



# Extracurricular Management Practices and Their Impact on Students' Life Skills in an Indonesian Madrasah

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## ABSTRACT

*This study investigates the management of extracurricular activities and their contribution to students' life skills development at MTs Bua, a rural madrasah in Indonesia. Despite limited resources, the school consistently delivers extracurricular programmes by applying the Planning, Organising, Actuating, and Controlling (POAC) management cycle while integrating Islamic moral values. The study aims to analyse how extracurricular activities are managed, identify the life skills developed, and explore challenges in their implementation. Using a qualitative case study design, data were collected through in-depth interviews with the principal, vice principal for curriculum, and activity coaches, supplemented by document analysis. Data were analysed thematically following Miles and Huberman's interactive model. Findings indicate that extracurricular management follows a structured cycle adapted to resource constraints through participatory planning, efficient role distribution, and regular monitoring. Scouting, sports, and arts foster a broad range of life skills, such as teamwork, leadership, emotional regulation, creativity, and communication, while embedding Islamic moral guidance. Challenges include limited facilities, financial constraints, inconsistent participation, and varying levels of coach expertise; these are addressed through flexible scheduling, resource-sharing, and leadership commitment. The study offers a hybrid management model that combines competency-based and values-based approaches, demonstrating that the POAC framework can be effectively adapted in rural Islamic school contexts. It also provides a new perspective on sustainability, showing that leadership commitment and adaptive strategies can sustain extracurricular programmes without substantial infrastructure. These findings have practical implications for school leaders, educators, and policy-makers in designing and sustaining extracurricular activities that promote both skill development and character formation.*

## INTRODUCTION

The 21st century, marked by rapid technological advancement and global interconnectedness, has redefined the skills students need to thrive in academic, professional, and social domains. In addition to academic achievement, educational institutions are increasingly expected to equip students with

essential life skills, including critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, emotional regulation, and adaptability ([Thornhill-Miller et al., 2023](#); [Wagner et al., 2024](#)). These competencies are widely recognised as critical for students' readiness to face the demands of a dynamic workforce and to contribute meaningfully to society.

In the Indonesian context, the integration of life skills into educational practice is supported by national policy. Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System emphasises the development of students' intellectual, spiritual, social, and vocational competencies. Furthermore, the Independent Curriculum (*Kurikulum Merdeka*), introduced in 2022, provides schools with greater flexibility to implement learning approaches that accommodate students' interests and needs, including through extracurricular activities. As outlined by the Ministry of Education, extracurricular activities are intended not only to complement the formal curriculum but also to provide a structured platform for fostering students' talents, interests, and holistic personal growth ([Nuh, 2014](#)).

Extracurricular management, encompassing the processes of planning, organising, implementing, and evaluating activities, plays a pivotal role in realising these objectives. Effective management ensures that extracurricular programmes are aligned with the school's vision, adequately resourced, and designed to engage students in meaningful, student-centred learning experiences ([Buckley & Lee, 2020](#); [King et al., 2021](#)). In religious-based schools such as *madrasah tsanawiyah*, extracurricular activities often extend beyond conventional skills to include moral and spiritual development, reflecting the integration of Islamic values in the educational process ([Nabillah et al., 2024](#); [Ni'mah & Taufik, 2022](#)).

Research on extracurricular activities has consistently demonstrated their potential to enhance students' life skills when implemented effectively. [Wang et al. \(2024\)](#) found that sports-based extracurricular programmes improved students' emotional regulation, goal setting, and focus, contributing to both academic and personal development. [Aqodiah et al. \(2023\)](#) reported that scouting activities significantly boosted students' social competencies, such as empathy, communication, and teamwork. Similarly, [Farisi et al. \(2024\)](#) emphasised that integrating multicultural values into extracurricular activities fostered tolerance, cultural awareness, and respect for diversity. These findings collectively underline the value of extracurricular engagement as a strategic avenue for holistic student growth.

From a management perspective, successful extracurricular programmes require systematic coordination, resource allocation, and continuous evaluation to ensure their effectiveness ([Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2021](#); [Rahayu & Dong, 2023](#)). The application of the POAC framework, Planning, Organising, Actuating, and Controlling, has been shown to provide a structured approach for achieving these goals ([Terry, 2021](#)). In Islamic educational contexts, studies by [Rohimah \(2024\)](#) and [Farisi et al. \(2024\)](#) indicate that extracurricular management not only enhances cognitive and social skills but also reinforces moral and spiritual development. However, the extent to which these management practices can be sustained in resource-limited rural schools remains underexplored.

This gap is particularly relevant in the case of MTs Bua, a madrasah located in Luwu Regency, Indonesia. While the school operates within modest infrastructural and financial limitations, it maintains several extracurricular programmes, including scouting, sports, and arts, aimed at enhancing students' non-academic competencies. Preliminary observations indicate that these activities, though modest in scale, have contributed to students' social interaction skills, self-confidence, and problem-solving abilities. Nevertheless, challenges such as inconsistent participation, limited facilities, and overlapping school schedules may hinder the full potential of these programmes.

Given these conditions, there is a need to examine how extracurricular management is implemented in such contexts and how it impacts students' life skills. Understanding this relationship is essential for informing policy and practice in similar educational settings, particularly in rural or resource-limited environments. Therefore, this study aims to explore the implementation of extracurricular management and its contribution to the development of students' life skills at MTs Bua, a rural *madrasah* in Indonesia. Specifically, it seeks to analyse how extracurricular programmes are planned, organised, implemented, and evaluated to support life skills development; to identify the types of life skills, such as social competence, critical and creative thinking, emotional regulation, and problem-solving, fostered through these activities; and to examine the challenges faced in managing extracurricular activities within a resource-constrained environment. By focusing on this context, the

study offers empirical insights that can inform strategies for optimising extracurricular programmes to achieve holistic student development.

By focusing on an Indonesian rural madrasah, this study contributes to the literature by offering empirical insights into the holistic role of extracurricular management in life skills development within under-resourced educational contexts. The findings are expected to provide practical recommendations for educators, school leaders, and policy-makers to optimise extracurricular programmes as a vehicle for comprehensive student development.

## **METHODS**

### ***Research Design***

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design to explore how extracurricular management is implemented and how it contributes to the development of students' life skills in a rural Islamic secondary school context. This approach was selected to allow an in-depth examination of processes, experiences, and perspectives of stakeholders involved in extracurricular activities ([Creswell & Creswell, 2017](#)).

### ***Research Setting and Participants***

The research was conducted at MTs Bua, a *madrasah tsanawiyah* located in Luwu Regency, Indonesia. The school offers several extracurricular activities, including scouting, sports, and arts, and operates within limited infrastructure and resources. Participants consisted of the school principal, vice principal for curriculum, and extracurricular activity coaches. Purposive sampling was used to select participants ([Robinson, 2023](#)) who had direct involvement in planning, organising, implementing, and evaluating extracurricular programmes.

### ***Data Collection***

Data for this study were gathered through three complementary techniques: observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Observation was conducted using a participatory approach, in which the researcher directly engaged in the school environment and attended extracurricular activities such as scouting, sports, and arts. This method allowed the researcher to capture real-time interactions between students, coaches, and school leaders, as well as to identify how planning and organisational strategies were translated into practice.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, including the principal, vice principal for curriculum, and coaches responsible for extracurricular activities. An interview guide was prepared to ensure consistency across interviews, while still allowing flexibility to explore emerging topics. The interviews focused on understanding the decision-making processes in extracurricular management, the perceived benefits for students' life skills, and the challenges faced in programme implementation. Each interview lasted between 30 to 60 minutes and was audio-recorded with participants' consent for transcription and analysis.

In addition, document analysis was used to obtain supporting evidence and contextual information. Relevant documents included extracurricular programme plans, activity schedules, attendance records, evaluation forms, and school policy documents. These materials provided insights into the formal structure, objectives, and monitoring processes of extracurricular management. By integrating these three data sources, the study ensured a more comprehensive and triangulated understanding of the research problem.

### ***Data Analysis***

The collected data were analysed, which involves three interconnected stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification ([Miles et al., 2014](#)). During the data reduction stage, raw data from observations, interview transcripts, and documents were carefully reviewed, coded, and categorised according to recurring patterns and themes relevant to the research objectives. This process involved both deductive coding, based on the theoretical framework of extracurricular management and life skills, and inductive coding, allowing new themes to emerge from the data.

Following the reduction, the data were displayed in the form of thematic matrices, narrative descriptions, and visual diagrams to facilitate interpretation and comparison across sources. This stage

helped to identify relationships between management practices, activity implementation, and life skills outcomes. The conclusion drawing and verification stage involved synthesising the findings to answer the research objectives, while continuously checking the accuracy and consistency of interpretations against the original data. Credibility was enhanced through member checking, where selected participants reviewed and validated the preliminary findings, and through triangulation across multiple data sources. This rigorous process ensured that the final analysis reflected both the participants' perspectives and the broader contextual realities of extracurricular management in a rural *madrrasah*.

### ***Trustworthiness of the Study***

To ensure credibility, triangulation was applied by cross-verifying findings from observations, interviews, and document analysis. Member checking was conducted by sharing preliminary findings with participants for validation. Transferability was supported by providing a detailed description of the research context, while dependability and confirmability were ensured through an audit trail of data collection and analysis procedures.

## **RESULTS**

### ***Implementation of Extracurricular Management***

The management of extracurricular activities at MTs Bua follows a structured cycle of planning, organising, implementing, and evaluating. Planning is conducted at the beginning of each academic year through collaborative meetings involving the principal, vice principal for curriculum, and coaches. This process determines the type of activities to be offered, primarily scouting, sports, and arts, alongside scheduling and resource allocation. As the principal described:

*"The principal works together with the vice principal for curriculum and the teachers during the annual planning meeting to arrange the teaching schedule and extracurricular activities."*  
(Principal)

Another coach emphasised that planning also involves ensuring alignment with the curriculum so that extracurricular activities serve educational goals:

*"We review the existing curriculum to ensure that extracurricular activities are not merely supplementary, but also support the development of students' competencies, both in academic and life skills aspects."* (Coach)

Organising involves appointing coaches for each activity and clearly defining responsibilities. The school leadership distributes tasks according to the expertise and availability of each coach:

*"The preparation of schedules and programmes is entrusted to the selected coaches, who are responsible for planning the activities to be implemented in their respective extracurricular programmes."* (Vice Principal for Curriculum)

Implementation occurs once a week for each activity, typically outside regular class hours due to the full-day school system. Attendance is recorded, and progress is monitored through regular reports:

*"Extracurricular activities are scheduled once a week for each programme and are held in the afternoon after the teaching and learning process."* (Sports Coach)

Evaluation takes place at the end of each semester through review meetings that assess participation, skill acquisition, and areas for improvement. The principal highlighted the importance of administrative accountability:

*"I require the coaches to follow certain procedures to ensure the continuity of activities, including maintaining attendance records, submitting activity reports, and providing final evaluation results."*  
(Principal)

Although the school faces challenges such as limited facilities, the leadership maintains programme consistency by optimising available resources and fostering close coordination among staff. This structured yet adaptive approach allows extracurricular activities to remain a consistent and integral part of the school's educational strategy throughout the year.

### **Types of Life Skills Developed**

The study revealed that extracurricular activities at MTs Bua contribute to the development of various life skills, both generic and specific. Scouting activities are particularly effective in fostering teamwork, leadership, discipline, and problem-solving skills. Through group-based challenges, camping, and outdoor activities, students learn to collaborate, take initiative, and make quick yet thoughtful decisions. As one scouting coach noted:

*"Scouting teaches the students discipline and teamwork. They learn how to work together, take responsibility, and solve problems in real situations."* (Scouting Coach)

Sports programmes, mainly focusing on football and other physical activities, enhance students' physical fitness, emotional regulation, goal setting, and resilience. Regular training sessions and participation in friendly matches encourage students to manage their emotions, persist in the face of challenges, and work towards shared objectives. A sports coach explained:

*"Sports help students control their emotions during competition, set goals for improvement, and build persistence through regular practice."* (Sports Coach)

Arts activities, although conducted less frequently and mostly in preparation for school events, nurture creativity, self-expression, and confidence. Students involved in music, dance, or drama performances gain experience in public presentation and creative problem-solving. As the arts coach described:

*"Even though arts activities are not held every week, when students prepare for performances, they develop creativity and confidence in expressing themselves in front of an audience."* (Arts Coach)

Across all programmes, students also develop communication skills, cooperation, and stress management abilities. These skills are often acquired indirectly through participation in group projects, public performances, or competitive events. The vice principal for curriculum observed noticeable progress:

*"We can see the students becoming more confident, more cooperative, and more able to handle pressure when they are actively involved in extracurricular activities."* (Vice Principal for Curriculum)

The combination of these activities supports the development of both personal and social competencies, aligning with the holistic educational goals of the *madrasah*. The findings indicate that extracurricular engagement, when managed systematically, can provide meaningful opportunities for students to develop life skills that are essential for both academic and non-academic success.

### **Challenges in Implementation**

Despite the positive outcomes, several challenges hinder the optimal implementation of extracurricular activities at MTs Bua. The most significant challenge is limited physical infrastructure. The school does not have dedicated sports fields or arts rooms, requiring activities to share the limited open spaces. It often restricts the scale and variety of activities that can be conducted. As the principal explained:

*"We have to adjust our activities to the space we have. For example, sports and scouting sometimes use the same yard, so we have to take turns."* (Principal)

Financial constraints also limit the purchase of equipment and materials. Coaches often improvise or share resources between programmes to meet the needs of different activities. One coach noted:

*"We cannot buy all the equipment we need at once, so sometimes we modify or share what we have among the activities."* (Sports Coach)

Student participation is another challenge, with some students attending irregularly due to competing academic demands, family responsibilities, or a lack of parental support. The vice principal for curriculum highlighted this issue:

*"Some students are not consistent in attending activities because they have other commitments, either at home or in their studies."* (Vice Principal for Curriculum)

Scheduling conflicts occasionally disrupt extracurricular sessions, especially when school events or examinations overlap with planned activities. In such cases, activities are postponed or condensed. As one coach explained:

*"If there is an exam week or a school event, we sometimes have to skip or shorten the extracurricular sessions."* (Scouting Coach)

Lastly, not all coaches have formal training in extracurricular management or in facilitating life skills development, which may limit the depth of learning in some programmes. The arts coach admitted:

*"I teach based on my experience, not from formal training, so sometimes I just focus on preparing for performances rather than broader life skills."* (Arts Coach)

Despite these constraints, the commitment of school leaders and coaches to adapt, through flexible scheduling, resource sharing, and simplified activity designs, has enabled the continuation of extracurricular activities. This adaptability has been key to sustaining students' opportunities for life skills development in a resource-limited environment.

## **DISCUSSION**

### ***Implementation of Extracurricular Management***

The findings show that extracurricular management at MTs Bua adopts a structured cycle, planning, organising, implementing, and evaluating, which closely aligns with the POAC (Planning, Organising, Actuating, and Controlling) framework ([Terry, 2021](#)). In the planning stage, collaborative meetings between the principal, vice principal for curriculum, and coaches illustrate participatory management practices, a principle supported by previous studies, which argue that involving multiple stakeholders in decision-making fosters ownership, shared responsibility, and programme relevance ([Kobashi et al., 2024](#); [Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2021](#); [Mukhtar & Bahormoz, 2022](#)). Holding these planning meetings at the start of the academic year ensures that extracurricular activities are embedded into the school's overall plan rather than functioning as ad hoc additions.

The organising stage is characterised by a clear allocation of responsibilities, with coaches appointed according to their expertise and availability. This practice reflects effective human resource management principles ([Lu et al., 2023](#); [Robbins et al., 2015](#)) and, in the case of MTs Bua, is enhanced by the integration of Islamic values in role assignments. Coaches are expected not only to deliver technical skills but also to embed moral and spiritual guidance in each activity, a distinctive feature that combines pedagogical and character-building functions ([Bisa, 2023](#); [Rohimah, 2024](#)).

Implementation takes place on a consistent weekly schedule, despite the constraints of the school's full-day programme. Attendance tracking and activity reporting strengthen accountability, in line with relevant research assertions that systematic monitoring is vital for sustaining extracurricular activities ([Kosarikov & Davydova, 2022](#); [Tawakkal et al., 2025](#)). The ability to maintain regular sessions, even in a resource-limited environment, reflects strong logistical coordination and time management.

Evaluation is carried out formally at the end of each semester, assessing participation, skill acquisition, and improvement areas. It reflects a continuous improvement approach similar to Deming's PDCA cycle ([Trippner-Hrabi et al., 2024](#)), ensuring that lessons learned feed into the next cycle of planning and implementation. Importantly, evaluation at MTs Bua is not only outcome-focused but also value-driven, ensuring that moral and spiritual development remains central to the programme's objectives.

This study offers several contributions to the literature on extracurricular management. First, it documents a hybrid management model that combines competency-based and values-based approaches, embedding Islamic moral objectives into every stage of the POAC cycle, a practice rarely discussed in existing research. Second, it demonstrates the adaptation of the POAC framework in a resource-constrained rural setting, showing that structured management processes typically associated with well-resourced schools can be sustained with flexible scheduling, shared facilities, and efficient role distribution. Third, it highlights the role of leadership commitment and participatory planning as key drivers of programme sustainability in low-resource environments. These findings expand the scope of extracurricular management studies by illustrating how formal management systems can be successfully contextualised in small rural *madrasah* settings without significant financial investment.

### ***Types of Life Skills Developed***

The results reveal that extracurricular activities at MTs Bua foster a diverse set of life skills, including teamwork, leadership, emotional regulation, goal setting, creativity, and communication. These align with the framework of generic and specific life skills described by [UNICEF \(2012\)](#), which categorises them into personal competencies (self-management, problem-solving) and social competencies (communication, collaboration). The integration of multiple activity types, scouting, sports, and arts, creates varied learning contexts that reinforce different skill domains.

Scouting was found to cultivate discipline, leadership, and teamwork through structured tasks, group challenges, and outdoor activities. It supports the findings of previous studies, which reported that scouting programmes improve students' social cooperation and responsibility ([Aqodiah et al., 2023](#)). Similarly, sports foster resilience, emotional regulation, and goal setting, in line with previous research, which highlighted the role of competitive physical activities in enhancing persistence and stress management ([Wang et al., 2024](#)). Arts activities, though less frequent, play a critical role in developing creativity, confidence, and self-expression, echoing relevant research assertions that artistic engagement promotes identity exploration and creative problem-solving ([Sumarsono et al., 2025](#)).

What distinguishes MTs Bua's extracurricular programme is the deliberate integration of moral and spiritual guidance within each activity. For example, scouting activities incorporate lessons on Islamic etiquette in teamwork, sports sessions emphasise sportsmanship as a form of *akhlaq* (morality), and arts activities often involve performances with cultural and religious themes. This approach aligns with previous studies' perspective on embedding religious values into non-formal learning to strengthen character formation ([Armadi et al., 2024](#); [Farisi et al., 2024](#)).

Another notable finding is that life skills development occurs even when activities are not conducted intensively or on a daily basis. It supports relevant research, who argue that the quality of facilitation and intentional skill focus often outweighs the frequency of activity in determining developmental outcomes ([Goulart et al., 2021](#); [Mckenzie et al., 2021](#)). Coaches at MTs Bua consciously design activities to integrate skill-building elements, such as problem-solving scenarios in scouting or goal-oriented drills in sports, rather than relying solely on unstructured participation.

This study contributes to the literature by demonstrating that a small rural *madrasah* can achieve multi-domain life skills development through a balanced mix of scouting, sports, and arts, despite resource and scheduling limitations. The intentional integration of Islamic moral education within life skills training distinguishes this model from secular extracurricular frameworks commonly documented in prior studies. Furthermore, the findings highlight that life skills development is not solely dependent on activity frequency, but can be achieved through targeted, value-oriented facilitation, a perspective that expands existing theories on extracurricular impact.

### ***Challenges in Implementation***

The study identified four main challenges in implementing extracurricular activities at MTs Bua: limited facilities, financial constraints, inconsistent student participation, and occasional scheduling conflicts. These challenges are consistent with findings in rural education research, where infrastructural and resource limitations are common obstacles to extracurricular programme delivery ([Lombo & Subban, 2024](#); [Thelma et al., 2024](#)).

Limited facilities, such as the absence of a dedicated sports field or arts room, often force activities to share available spaces, which can restrict both the scale and quality of implementation. It aligns with relevant research, which noted that physical infrastructure directly influences the diversity and depth of extracurricular engagement ([Mustajib et al., 2025](#); [Uysal, 2025](#)). Similarly, financial constraints reduce the school's ability to purchase new equipment or materials, leading coaches to rely on improvisation or resource-sharing ([Morris & Shockley, 2022](#); [Sulz et al., 2022](#)). Prior studies confirm that limited funding in rural schools often necessitates creative solutions to sustain activities ([Thelma et al., 2024](#); [Yelubayeva et al., 2023](#)).

Inconsistent student participation is another concern, with absenteeism influenced by competing academic demands, household responsibilities, or a lack of parental support. It echoes findings by relevant research, which observed that socioeconomic factors and parental attitudes significantly affect extracurricular attendance rates ([Goshin et al., 2021](#); [Mooney et al., 2023](#)). In addition, scheduling conflicts, particularly during exam weeks or special school events, occasionally disrupt the continuity of programmes, a challenge also reported by [Bisa \(2023\)](#) in their study of extracurricular sports.

Another challenge noted in this study is the varying levels of coach expertise in life skills facilitation. Not all coaches have received formal training in extracurricular management or life skills pedagogy, which can limit the depth of student development. It supports the relevant research argument that professional development is essential for maximising the educational value of extracurricular activities ([Ho et al., 2023](#); [Ooi, 2020](#)).

Despite these constraints, MTs Bua demonstrates resilience through adaptive management strategies, such as flexible scheduling, shared facility usage, and resource pooling across activities. The persistence of programme delivery in such conditions reflects the term “capacity building through internal commitment,” where schools leverage internal strengths rather than relying solely on external support ([Fullan, 2015](#)).

This study contributes new insights by illustrating how a rural *madrasah* sustains extracurricular programmes in the face of multiple constraints through context-specific adaptive strategies. The combination of resource-sharing, flexible scheduling, and integration of moral values within activities offers a practical model for other low-resource schools. Additionally, the findings underscore that programme sustainability in resource-constrained settings depends more on leadership commitment and adaptive capacity than on infrastructural abundance, a perspective that extends current theories on extracurricular management in rural education.

### **CONCLUSION**

This study explored the management of extracurricular activities and their contribution to life skills development at MTs Bua, a rural *madrasah* in Indonesia. The results showed that the school applies a structured cycle of planning, organising, implementing, and evaluating, adapted to limited resources through participatory planning, efficient role distribution, and consistent monitoring. Scouting, sports, and arts collectively foster a variety of life skills, such as teamwork, leadership, emotional regulation, creativity, and communication, while embedding Islamic moral values in the learning process. Although the school faces challenges, including limited facilities, financial constraints, inconsistent participation, and varying coach expertise, these are addressed through adaptive strategies and strong leadership commitment.

The study offers a hybrid extracurricular management model that combines competency-based and values-based approaches, demonstrating that the POAC framework can be successfully adapted in resource-constrained rural settings. It also shows that life skills development is not dependent solely on activity frequency, but can be achieved through intentional, value-oriented facilitation. Programme sustainability in such contexts relies more on leadership commitment and adaptive capacity than on infrastructure availability, offering a new perspective to the literature on extracurricular management.

Practically, the findings guide school leaders, educators, and policy-makers. For school leaders, the study offers a replicable framework for sustaining extracurricular activities through flexible scheduling, shared facilities, and moral integration. For educators, it emphasises the need for purposeful skill integration in activity design. For policy-makers, it highlights the importance of targeted support for rural schools, particularly in professional development for coaches. Theoretically, the research expands discussions on values-based education and demonstrates the viability of structured management systems in rural Islamic school contexts.

### **Funding and Conflicts of Interest**

The authors declare no funding and conflicts of interest for this research.

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