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The Impact of Cultural and Artistic Extracurricular Activities on Student Engagement and Identity in Primary Education in Kosovo

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of cultural and artistic extracurricular activities on student engagement and identity development in primary education in Kosovo, drawing on Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory, which highlights the interaction between cultural contexts and student growth. Using a convergent mixed-methods design, 500 participants—250 teachers and 250 parents—were selected through stratified sampling from ten public schools in both urban and rural areas, ensuring balanced representation by gender, teaching experience, and community background. Activities such as music, theater, visual arts, and heritage-based projects were analyzed for their influence on students' motivation, sense of belonging, and cultural awareness. Quantitative data were gathered via structured questionnaires, while qualitative insights came from interviews with school principals and quality coordinators. Findings revealed a significant link between structured artistic programs and increased participation and emotional engagement. Teachers emphasized creativity and social cohesion as key benefits, while parents underscored the preservation of cultural identity. Folk music, traditional exhibitions, and theatrical performances emerged as the most influential in shaping students' sense of self. Strong school–family partnerships correlated with higher community involvement and more effective program implementation, though urban–rural disparities persisted in institutional support and resources. The study recommends that national education policies formally integrate the arts into holistic learning, with targeted funding and teacher training to ensure sustainable implementation, particularly in underserved rural schools.

Keywords: Arts and Culture; Cultural Identity; Extracurricular Activities; Primary Education; Student Engagement

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1. Introduction

Student engagement and the development of cultural identity are widely recognized as central pillars of twenty-first-century primary education, encompassing academic, emotional, social, and cultural dimensions of learning^[1,2]. Scholars emphasize that meaningful engagement requires more than academic performance; it involves fostering inclusive contexts where students can explore personal and cultural identities^[3,4]. This study is grounded in Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory, which highlights the interplay between cultural environments, social systems, and individual development^[5].

Extracurricular activities—particularly those rooted in arts and cultural expression—play a particularly influential role in supporting multidimensional engagement. Participation in music, theater, visual arts, and heritage-based projects has been shown to enhance student motivation and creativity while simultaneously fostering identity development and social belonging^[6-8]. Such activities function as powerful informal learning environments that enable students to explore their potential, build peer relationships, and strengthen connections with their community^[9]. When meaningfully implemented, arts-based programs create space for emotional expression, collaborative learning, and civic consciousness^[10,11].

International research underscores the benefits of integrating cultural and artistic content in education. In Nordic countries, arts-based education has been shown to support democratic participation and cultural identity formation^[10], while studies in North America link extracurricular arts to increased motivation, improved behavior, and stronger student-teacher relationships^[4,11,12]. Collectively, these findings indicate that arts and culture are not peripheral additions to the curriculum but central components of holistic and inclusive learning.

In Kosovo, the Core Curriculum for Pre-University Education (MASHTI, 2016) emphasizes integrating cultural and artistic dimensions into the teaching process^[13]. However, practical implementation remains inconsistent and often superficial. Prior studies have highlighted barriers such as inadequate infrastructure, limited teacher training, insufficient community collaboration, and disparities between urban and rural schools^[14,15]. These structural

challenges limit the potential of arts-based learning to meaningfully enhance student development and cultural identity formation.

These structural challenges limit the potential of arts-based learning to meaningfully enhance student development and cultural identity formation.

Recognizing these gaps, this study examines the role of cultural and artistic extracurricular activities in promoting student engagement and cultural identity in Kosovo's primary education. It further explores the level and nature of collaboration between parents and teachers in the design and implementation of such activities. Through a mixed-methods approach involving 500 participants—250 teachers and 250 parents—from ten urban and rural public schools, the research seeks to provide empirical evidence to inform culturally responsive practice and evidence-based policy within Kosovo's post-conflict educational context, where studies in this field remain scarce.

2. Purpose of the Study

This study aims to examine the impact of extracurricular activities with cultural and artistic content on student engagement, motivation, and the development of both personal and collective identity in primary education in Kosovo. Furthermore, it investigates the role of parent-teacher partnerships in the planning and implementation of such activities, with attention to contextual variables such as school location (urban vs. rural) and teachers' professional experience. By adopting a mixed-methods approach, the research contributes to the international body of knowledge on arts-based education and school-family engagement by offering empirical evidence from a post-conflict, under-researched educational context such as Kosovo.

3. Study Objectives

1. To assess the perceptions of teachers and parents regarding the impact of cultural and artistic extracurricular activities on student engagement.
2. To analyze how these activities contribute to the formation of students' personal identity and their sense of belonging to the school community.
3. To examine the level and forms of parent-teacher part-

nerships in planning and delivering extracurricular cultural and artistic activities.

4. To identify how demographic variables (school location, teacher experience) influence the implementation and quality of such programs.
5. To provide evidence-based recommendations for the development of more inclusive, community-oriented extracurricular models in primary schools.

4. Research Questions

1. What is the perceived impact of cultural and artistic extracurricular activities on student engagement in primary education?
2. In what ways do teachers and parents perceive these activities as contributing to the development of students' identity?
3. What is the nature and extent of collaboration between schools and families in the design and implementation of cultural extracurricular activities?
4. Are there significant differences in the implementation of these activities between urban and rural schools?

5. Research Hypotheses

H1. *There is a positive correlation between students' participation in artistic extracurricular activities and their sense of belonging in school.*

H2. *The level of parent-teacher collaboration is a significant predictor of the effective implementation of extracurricular activities.*

H3. *Teachers in urban schools report greater institutional support and resources for cultural activities compared to their rural counterparts.*

H4. *Teachers' professional experience influences their perception of the educational value of arts-based extracurricular engagement.*

6. Research Methodology

6.1. Study Design

This study employed a convergent mixed-methods

design^[16], combining quantitative data collected through structured questionnaires, which were developed and distributed based on established sampling procedures^[17], and qualitative data obtained through semi-structured interviews, supported by frameworks that emphasize the importance of school, family, and community partnerships in educational research^[18].

6.2. Sampling of Participants

The study included 500 participants, consisting of 250 teachers and 250 parents from ten purposefully selected public primary schools (five urban and five rural) across three municipalities in Kosovo: Prishtina, Gjilan, and Ferizaj. The selection of schools was based on location, size, and diversity of programs. Within each school, participants were selected using stratified sampling^[19], ensuring representation by gender, teaching experience, and community background. Stratification balanced demographic variables and allowed meaningful subgroup comparisons.

6.3. Instruments Used

For the quantitative component, a standardized questionnaire was developed based on prior research instruments related to extracurricular engagement and parent-teacher collaboration^[12]. The questionnaire included four sections: (1) demographic data; (2) frequency and type of student participation in cultural/artistic activities; (3) perceived impact of these activities on student motivation, engagement, and identity; and (4) parent-teacher collaboration indicators.

For the qualitative phase, a semi-structured interview guide was designed following established guidelines^[19]. Interviews were conducted with 20 school personnel (10 principals and 10 quality coordinators) to explore institutional strategies, challenges, and success stories related to extracurricular programming. The instrument was piloted prior to data collection to ensure clarity and relevance.

6.4. Data Collection Procedure

Data collection took place between January and March 2025. Questionnaires were distributed both physically (printed forms in schools) and elec-

tronically (Google Forms). On average, each questionnaire required 15–20 minutes to complete. Qualitative interviews were conducted in person, lasting approximately 35–45 minutes each, and were audio-recorded with informed consent. Interviews were held in private settings within school premises to maintain confidentiality and ensure open discussion. All recordings and transcripts were securely stored and anonymized.

6.5. Research Ethics

Prior to participation, all individuals received an informed consent form outlining the study's purpose, confidentiality measures, and their voluntary right to withdraw. Ethical approval for the research was granted by the Institutional Research Ethics Board of the University "Kadri Zeka" (Approval No. 2025/01/EDU). All procedures followed the ethical standards of the Declaration of Helsinki^[20].

6.6. Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using *IBM SPSS Statistics* version 29. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, means, standard deviations) and inferential techniques, including Chi-square tests, One-Way ANOVA, and Cramér's V, were applied to examine relationships and differences across key variables such as school location and teacher experience. Qualitative data were analyzed through thematic analysis^[21], drawing on prior research that emphasized the role of arts and educational interventions in shaping student outcomes^[22,23]. This approach enabled the identification of patterns and themes across participant narratives, particularly regarding the perceived impact of extracurricular activities on inclusion and teaching quality^[24].

7. Literature Review

7.1. The Role of the Arts in Children's Holistic Development

Artistic extracurricular activities are increasingly acknowledged as vital components of holistic education, particularly during the formative years of primary schooling

^[24,25]. Numerous studies highlight the positive effects of engaging in visual arts, music, theater, and dance on children's cognitive, emotional, and social development^[26–28].

Uptis and Smithrim, through a large-scale longitudinal study in Canadian schools, demonstrated that participation in artistic extracurriculars leads to a decrease in school absenteeism and improved classroom engagement^[4]. Their research provides empirical evidence that sustained exposure to the arts enhances not only students' academic habits but also their socio-emotional adjustment, aligning with global efforts to humanize education by embedding creativity and personal expression into learning environments^[29]. Moreover, in the context of Kosovo, urban–rural disparities continue to influence how extracurricular initiatives are designed and accessed, often shaping the inclusiveness of students' opportunities^[30].

Martin and Torres emphasize that when children engage in arts-based activities, they gain opportunities to build self-esteem, experiment with new ideas, and express complex emotions^[25]. Their findings suggest that artistic experiences serve as platforms for emotional regulation and identity construction, which are crucial at the primary education level. This is particularly relevant for Kosovo, where many children face social pressures and transition challenges in rural and post-conflict areas^[31,32].

Eisner argues that creativity through the arts fosters critical thinking and independent learning—skills that traditional curricular subjects often struggle to cultivate in early education^[6]. His analysis underlined that structured arts programs correlate strongly with the development of innovative thinking and a sense of agency among children. In post-conflict contexts, such as Kosovo, arts initiatives further contribute to rebuilding identity and social cohesion^[33,34], while also fostering civic responsibility and cultural continuity^[35,36].

Zins *et al.* present a comprehensive framework connecting social-emotional learning (SEL) with artistic learning, positing that artistic expression is inherently tied to competencies such as self-awareness, empathy, and collaborative problem-solving^[37]. This model aligns with Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory, which underscores the role of cultural and social contexts in shaping student identity and engagement [5]. Complementary evidence from other scholars further elaborates how SEL dimensions are

embedded in the arts^[38,39]. Niemi and colleagues, focusing on the Nordic education model, view art not simply as an enrichment subject but as a foundational pedagogical approach that shapes culturally conscious citizens and promotes civic responsibility from a young age^[10]. While the Nordic context differs structurally from Kosovo, the principle that arts contribute to civic and moral education is universally applicable but requires contextual adaptation.

From a critical perspective, these studies collectively validate the transformative potential of the arts. However, in contexts like Kosovo, structural barriers such as underfunded schools, lack of materials, and teacher overload can limit their impact^[31,33]. Thus, while global literature offers robust models, their successful application in Kosovo requires contextualization and sustained investment in educational capacity-building.

7.2. Parental Involvement in Cultural and Artistic Activities

Parental engagement is a fundamental pillar in the sustainable development of extracurricular programs, particularly those with cultural and artistic dimensions^[34,35]. Studies consistently affirm that when parents are actively involved in school life, students demonstrate higher levels of engagement, confidence, and social integration^[36].

Epstein and colleagues, in their widely cited framework of overlapping spheres of influence, argue that parents and teachers must function as co-educators, especially in activities reflecting cultural identity and creativity^[18]. This approach is particularly relevant for Kosovo, where institutional boundaries between school and family often remain rigid, limiting joint ownership of student learning^[32].

Tett and MacLachlan explore how schools can create inclusive environments for parental participation by valuing families' cultural backgrounds and lived experiences^[26]. Their findings indicate that arts-based activities provide natural spaces for intergenerational learning, an opportunity especially valuable for Kosovo's rich oral and folkloric traditions^[14].

Garbacz et al. report a strong correlation between parents' perceived competence and their involvement in extracurricular planning, suggesting that training and inclusion in decision-making enhance program sustainability^[27].

This is critical in Kosovo, where parental education levels vary and structured engagement strategies are limited^[30].

Kraft and Dougherty provide quantitative evidence from U.S. public schools showing that parent engagement in extracurricular arts programs enhances academic performance and classroom behavior, especially for marginalized students^[11]. Their findings underscore the dual benefit of such involvement: strengthening student outcomes while building school–family trust.

Critically, while global literature highlights the importance of parental engagement, Kosovo faces systemic barriers such as limited time, transportation, and institutional support that must be addressed to operationalize this evidence effectively^[15]. In post-conflict societies, arts-based family engagement can also serve as a healing mechanism, offering both educational and emotional benefits^[33].

7.3. International Models of Arts Integration in Education

In many countries with advanced education systems, arts integration is a core component of both curricular and extracurricular activities supported by coherent policies, institutional frameworks, and community partnerships^[22,28].

Niemi and colleagues emphasize that in Nordic countries, arts education plays a central role in developing civic competence and cultural awareness, serving as a transformative tool for social development and democratic engagement^[10]. This underscores the need for long-term policy commitments, which remain weak in Kosovo's education system^[13].

Upitis and Smithrim report that in Canada, extracurricular arts programs are often organized with cultural institutions, providing authentic learning experiences and enhancing community engagement^[4]. In Kosovo, by contrast, such partnerships are ad hoc and lack institutional support^[14].

Kraft and Dougherty show that in U.S. schools, participation in artistic extracurricular activities leads to higher student motivation and improved teacher–student relationships^[11]. Their findings suggest that the arts can serve as an equalizing force in education—a critical point for Kosovo, where socioeconomic disparities between urban and rural

areas remain pronounced^[31].

Lum identifies three foundational elements for sustainable arts integration: political and financial support, professional teacher development, and deep community involvement^[28]. The absence of these dimensions leads to fragmented, unsustainable initiatives—an observation particularly relevant for Kosovo, where funding and teacher training are limited.

7.4. Challenges in Kosovo and Comparable Contexts

Despite policy recognition, Kosovo faces systemic barriers that hinder full implementation of cultural and artistic extracurricular activities^[13,14]. Studies show fragmented application of the Core Curriculum due to insufficient teacher training and weak monitoring systems^[15].

Rahmani and Bajrami found significant disparities between urban and rural schools in extracurricular offerings, highlighting lack of infrastructure, artistic materials, and partnerships necessary for sustainable programs^[30].

Smith and Krasniqi argue that sociopolitical factors influence parental involvement, with rural families often viewing extracurriculars as nonessential due to economic pressures^[31].

Miftari and Shala emphasize that donor-driven interventions prioritize short-term results, leaving schools unable to sustain programs without external support^[32].

These challenges mirror those in other Balkan contexts, where top-down policies and lack of grassroots involvement limit effectiveness^[33]. Addressing these barriers in Kosovo requires locally grounded strategies, equitable resource allocation, and community-centered implementation.

7.5. Impact on Identity and Belonging

Cultural and artistic extracurricular activities play a crucial role in shaping students' identity and sense of belonging, particularly in transitional societies like Kosovo^[33–35]. These activities create inclusive spaces where children can connect with their cultural heritage and peers^[34].

Bronfenbrenner and Morris extend the ecological systems theory to highlight how school-based cultural pro-

grams serve as key mesosystem interactions linking family and school environments^[5].

Morrison and Khatib argue that early exposure to arts supports both personal and collective identity, particularly in multilingual or post-conflict regions^[33].

Swick and Ramić show that heritage-based activities foster pride, intergenerational dialogue, and resilience against marginalization^[34,38].

Petrovic et al. provide evidence that cultural programs increase students' sense of school attachment and civic responsibility^[35].

In Kosovo, these findings highlight the potential of inclusive, culturally grounded extracurricular programs to enhance emotional well-being, strengthen social integration, and promote civic identity, especially in communities where trust in institutions remains fragile^[31].

8. Analysis of Results

Following the data collection, a statistical and thematic analysis was conducted to evaluate the impact of cultural and artistic extracurricular activities on student engagement, identity development, and school–family collaboration in primary education in Kosovo. A mixed-methods approach was used, combining quantitative results with qualitative insights to enhance the validity of the findings.

Quantitative analysis included descriptive (means, standard deviations) and inferential statistics (independent-samples t-tests, ANOVA, and Chi-square tests), applied across key participant variables such as respondent role (teacher vs. parent), school location (urban vs. rural), and professional experience. Qualitative data from interviews with school principals and quality coordinators were analyzed using thematic analysis^[21].

Teachers rated student engagement in cultural and artistic extracurricular activities higher than parents. The difference was statistically significant as confirmed by both an independent-samples t-test ($t(498) = 6.74, p < 0.001$) and a Chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 29.86, p < 0.001$), supporting Hypothesis H1 (Table 1).

Table 1. Evaluation of Student Engagement in Extracurricular Activities by Participant Group.

Participant Group	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Statistical Test	p-value
Teachers	4.20	0.50	$t(498) = 6.74 / \chi^2 = 29.86$	< 0.001
Parents	3.80	0.60		

The one-way ANOVA revealed no statistically significant difference between teachers and parents in their perception of the impact of extracurricular activities on students' cultural identity ($F = 0.29$, $p = 0.591$). Although teachers rated the impact slightly higher ($M = 4.00$) compared to parents ($M = 3.90$), the difference was not significant. Hypothesis H4 was not supported by the quantitative data (**Table 2**).

Teachers evaluated school–family collaboration high-

er ($M = 4.10$) than parents ($M = 3.70$). The difference was statistically significant according to an independent-samples t-test ($t(498) = 7.45$, $p < 0.001$), supporting Hypothesis H2 (**Table 3**).

Teachers in urban schools reported higher institutional support for cultural extracurricular activities ($M = 4.25$) compared to teachers in rural schools ($M = 3.90$). The difference was statistically significant ($F = 6.12$, $p = 0.014$), supporting Hypothesis H3 (**Table 4**).

Table 2. Evaluation of the Impact of Extracurricular Activities on Cultural Identity According to Teachers and Parents.

Participant Group	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Statistical Test	p-value
Teachers	4.00	0.60	$F = 0.29$	0.591
Parents	3.90	0.70		

Table 3. Evaluation of School–Family Collaboration According to Teachers and Parents.

Participant Group	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Statistical Test	p-value
Teachers	4.10	0.40	$t(498) = 7.45$	< 0.001
Parents	3.70	0.50		

Table 4. Institutional Support for Cultural Activities by School Location.

School Location	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Statistical Test	p-value
Urban	4.25	0.45	$F = 6.12$	0.014
Rural	3.90	0.55		

9. Analysis of the Qualitative Data

To complement the statistical results and provide deeper insight into the impact of cultural and artistic extracurricular activities in primary education in Kosovo, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 school directors (D1–D10) and 10 quality coordinators (K1–K10) from the same schools included in the quantitative survey. Thematic analysis was carried out following Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework ^[21]. Transcripts were double-coded by two independent researchers and validated through peer review to ensure consistency of themes.

9.1. Theme 1: Student Engagement through Cultural Activities

Quality coordinators emphasized that artistic initiatives such as school theatre and traditional celebrations in-

creased student participation. K3 stated: "Children who are not active in academic classes show talent and motivation on stage." D5 added: "Artistic activities give students a space to feel valued and included."

These narratives consistently highlighted that cultural and artistic programs create inclusive spaces where students can actively participate beyond traditional classroom settings.

9.2. Theme 2: Development of Cultural Identity

Directors and coordinators reported that activities focused on cultural heritage, such as folk dance and ethnographic exhibitions, enhanced students' awareness of their cultural background. D7 noted: "Students better understand themselves when presenting their local customs to peers." K9 stated: "Learning outside the classroom through art and culture is a form of identity development."

Participants described these experiences as reinforcing students' connection to local traditions and fostering a sense of belonging within their communities.

9.3. Theme 3: School–Family Collaboration

Several directors (D2, D4, D8) observed that cultural events often attract more parental attendance than formal meetings. D8 commented: “We get greater parental attendance during cultural events than during formal meetings.” Coordinators also indicated that student enthusiasm often influenced the level of family involvement (K5).

These findings reflect the role of cultural activities in serving as informal bridges between schools and families, encouraging broader community participation.

9.4. Theme 4: Institutional Support and Geographical Context

Urban school directors (D1, D6, D10) reported receiving regular support from Municipal Directorates of Education, including training and cultural partnerships. Rural directors (D3, D7, D9) cited funding limitations and logistical barriers. K6 noted: “In the village, it’s a challenge to find resources for a cultural exhibition, unlike in the city.”

This theme illustrates disparities in resource allocation and institutional support between urban and rural schools.

9.5. Conclusion of the Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative findings highlight four recurring themes: enhanced student engagement, cultural identity development, school–family collaboration, and disparities in institutional support. These results complement the quantitative data by providing context-specific insights from school leaders and coordinators, underscoring the importance of culturally responsive extracurricular programs in Kosovo’s primary education.

10. Discussion

This study examined the role of cultural and artistic extracurricular activities in fostering student engagement, identity formation, and school–family collaboration in Kosovo’s primary education system through a mixed-methods

approach. By integrating quantitative evidence with qualitative insights, the findings offer a comprehensive understanding of both the benefits and limitations of such programs in a post-conflict, resource-constrained context.

10.1. Student Engagement and School Belonging (RQ1/H1)

Quantitative analysis confirmed that participation in artistic activities significantly enhances students’ engagement and sense of belonging in school. This aligns with prior research emphasizing the arts as catalysts for emotional connection and community inclusion^[9,24]. The qualitative narratives reinforced this, illustrating that cultural events often provide marginalized students with opportunities to succeed outside conventional academic performance. These findings support the argument that arts-based extracurriculars are not ancillary but central to holistic education, especially in transitional societies.

10.2. Cultural Identity Development (RQ2/H4)

Although statistical differences between teachers’ and parents’ perceptions of cultural identity formation were not significant, qualitative data revealed that experienced teachers articulate the long-term impact of arts on self-concept and cultural pride. This reflects Swick’s assertion that identity development through the arts is contextually embedded and often underappreciated in short-term quantitative measures^[34]. The findings underscore the importance of integrating culturally responsive pedagogy to strengthen students’ ties to their heritage while fostering inclusive civic values.

10.3. School–Family Collaboration (RQ3/H2)

A pronounced gap emerged between teachers’ and parents’ perceptions of school–family collaboration. Teachers tended to view current practices as sufficient, while parents expressed a sense of limited involvement. This asymmetry echoes Epstein’s call for partnership models grounded in shared authority and transparent communication^[18]. The qualitative findings highlighted that cultural events often serve as natural bridges for engaging families, suggesting that policy should formalize these informal spaces into structured engagement strategies.

10.4. Urban–Rural Disparities and Institutional Support (RQ4/H3)

The significant difference in perceived institutional support between urban and rural schools reflects systemic inequities documented in previous research ^[30,33]. Urban schools' access to funding, training, and cultural partnerships contrasts with rural schools' limited resources and logistical challenges. The testimonies of rural principals reinforce the vulnerability of extracurricular programs when reliant on external projects rather than stable policy-backed funding. These findings call for equity-oriented policies targeting rural schools with sustainable infrastructure, capacity-building, and community partnerships.

10.5. Theoretical and Practical Implications

The results provide empirical support for Bronfenbrenner's ecological model ^[5] by illustrating how extracurricular arts function as mesosystem interactions linking school, family, and community contexts. They also validate the argument that arts education contributes to social-emotional learning and civic identity formation, echoing Morrison's emphasis on culturally responsive pedagogy ^[9]. Practically, the study highlights the necessity of institutionalizing arts-based extracurriculars as core elements of primary education policy in Kosovo, with particular focus on teacher training and rural resource allocation.

10.6. Limitations and Future Research

While the mixed-methods design enhanced validity, the study relied on self-reported perceptions, which may be subject to bias. Future research should incorporate longitudinal designs and direct observation of student outcomes to capture long-term effects of arts-based programs on engagement and identity. Expanding the sample to include students' voices directly would also provide a more comprehensive picture.

11. Conclusions, Recommendations, and Future Research

This study demonstrates that extracurricular cultural and artistic activities play a significant role in enhancing

students' emotional well-being, identity formation, and engagement in primary schools in Kosovo. The findings highlight the multidimensional benefits of these activities, encompassing social inclusion, academic motivation, and cultural awareness. Teachers' professional experience and the strength of school–family collaboration emerged as critical mediating factors, while persistent geographic disparities underscore the need for equity-focused interventions. Together, these results emphasize the necessity of integrating cultural and artistic extracurriculars as essential components of holistic education policy in Kosovo.

11.1. Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following policy and practice recommendations are proposed:

1. Integrate Arts as Core Educational Policy

Cultural and artistic activities should be embedded within the national curriculum framework as essential elements of holistic learning, rather than optional enrichment.

2. Provide Dedicated Funding for Cultural Activities

Public education budgets must allocate targeted funding for extracurricular arts programs, with priority given to rural schools to address infrastructure and resource gaps.

3. Offer Specialized Teacher Training

Pre-service and in-service training programs should include modules on integrating arts for emotional, behavioral, and cultural development to maximize pedagogical effectiveness.

4. Strengthen School–Family Partnerships

Schools should adopt structured, sustainable models for parental involvement in cultural activities, reinforcing co-responsibility for student development.

5. Establish Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms

Municipal and national education authorities should implement systems to monitor the quality, reach, and outcomes of extracurricular cultural programs to inform evidence-based policy-making.

6. Promote Cross-Institutional Collaboration

Schools should actively build partnerships with cultural institutions, NGOs, and community organizations to diversify programming and expand access to artistic opportunities.

11.2. Limitations and Directions for Future Research

While this study offers valuable insights into the role of cultural and artistic extracurricular activities in primary education in Kosovo, several limitations must be acknowledged:

1. Limited Sample Scope

Data were collected from only ten schools in selected municipalities, which may limit geographic and demographic representativeness. Differences in cultural infrastructure and community dynamics between regions necessitate caution in generalizing results nationally.

2. Reliance on Self-Reported Data

The study relied on perceptions of teachers, parents, and school leaders. While these perspectives are critical, they are inherently subjective and may reflect individual biases or institutional culture. The absence of longitudinal or objective performance measures restricts causal inference.

3. Instrument Validation

Questionnaires and interview protocols were developed for this research and, while piloted for contextual fit, lack international psychometric validation. Future studies should adapt or validate established instruments to ensure greater reliability and comparability.

4. Lack of Gender and Ethnic Analysis

The study did not disaggregate data by gender or ethnicity, factors that may influence participation and perception in a culturally diverse society. Future research should address these dynamics to design more inclusive interventions.

5. Limited Qualitative Sample

The qualitative component included 20 participants, which, although achieving thematic saturation, provides a restricted range of perspectives. Incorporating students, cultural practitioners, and policymakers would allow for a more comprehensive analysis of systemic enablers and barriers.

11.2.1. Future Research Directions

Future studies should expand the sample to include diverse municipalities and school contexts, employ longitudinal mixed-methods designs, and triangulate findings

with student performance data. Research should also examine the impact of policy frameworks, funding structures, and cross-sectoral partnerships on sustaining cultural engagement. Additionally, exploring gender and ethnic dimensions would enhance understanding of inclusivity and equity in extracurricular cultural programming.

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Conflicts of Interest

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