific topic of study could be beneficial to educational leaders, especially in consideration of literature related to the reported benefits of participation in extracurricular activities and theories associated with school connectedness.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which differences existed in English Language Learners' course grades as a function of participation in extracurricular activities. The secondary purpose of this investigation was to determine the extent to which differences existed in frequency of student disciplinary infractions as a function of participation in extracurricular activities. The final purpose of this study was to determine the degree to which attendance rates of English Language Learners were connected to participation in extracurricular activities.

Significance of the Study

Analyzed in this study were data specific to the participation of English Language Learners in extracurricular activities as related to school connectedness variables (i.e., student grades, student discipline, and student attendance). In this investigation, data were attained that could provide insight into the potential effect of participation in extracurricular activities on factors associated with school connectedness and decreased at-risk behavior for English Language Learners. Because English Language Learners are the fastest growing student population in the United States (Batalova & McHugh, 2010),

educational leaders would benefit from research findings involving this student population. As research concerning school involvement that support the social and academic English language development of English Language Learners is conducted, the capacity of educational leaders to develop and implement policies and practices that support students' English language development could be expanded as well.

Using Krashen's (1982) affective filter theory and the school connectedness theory as a foundation for this study, students who participate in extracurricular activities in school could benefit from a lowered affective filter and a decreased desire to engage in behaviors that could jeopardize academic achievement. Therefore, trends in English Language Learner school connectedness, participation in extracurricular activities in this study, could provide school administrators with valuable information that could drive programmatic and instructional strategies to increase English acquisition and access to content material. Structuring English language development programs that offer quality instruction in content areas while providing appropriate support for both school connectedness and school inclusion could decrease student risk factors. Analyzing trends in connectedness to the school environment for English Language Learner, as evidenced in this study by student grades, disciplinary history, and attendance rates as a function of extracurricular activities participation could provide school administrators with valuable information that could drive programmatic and instructional strategies.

Research Questions

The following questions were addressed in this research study: (a) What is the difference in student grades as a function of participation in extracurricular activities for English Language Learners?; (b) What is the difference in the number of disciplinary

infractions as a function of participation in extracurricular activities for English Language Learners?; and (c) What is the difference in attendance rates as a function of participation in extracurricular activities for English Language Learners?

Method

Research Design

This investigation was a non-experimental, causal-comparative study because the independent variable was not manipulated (Creswell, 2014; Johnson & Christensen, 2014). The independent variable, participation or non-participation in extracurricular activities in this study, had already taken place at the time of analysis. In addition, no variables were controlled. The archival data that were analyzed in this study were reflective of events that had already transpired (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). The independent variable analyzed in this study was participation or non-participation in extracurricular activities of English Language Learners. The dependent variables were student grades, number of disciplinary infractions, and attendance rates.

Participants

Archival data from a large school district in suburban Houston were obtained for the 2014-2015 school year. These data contained demographic information of all students labeled as English Language Learners in Grades 6 through Grade 12. In the Texas school accountability system, English Language Learners are labeled Limited English Proficient. Due to the negative connotation of that label, the term English Language Learner was used throughout this study. The sample was inclusive of approximately 1,500 English Language Learners.

In related studies, extracurricular activity participation has been categorized as either participant or as nonparticipant (Hunt, 2005; Okamoto et al., 2012). Employing similar methods, a quantitative study was conducted through which student schedules was analyzed to establish student categories of participant and nonparticipant. Student participation in extracurricular activities, determined by conducting a content analysis of both student schedules and course descriptions printed in the district course guides, was coded as either participant or nonparticipant. Extracurricular activities, for the purposes of this study, constituted activities that were both school-sponsored and that were connected to a specific curricular course. Courses were selected based the requirement for after school participation, which was verified in descriptions in the course catalog.

Procedures

To generate the dataset for this study, several steps were conducted. Student schedule data were collected for all students in Grades 6 through Grade 12 who are identified as English Language Learners in the district. Students were determined to be either participants or non-participants in extracurricular activities by conducting a content analysis on student schedules for the 2014-2015 school year. Students who were enrolled in courses for which course descriptions contained specific verbiage related to mandatory after school participation were coded as participants. Students not enrolled in such courses were coded as non-participants. Data regarding participation in extracurricular activities was merged into the data set holding other student demographic data in the IBM Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Student grades, number of disciplinary infractions, and student attendance rates were included in the data set.

Instrumentation

After determining the extracurricular activity participation of English Language Learners, the extent to which participation was related to student grades was addressed. To determine this relationship, student GPA was analyzed. In the district represented in this study, GPA was calculated by dividing the summation of course grades by the total number of grades for the semester grades, and was calculated only for students in Grades 9-12. Course grades were not weighted. To analyze the relationship between participation in extracurricular activities and student grades further, data were analyzed regarding student honor roll status. Next, the potential relationship between participation in extracurricular activities and student behavior was assessed. Student behavior was quantified as the overall number of disciplinary infractions resulting in disciplinary consequences for each student. Student discipline, for the purposes of this study, included any disciplinary infraction for which a student receives a consequence such as an in-school detention, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or a removal to the Disciplinary Alternative Education Program. No consideration for infraction type or consequence occurred in either collecting or analyzing data in the study. Lastly, the relationship between participation in extracurricular activities and student attendance rates, the percentage of days students were in attendance was calculated. Attendance rates are reported in the Texas Education Agency Academic Excellence Indicator System based on student attendance for the school year in its entirety. In this study, locally reported attendance rates using the same method were utilized. Attendance is calculated by dividing the total number of days students were in attendance by the total number of days students were enrolled (Texas Education Agency, 2014).

Data Analysis

To determine the extent to which differences exist in factors associated with school connectedness as a function of participation of extracurricular activities, separate independent samples *t*-test statistical procedures was conducted. Utilizing this statistical procedure was appropriate because the independent variable (i.e., participation or non-participation in extracurricular activities) was categorical in nature and the dependent variables of student grades, number of disciplinary infractions, and attendance rates were interval level variables (Field, 2005). Student GPA was also defined by whether or not the student was on the honor roll. This variable was dichotomous in nature as the student was either on or not on the honor roll. As such, a Pearson chi-square statistical procedure was conducted for honor roll status.

Results

Regarding the first research question, a parametric independent samples *t*-test was conducted. With respect to the GPAs of English Language Learners as a function of participation in extracurricular activities, the independent samples *t*-test yielded a statistically significant difference, $t(327.42) = -4.80$, $p < .001$. The difference represented a medium effect size (Cohen's *d*) of 0.52 (Cohen, 1988). English Language Learners who were not involved in extracurricular activities earned GPAs that were statistically significantly greater than the GPAs of English Language Learners who were involved in extracurricular activities. The average GPA of English Language Learners who were not involved in extracurricular activities was 77.50, compared to an average GPA of 69.39 for English Language Learners who were involved in extracurricular activities. Table 4.1 contains descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Insert Table 4.1 about here

The first research question regarding student grades was also addressed, using English Language Learner honor roll status. Honor roll status consisted of either earning all As, earning all As and Bs, or not being on the honor roll. The result was not statistically significant, $\chi^2(2) = 3.99$, $p = .14$. The percentage of English Language Learners who were on the student honor roll did not differ as a function of extracurricular activity participation. Delineated in Table 4.2 are the frequencies and percentages of English Language Learners on the honor roll by extracurricular activity participation.

Insert Table 4.2 about here

With respect to disciplinary infractions as a function of participation in extracurricular activities, an independent samples *t*-test yielded a statistically significant difference, $t(237.28) = 6.84$, $p < .001$. The difference represented a medium effect size (Cohen's *d*) of 0.64 (Cohen, 1988). English Language Learners who were not involved in extracurricular activities were less likely to receive a disciplinary referral than English Language Learners who were involved in extracurricular activities. The average number of disciplinary referrals for English Language Learners who were not involved in extracurricular activities was 1.85, compared to an average number of referrals of 5.22 for English Language Learners who were involved in extracurricular activities. Table 4.3 contains the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Insert Table 4.3 about here

Regarding English Language Learner attendance rates as a function of extracurricular activity participation, an independent samples *t*-test yielded a statistically significant difference, $t(221.06) = -2.29$, $p = .01$, a small effect size (Cohen's *d*) of 0.22 (Cohen, 1988). English Language Learners who were not involved in extracurricular activities had higher attendance rates than English Language Learners who were involved in extracurricular activities. The average attendance rate for English Language Learners who were not involved in extracurricular activities was 96.06%, compared to an average attendance rate of 94.39% for English Language Learners who were involved in extracurricular activities. Descriptive statistics for this analysis are revealed in Table 4.4.

Insert Table 4.4 about here

Discussion

In this empirical investigation, school connectedness variables (i.e., student grades, disciplinary infractions, and attendance rates) were analyzed by whether or not English Language Learners had participated in extracurricular activities. In contrast to previous research, participation in extracurricular activities was statistically significantly negatively related with all three school connectedness variables analyzed in this study English Language Learners who participated in extracurricular activities had lower

GPAs, more disciplinary infractions, and lower attendance rates than English Language Learners who had not participated in extracurricular activities.

Connections with Existing Literature

As discussed previously, statistically significant relationships have been documented between extracurricular activity participation and improved academic performance, increased school connectedness, and decreased risk behaviors (Covay & Carbonaro, 2010; Diaz, 2005; Farb & Matjasko, 2012; Feldman & Matjasko, 2005; Stearnes & Glennie, 2010). Schwartz, Cappella, and Seidman (2015) established that students who were engaged in extracurricular activities had higher GPAs than students who were not engaged in extracurricular activities. Several researchers (e.g., Bryan et al., 2011; Neihaus, Rudasill, & Rakes, 2011; Skues, Cunningham, & Pokharel, 2005; You et al., 2008; Young, 2004) have presented findings that were supportive of the notion that as the students felt a greater connection to the school environment, academic achievement, future orientation, and emotional stability followed. In addition, a negative relationship exists between student involvement in extracurricular activities and engagement in risky behaviors (Covay & Carbonaro, 2010; Farb, & Matjasko, 2012).

Results of this study, however, were not commensurate with previous research. English Language Learners who were engaged in extracurricular activities had lower GPAs than lower than English Language Learners who were not engaged in extracurricular activities. With regard to student discipline, English Language Learners who participated in extracurricular activities had almost five times more discipline referrals than their peers who had not participated in extracurricular activities. English Language Learners who were involved in extracurricular activities had attendance rates

that were 2% lower than English Language Learners who were not involved in extracurricular activities.

Connection to Theoretical Framework

In his Acculturation Model, Schumann (1978) noted the sociocultural aspects of language acquisition. Two processes that influence language development in educational contexts are social and cultural in nature. Freeman and Freeman (2001) asserted that language learners who are socially distant from peers in the target language group might have only limited capacity to function in the target language. Furthermore, exclusive exposure to the target language is not as essential as the nature of interaction between native language speakers and second language learners (Saunders & O'Brien, 2006). Accordingly, Krashen contended that the affective filter, a psychological barrier to language acquisition, influences the English Language Learner's ability to capitalize on available language input. Negative feelings or anxiety inhibit effective processing of language inputs (Ni, 2012). Conversely, students who have positive feelings and low anxiety have greater capacity to process available language inputs (Ni, 2012). Furthermore, Wilson (2004) suggested that for the learning environment to be effective, students must feel a connection to the school environment. Supporters of the school connectedness theory (Ortiz, Valerio, & Lopez, 2012; Wilson, 2004; Zullig, Huebner, & Patton, 2012) contend that as students develop positive relationships between peers and adults, motivation towards educational, cultural, and civic pursuits increase. Students who were more connected to school had higher attendance rates, which are predicting factors in determining student success (Blum, 2015; Schoeneberger, 2012).

In this study, factors related to school connectedness, acculturation, and affective education were course grades, number of disciplinary referrals, and attendance rates of English Language Learners. However, results in this study on English Language Learners were reflective of negative relationships between participation in extracurricular activities and variables associated with school connectedness. Specifically, English Language Learners who participated in extracurricular activities earned lower course grades, had more discipline referrals, and had lower attendance rates than English Language Learners who did not participate in extracurricular activities. Although the results are contradictory to the intention of the theories presented within this study, the fact that English Language Learners did not benefit from participation in extracurricular activities serves as an indication that support structures implemented within the school environments may not have been sufficient to counteract negative student acculturation. According to state reports for the district, for instance, English Language Learners historically have attendance rates that are higher than any other student population (Texas Education Agency, 2016a). A potential justification for the English Language Learners who participated in extracurricular activities having lower attendance rates than English Language Learners who did not participate, is that as cultural assimilation occurred within the context of extracurricular activities, English Language Learners began to behave in manners similar to students belonging to other student groups.

Implications for Policy and Practice

With regard to factors associated with school connectedness (i.e., student grades, student discipline, and student attendance) that were analyzed in this study, English Language Learners did not benefit from participation in extracurricular activities, as is

suggested in prior research. It is possible that sufficient affective support was not provided to English Language Learners who choose to engage in extracurricular activities. As such, English Language Learners might not have access to proper support structures within the school environment that would combat negative influences from peers as cultural assimilation occurs. Additionally, English Language Learners who participate in extracurricular activities may not be provided with the academic support necessary to mediate the cognitive and linguistic burdens of course work, as evidenced by lower course grades for English Language Learners who participate in extracurricular activities. Participating in extracurricular activities exclude student from being able to attend offered tutoring or intervention opportunities. Moreover, opportunities for long-term, and targeted, intervention and affective support within the curricular confines of the school schedule might be limited for English Language Learners as time in student schedules are usurped by courses taken in connection to extracurricular activities. Instructional leaders must be creative in developing and implementing alternative support structures that would allow students access to school activities without foregoing access interventions, targeted assistance, and affective support.

Recommendations for Future Research

In this investigation, extracurricular activities were limited to school-sponsored activities that were tied to a curricular course offering. Including activities are conducted exclusively after school hours, or that are community sponsored, would increase the sample size and would provide a more complete representation of extracurricular activity participation. Furthermore, extending the study to English Language Learners in elementary school settings would permit a determination of the degree to which results

from this investigation would be generalizable to a group of younger English Language Learners. In addition, the extracurricular activity of other student populations could be assessed and compared to the extracurricular activity of English Language Learners. Such comparisons would be helpful with respect to determining the extent to which results from this study are generalizable to other student populations. Finally, engaging in qualitative research on the topic of school connectedness as a function of participation in extracurricular activities could be useful in determining student and teacher perceptions concerning benefits of participation in extracurricular activities among English Language Learners.

Conclusion

In this investigation, factors associated with school connectedness were analyzed as a function of participation in extracurricular activities for English Language Learners. For all factors examined (i.e., student grades, student discipline, and student attendance), English Language Learners who participated in extracurricular activities had lower GPAs, more disciplinary infractions, and lower attendance rates than English Language Learners who had not participated in extracurricular activities. The results may be interpreted to mean that support structures with the school environment were not sufficient to allow for participation among English Language Learners while maintaining high course grades, limited disciplinary referrals, and high attendance rates. Policies and practices should be explored that would provide affective and academic support for English Language Learners who choose to participate in extracurricular activities so that potential benefits of participation can be realized.

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Table 4.1

Descriptive Statistics for Student GPAs by Participation in Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular Activity Involvement	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Participated	174	69.39	1.30
Did Not Participate	164	77.50	1.07

Table 4.2

Inclusion of English Language Learners on Student Honor Roll by Participation in Extracurricular Activities

Student Honor Roll Status	Participated *n* and %age	Did Not Participate *n* and %age
All A Honor Roll Status	(*n* = 0) 0.00%	(*n* = 8) 1.5%
A and B Honor Roll Status	(*n* = 24) 13.8%	(*n* = 92) 17.3%
Not on Honor Roll	(*n* = 150) 86.2%	(*n* = 432) 81.2%

Table 4.3

Descriptive Statistics for Number of Discipline Referrals of English Language Learners by Participation in Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular Activity Involvement	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Participated	174	5.22	6.00
Did Not Participate	532	1.85	4.42

Table 4.4

Descriptive Statistics for Attendance Rates of English Language Learners by Participation in Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular Activity Involvement	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Participated	174	94.39	0.09
Did Not Participate	532	96.06	0.06

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The primary purpose of this journal-ready dissertation was to determine the degree to which differences existed in extracurricular participation rates among English Language Learners, students recently reclassified from English Language Learner status, and students who are not English Language Learners. Additionally, the extent to which participation was related to socioeconomic status and length of time in U.S. schools was examined. The secondary purpose of this journal-ready dissertation was to ascertain to what extent participation in extracurricular activities related to English language acquisition, academic performance, and certain behaviors related to school connectedness among English Language Learners.

In the first journal article, the relationship between participation in extracurricular activities and status as an English Language Learner was determined. In the second study, patterned after the federal AMAOs, the extent to which participation in extracurricular activities was connected to English language acquisition and academic performance was ascertained. Finally, in the third investigation, the relationship between participation in extracurricular activities and variables associated with school connectedness (i.e., student grades, disciplinary infractions, and attendance rates) was the focus. Each of these three empirical investigations included archival data for the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years for students in Grade 6 through Grade 12 obtained from a large public school in southeast Texas. These data permitted a determination of the extent to which English Language Learners engaged in extracurricular activities in a similar manner as their English proficient peers, and the extent to which participation in

extracurricular activities was related to English language acquisition, academic performance, and school connectedness of English Language Learners.

In this chapter, results are discussed and summaries for three articles are provided. In addition, implications for policy and practice are discussed. Finally, recommendations for future research are included.

Study One

In the first study, the degree to which extracurricular activity participation differed by English Language Learner status, by economic status, and by time enrolled in U.S. schools was addressed. Students who had been identified as English Language Learners, as well as students who had recently been reclassified from English Language Learner status, were statistically significantly less likely than students not identified as English Language Learners to participate in extracurricular activities. For English Language Learners and for students who had recently been reclassified, their economic status was not related to their extracurricular activity rates. Students who were not English Language Learners and who were also economically disadvantaged were less likely to participate in extracurricular activities than were students who were not English Language Learners and who were not economically disadvantaged. For this group of students, as their economic status improved, so too did their participation in extracurricular activities. With respect to the time of enrollment in U.S. schools, English Language Learners who had been in U.S. schools for less than five years exhibited similar rates of participation as their peers who had attended U.S. schools for five or more years.

Study Two

In the second study, the degree to which participation in extracurricular activities among English Language Learners was associated with progress toward, and attainment of, English fluency. The degree to which participation was related to academic performance of English Language Learners was addressed. Revealed in the second empirical investigation was that extracurricular activity participation was not statistically significantly related to second language acquisition as measured by progress on the TELPAS composite score. Furthermore, the association between participation and student attainment of an Advanced High rating on the TELPAS composite score was not statistically significant. With regard to student performance on the STAAR Reading and STAAR Mathematics exams, English Language Learners who were not involved in extracurricular activities had statistically significantly higher scores than English Language Learners who were involved in extracurricular activities. Additionally, English Language Learners who participated in extracurricular activities were less likely than their peers who had not participated in extracurricular activities to meet the passing standard on STAAR Mathematics test.

Study Three

In the third study, factors associated with school connectedness (i.e., student grades, student discipline, and student attendance) were analyzed to determine the degree to which these factors were related to participation in extracurricular activities. Revealed in this investigation was that participation in extracurricular activities was statistically significantly negatively related with factors associated with school connectedness. English Language Learners who participated in extracurricular activities had lower

course grades, more reported disciplinary referrals, and lower attendance rates than English Language Learners who did not participate. With regard to student discipline, English Language Learners who participated in extracurricular activities received nearly five times more discipline referrals than their peers who had not participated in extracurricular activities. English Language Learners who had participated in extracurricular activities had attendance rates that were 2% lower than the attendance rates of English Language Learners who had not participated in extracurricular activities.

Connection to Prior Research

Some of the findings revealed in this study were partially congruent with prior research. Peguero (2010) contended that student English language acquisition could contribute to a lack of participation. Further, English language proficiency emerged as a contributing factor to determining rate of extracurricular activity participation. However, students who had recently been reclassified from English Language Learner status had low rates of extracurricular activity participation that were comparable to the English Language Learner group, despite the fact that these students previously met criteria indicated by the state of Texas to determine English fluency.

Indicated in prior research, socioeconomic status influences participation in extracurricular activities (Garcia, 2012; Peck et al., 2008; Peguero, 2010; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2009). Although findings in this study were consistent with prior research for the non-English Language Learner population, economic status was not statistically significantly related to extracurricular activity participation of English Language Learners, nor for students who were recently reclassified from English Language Learner status.

McWhorter (1995) contended that language learners who were involved in extracurricular activities were more likely to be academically successful than students who were not involved in extracurricular activities. Furthermore, according to several researchers (e.g., Covay & Carbonaro, 2010; Farb & Matjasko, 2012; Feldman & Matjasko, 2005; Stearnes & Glennie, 2010), as opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities increased in the academic environment, the degree to which students performed at grade level also increased. Findings in this study, however, were not congruent with the existing academic literature. Participation in extracurricular activities was not statistically significantly related to English Language Learners' English proficiency or reading ability as measured by the TELPAS or the STAAR Reading tests. In fact, English Language Learners who did not participate in extracurricular activities performed better on the STAAR Reading test than their peers who had participated in extracurricular activities.

With respect to mathematics achievement, Lipscomb (2007) concluded that a positive relationship existed between achievement in mathematics and participation in extracurricular activities. Similarly, Morris (2015) determined that students who were involved in extracurricular activities demonstrated statistically significant higher levels of academic performance in mathematics. Findings in this study were not congruent with the existing literature regarding mathematics achievement and participation in extracurricular activities. English Language Learners who participated in extracurricular activities were less likely than their peers who did not participate to meet the passing standard on the STAAR Mathematics test.

Indicated in academic literature concerning participation extracurricular activities was the presence of a positive relationship between participation and improved academic performance, increased school connectedness, and decreased risk behaviors (Covay & Carbonaro, 2010; Diaz, 2005; Farb & Matjasko, 2012; Feldman & Matjasko, 2005; Stearnes & Glennie, 2010). Schwartz, Cappella, and Seidman (2015) documented that students who were involved in extracurricular activities had higher GPAs than students who had not been involved in extracurricular activities. Several researchers (e.g., Bryan et al., 2011; Neihaus, Rudasill, & Rakes, 2011; Skues, Cunningham, & Pokharel, 2005; You et al., 2008; Young, 2004) presented findings that as e students felt a greater connection to the school environment, academic achievement, future orientation, and emotional stability followed. In addition, negative relationships exist between student involvement in extracurricular activities and engagement in risky behaviors (Covay & Carbonaro, 2010; Farb, & Matjasko, 2012). Results of this study, however, were contrary to prior research. English Language Learners who participated in extracurricular activities had GPAs that were lower than the GPAs of English Language Learners who had not participated in extracurricular activities.

Connection to Theoretical Framework

Collier (1995) identified a major aspect of second language acquisition was sociocultural in nature. Grounded in the work of Vygotsky, who asserted that learning is a combination of one's natural cognitive predisposition and potential learning that occurs through collaboration with capable peers. Díaz-Rico (2004) asserted the space between natural and potential ability consists of interactions between students, teachers, and peers.

Further Schumann, in his Acculturation Model, contended that the affective and emotional aspects of learning are important to the sense of belongingness experienced by a learner, as well as the receptiveness to and willingness to engage in language (Collier, 1995). Based on the results of this study, English Language Learners, as well as students who had been recently reclassified from English Language Learner status, may be missing prime opportunities to engage in social contexts that are supportive of these theories of second language acquisition by not participating in extracurricular activities at a rate that was comparable to their native English-speaking peers. English Language Learners who are encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities along with capable language models could benefit from exposure to the target language, a more fully developed sense of belonging in the educational environment, and an increased willingness to engage in language output in the target language. With these potential advantages, English Language Learners could experience increased academic achievement and educational success.

According to the social interactionist theory of language acquisition, language acquisition is not exclusively a biological or cognitive task (Dolati, 2012). Instead, social interactionists posit that language acquisition is accomplished through a social need to communicate with peers (Dolati, 2012). Neither the TELPAS, nor the STAAR assessments measure informal or social language exclusively. Moreover, because the TELPAS is closely correlated to the STAAR Reading test, a measure of content skills and not English proficiency, a true sense of social language acquisition would not be obtained from data used in this study. Accordingly, determining the extent to which English Language Learners benefited academically from the social interactions with

peers would be challenging, particularly given the limitations of archival data. Potential academic learning that might result from social language acquisition through involvement in extracurricular activities would require an alternative research design than the design utilized in this investigation.

Krashen contended that the affective filter, a psychological barrier to language acquisition, influences the ability of English Language Learners to capitalize on available language input. Negative feelings or anxiety inhibit effective processing of language inputs (Ni, 2012). Conversely, students who have positive feelings and low anxiety have greater capacity to process available language inputs (Ni, 2012). Furthermore, Wilson (2004) suggested that for the learning environment to be effective, the student must feel a connection to the school environment. Supporters of the school connectedness theory (Ortiz, Valerio, & Lopez, 2012; Wilson, 2004; Zullig, Huebner, & Patton, 2012) contend that as students develop positive relationships between peers and adults, motivation towards educational, cultural, and civic pursuits increase. Students who are more connected to school have higher attendance rates (Blum, 2015; Schoeneberger, 2012).

Although the results revealed in this study were contradictory to the intention of the theories presented herein, the fact that English Language Learners did not benefit from participation in extracurricular activities may be interpreted to mean that support structures implemented within the school environments were not sufficient to counteract negative student acculturation. According to state reports for this specific school district, for instance, English Language Learners historically have attendance rates that are higher than any other student populations (Texas Education Agency, 2016a). A potential justification for the English Language Learners who participated in extracurricular

activities having lower attendance rates than English Language Learners who did not participate, is that as cultural assimilation occurred within the context of extracurricular activities, English Language Learners began to behave in manners similar to students belonging to other student groups.

Implications for Policy and Practice

School administrators could develop policies and practices that are more culturally and linguistically inclusive to increase school connectedness for students in this population. Developing educational policy by which English Language Learners would be encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities, could potentially increase the student exposure to target language models and increase student motivation to engage in that target language. In addition, English Language Learners might benefit from an increased sense of belongingness in the school environment through participation in extracurricular activities. For these reasons, impediments experienced by English Language learners that would act as barriers to participation in extracurricular activities should be identified. Once these barriers have been determined, school leaders should generate strategies to increase extracurricular participation among English Language Learners. Through increased participation, English Language Learners could attain critical social and academic language necessary to the context of school more readily.

Regarding English language acquisition, academic performance, and factors related to school connectedness, English Language Learners who participated in extracurricular activities did not profit from the potential benefits of such participation. One possible explanation for this phenomena is that the structure of the school environment is such that English Language Learners who participate in extracurricular

activities were not provided the academic support necessary to combat the cognitive and linguistic demands of the assessments analyzed in the study. For instance, participating in extracurricular activities might limit access to after-school tutorials or special intervention programs. Moreover, intervention opportunities and specialized classes designed to mitigate instructional deficits that are offered during the school day might not be available to students who participate in extracurricular activities that are associated with a school course, as was analyzed in this study. Sufficient academic and linguistic support necessary for English Language Learners may not have been provided in a way, or to a depth, that allowed students to have full access to the educational environment. It is possible that sufficient affective support was not provided to English Language Learners who choose to engage in extracurricular activities. As such, English Language Learners might not have had access to proper support structures within the school environment that would combat negative influences from peers as cultural assimilation occurs.

Moreover, opportunities for long-term, and targeted, intervention and affective support within the curricular confines of the school schedule might be limited for English Language Learners as time in student schedules was usurped by courses taken in connection to extracurricular activities. Instructional leaders must be creative in developing and implementing alternative support structures that would allow students access to school activities without foregoing access interventions, targeted assistance, and affective support.

Recommendations for Future Research

In this study, the definition of extracurricular activities was limited to activities that were both school sponsored and tied to a school course. Expanding that definition to include school sponsored activities that occur outside of the constructs of the school day exclusively would be beneficial to the study as it would likely provide a more complete picture of student participation. Furthermore, expanding the definition of extracurricular activities to include activities that are community-based and not school sponsored (e.g., community sports teams and classes, dance and cheerleading classes, church groups, music lessons, and other academic pursuits) would be advantageous, as the nature of extracurricular activity participation would be more fully represented. Including elementary grade levels would further expand the sample size and allow for a more robust analysis.

Conducting similar studies in different geographical areas, across multiple school districts, and school types would further extend the available research regarding this topic and student population. Analyzing the research questions by race, ethnicity, gender, and age could provide some valuable information regarding potential reasons that English Language Learners and students who had been reclassified from English Language Learner status did not participate in extracurricular activities at rates comparable to their non-English Language Learner peers. Moreover, analyzing the research questions specific to English Language Learners by English proficiency would give valuable clues about whether language development and participation in extracurricular activities among this student group are related.

Because 50% of the composite score is calculated with the TELPAS Reading score, the majority of the measure is derived from reading (Texas Education Agency, 2016c). Separating the Listening, Speaking, and Writing portions of the assessment system might result in different finding. Additionally, as the TELPAS Reading test is closely correlated to the STAAR Reading test, utilizing alternative measures of language acquisition might provide data that more accurately represents true language proficiency in isolation of content skills (Texas Education Agency, 2016c).

To expand the current literature on potential relationships between participation in extracurricular activities and second language acquisition, conducting similar investigations in different school districts with varying characteristics is suggested. Further, researchers are encouraged to use a variety of assessments geared specifically for measuring English language acquisition. Analyzing individual sections of TELPAS, for instance, might be beneficial in determining if participation in extracurricular activities was related to performance in individual language components. In addition, comparing data on English Language Learners with other student populations to determine the extent to which results in this study are reflective of other student populations would be informative.

Finally, conducting qualitative studies in which student and teacher perceptions were analyzed regarding participation in extracurricular activities by students identified as English Language Learners, especially barriers to participation, would be particularly relevant. Engaging in qualitative research on the topic of school connectedness could be useful in determining student and teacher perceptions concerning benefits of participation among English Language Learners. Additionally, utilizing qualitative data to determine

student and teacher perceptions regarding perceived academic and linguistic benefits of participation in extracurricular activities among English Language Learners is suggested.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the primary purpose of this journal-ready dissertation was to ascertain the degree to which differences were present in extracurricular activity participations for three student groups (i.e., English Language Learners, students recently reclassified from English Language Learner status, and students not labeled as English Language Learners). The second purpose of this study was to examine the relationship of extracurricular activity participation with English Language Learner performance on the TELPAS and the STAAR Reading and Mathematics tests. The third purpose of this journal-ready dissertation was to ascertain the degree to which extracurricular activity participation of English Language Learners was related to factors associated with school connectedness. As noted previously, many of the results obtained in this investigation were not congruent with the extant literature. As such, research studies are clearly warranted regarding the student population of English Language Learners and their involvement in extracurricular activities and its benefits.

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Appendix A

Institutional Review Board
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
903 Bowers Blvd, Huntsville, TX 77341-2448
Phone: 936.294.4875
Fax: 936.294.3622
irb@shsu.edu
www.shsu.edu/~rgs_www/irb/

Sam Houston State University
A Member of The Texas State University System

DATE:	March 31, 2016
TO:	Mary Lariviere [Faculty Sponsor: Dr. John Slate]
FROM:	Sam Houston State University (SHSU) IRB
PROJECT TITLE:	*Extracurricular Activities Participation and English Language Learners: Second Language Acquisition and Academic Performance [T/D]*
PROTOCOL #:	2016-03-28765
SUBMISSION TYPE:	INITIAL REVIEW
ACTION:	DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS
DECISION DATE:	March 31, 2016
REVIEW CATEGORY:	Category 4—research involving existing, publicly available data usually has little, if any, associated risk, particularly if subject identifiers are removed from the data or specimens.

Thank you for your submission of Initial Review materials for this project. The Sam Houston State University (SHSU) IRB has determined this project is EXEMPT FROM IRB REVIEW according to federal regulations.

We will retain a copy of this correspondence within our records.

*** What should investigators do when considering changes to an exempt study that could make it nonexempt?**

It is the PI's responsibility to consult with the IRB whenever questions arise about whether planned changes to an exempt study might make that study nonexempt human subjects research. In this case, please make available sufficient information to the IRB so it can make a correct determination.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB Office at 936-294-4875 or irb@shsu.edu. Please include your project title and protocol number in all correspondence with this committee.

Sincerely,

Donna Desforges
IRB Chair, PHSC
PHSC-IRB

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Sam Houston State University IRB's records

Appendix B

Accountability, Assessment, and Research
Humble ISD
Humble, Texas

January 4, 2016

Dear Ms. Lariviere,

Thank you for your interest in conducting research in Humble ISD. We are grateful that you considered us. I am happy to inform you that your proposal number 091914a, as amended 12-17-15, entitled "Second Language acquisition of LEP students as a function of Extracurricular Activity Participation" has been approved, which includes access to data for district students in grades 6-12, including gender, race/ethnicity, socio-economic status, course enrollment, and state assessment results. You will be responsible for keeping all personally identifiable data secure per best practices and destroying any personally identifiable documentation by June 1, 2016 (for examples, see http://csrc.nist.gov/publications/nistpubs/800-122/sp800-122.pdf).

The proposed study should prove to be a useful contribution to improving Humble ISD, as well as a contribution to the practice of program evaluation.

As part of the research process, you will continue to consult with district staff and this office, as needed, and follow the guidelines of your institution's human subjects committee. This office will provide you with a masked dataset containing the variables outlined above.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best Wishes,

Warren Roane, Ph.D.
Director of Accountability, Assessment, and Research
Humble ISD
281-641-8124
warren.roane@humble.k12.tx.us

VITA

Mary Laura Lariviere

EDUCATIONAL HISTORY

Doctorate of Education – Educational Leadership, August 2016
Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX
Dissertation: Extracurricular Activity Participation and English Language Learners: Second Language Acquisition and Academic Performance

Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction, August 2005
Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX

Bachelor of Arts in English, Bilingual Education, May 2000
Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

ESL/Bilingual Specialist, Humble Independent School District, Humble, 2013-2016
SIOP Instructional Coach/Lead ESL Teacher, Humble High School, Humble, 2009-2013
Adjunct Professor, Developmental Reading/ESOL, Kingwood, 2009
Teacher, ESL/Journalism, Caney Creek High School, Conroe, 2005-2009
Instructor, Adult ESL, Region 6, Huntsville, 2004-2005
Teacher, Spanish, Splendora High School, Splendora, 2000-2003

RECOGNITIONS

Nominated for Humble ISD Super Staffer, 2016
Graduated Cum Laude, Sam Houston State University, 2000
Inducted into English National Honor Society, Sigma Tau Delta, 1998
Inducted into Golden Key National Honor Society, 1998
Recipient of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo Scholarship, 1996

SCHOLARLY RESEARCH ACTIVITY

PRESENTATIONS

Lariviere, L. M (2015, January). *Differences is school connectedness and school engagement for students with limited English proficiency*. Poster presented at the Hawaii International Conference on Education, Honolulu, HI.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Association for Texas Public Educators, 2002-2016
Texas Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, 2009-2016
Texans for Public Education, 2014-2016

PUBLICATIONS

Lariviere, L. M., & Slate, J. R. (2014). Differences is school connectedness and school engagement for students with limited English proficiency. *International Journal of Psychology Research, 9*(2), 123-136.