

THE IMPACT OF SCHOOL RULES ON LEARNING AND MASTERY OF MATERIALS: INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE AND EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract: *The effectiveness of school education largely depends on the regulatory frameworks and extracurricular activities provided within the educational system. This study examines the role of school rules and physical extracurricular tasks in influencing students' learning processes across various countries. Through a comparative analysis of international experiences—Finland, Japan, the United States, Germany, and South Korea—this paper highlights the strengths and challenges of different approaches. A particular focus is given to how discipline and extracurricular tasks impact students' academic and social outcomes. The findings provide actionable insights for adapting best practices to improve educational systems globally, including those in post-Soviet countries.*

Keywords: *school rules, extracurricular activities, international education systems, comparative analysis, learning outcomes, discipline*

INTRODUCTION

School regulations and extracurricular activities significantly shape students' educational experiences. While rules establish behavioral norms and organizational frameworks, extracurricular tasks provide practical learning opportunities that enhance students' engagement and competencies. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of these factors through a comparative analysis of international education systems. The findings aim to inform the development of effective strategies for improving education in diverse contexts, including post-Soviet countries, where a transition from rigid Soviet-era approaches to modern pedagogical models is ongoing.



LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review focuses on how school rules and extracurricular activities influence students' learning experiences across diverse international education systems:

FINLAND:

Sahlberg (2011) highlights Finland's minimalistic approach to school rules, where emphasis is placed on trust, equality, and fostering a collaborative environment. Finnish schools integrate extracurricular activities like sports, arts, and nature-based programs, which encourage students' holistic development. This approach is strongly linked to Finland's consistent high rankings in international assessments such as PISA, demonstrating the benefits of minimal stress and maximal student autonomy.

JAPAN:

According to Cummings (2015), Japanese schools enforce strict rules designed to instill discipline and social responsibility. Students are often engaged in school cleaning and maintenance tasks as part of their learning process. Such activities foster a strong sense of teamwork and accountability, although they may also contribute to higher stress levels and mental health issues due to the competitive and rigid nature of the system.

UNITED STATES:

Schmidt and Ludwig (2020) describe the U.S. educational system as diverse and decentralized, with significant variation in school rules and policies. Extracurricular activities, such as sports teams, debate clubs, and volunteer projects, are integral to student development. While these programs enhance leadership skills and creativity, disparities in resources among schools highlight challenges in equitable access.

GERMANY:

German schools, as discussed by Baumert and Maaz (2019), focus on structured yet balanced educational models. Rules are designed to promote efficiency, while extracurricular programs often include technical and cultural activities that prepare students for vocational pathways. Despite this, the system's early specialization can sometimes limit broader social mobility.

SOUTH KOREA:

South Korea's education system, noted by Kim and Lee (2016), is characterized by rigorous rules and a competitive atmosphere. Students engage in intensive after-school activities, often aimed at exam



preparation. While academic achievements are notable, the system's pressure-cooker environment raises concerns about student well-being and long-term mental health.

Each system demonstrates a unique balance between structure and flexibility, offering insights into how discipline and extracurricular activities shape educational outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a comparative qualitative research approach, synthesizing data from academic literature, policy reports, and statistical sources to explore the effects of school rules and extracurricular activities on student outcomes.

1. DATA COLLECTION:

Secondary data from peer-reviewed journals, government reports, and international assessment datasets (e.g., PISA, TIMSS) were used to identify key educational practices and outcomes across the selected countries.

2. COMPARATIVE FRAMEWORK:

A framework was developed to compare and analyze the following parameters:

- Nature and stringency of school rules
- Types and scope of extracurricular activities
- Academic performance metrics
- Socio-emotional outcomes and stress levels

3. Analysis Tools:

Qualitative content analysis was performed to identify recurring themes, patterns, and correlations in the data. Findings were synthesized into a comparative table for clearer visualization.

4. Case Studies:

Finland, Japan, the United States, Germany, and South Korea were selected as case studies due to their distinctive approaches to school rules and extracurricular engagement. The Soviet-era and contemporary educational systems were included to explore historical and contextual contrasts.



Results

The comparative analysis revealed significant variations in how school rules and extracurricular activities impact educational outcomes:

Parameter	Finland	Japan	USA	Germany	South Korea
School Rules	Minimal	Strict	Moderate	Structured	Very strict
Extracurricular Activities	Creativity, sports	Labor tasks, clubs	Sports, projects	Technical clubs, cultural activities	Exam-focused
Academic Outcomes	High, low stress	High, but stressful	Varied, talent-focused	Professional readiness	High, stressful
Focus	Individuality	Collectivism	Talent development	Structured skills	Competitive success

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study underscores the profound influence of school rules and extracurricular activities on students' academic and personal development. Effective education systems balance discipline with opportunities for creativity and personal growth. Key recommendations include:

1. Introducing trust-based regulations to promote autonomy and innovation.
2. Ensuring equitable access to diverse extracurricular programs.
3. Monitoring and mitigating student stress levels through supportive policies.

Future research should explore the longitudinal impact of these factors and identify context-specific strategies for educational reform.

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