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## Digital Learning Activities at School-age Educare when Policy Reforms Calls for Educational Change

Linnéa Stenliden, Helene Elvstrand, Lina Lago

**Abstract:** This study examines teachers' accounts of what is happening in practices of the School-age Educare centre (SAEC) when faced with pressure from policy reforms to adopt digital technology and promote digital competence as both a requirement and a right for all children. The aim is to explain anticipated tensions that may produce the (im)possible digital practices of SAECs. The study is conducted with teachers from three SAECs in Sweden. Reflection conversations and interviews were used to produce data that was analysed using a constructivist grounded theory approach. The study contributes to understandings of teachers' main concerns when SAECs are requested to adopt technology and align with reforms. It explains how tensions emerge, impact SAEC teachers' actions towards revised curricula and affect the distribution of digital learning activities. Attention is asked to ensure that the rights of also young pupils are upheld in the digital world of today and tomorrow.

**Keywords:** School-age Educare, policy reform, digital competence, digital learning activities, main concerns, educational change

### Introduction

As we enter the second decade of the 21st century, our society is increasingly becoming a digital culture. Today, children are active users of digital tools from an early age. The internet and digital worlds are central parts of their everyday lives. In other words, digital technology has become a significant feature of modern childhood (De Felice, 2017). At the same time, children have become objects of a multitude of monitoring devices including mobile media, wearable devices and social media platforms that generate detailed data about them (Lupton & Williamson, 2017). Accordingly, recent policy reforms highlight that those children are entitled to profit from these environments but also to understand their privacy rights online, to freedom of expression as well as be protected from sexual and aggressive threats variously mediated and amplified by the internet (e. g. Livingstone, 2016; UN, 2018; UN, 2021). Hence, digital competence has been underlined in educational policy both as a requirement and a right for these children (Ferrari, 2013; Long & Margerko, 2020), since both national and global authorities consider policy implementation appropriate means of control, govern, and change of standard in education (Ball, et, al., 2012; Braun, et, al., 2010; Viennet, & Pont, 2017). This paper reflects on the pressure for educational practices to align with the policy reforms that concern digital competence (European Commission, 2018; Ministry of Education and Re-

search, 2017; UNESCO, 2019; UNICEF, 2020) using Sweden's School-age Educare centres (SAEC) as an example. The attention is directed to SAEC as it is an important emissary arena for developing children's digital skills, at the same time the Swedish policy documents both leave much space for interpretation and little guidance for the SAEC teachers in this regard (Martinez, 2019). Understanding SAEC teachers' practices and factors that contribute to various approaches to digital media is essential, because disregard may effectively hinder children from their entitled rights to develop digital competence.

Many countries in Europe and Asia, as well as the US, are currently developing various extended activities like afterschool care or all-day school (see e.g., Durlak, Mahoney, Bohner, & Parente, 2010; Huang, La Torre & Leon, 2014). Some afterschool programs are affiliated with national organizations, while others are sponsored by public institutions or agencies or operate as subunits within private organizations. The Swedish SAEC can also be described as an afterschool programme. However, compared with many other countries, Sweden has a long history of distributing afterschool care, dated back to the 19th century. Gradually, the afterschool care has become incorporated to the national educational system during the 20th century. The Swedish SAEC has been regulated by the domestic curriculum since 1998 (Rohlin, 2012).

Afterschool programmes in general, have often been described as intermediary spaces, which highlights the tensions around the social purposes in connection with children's wellbeing and the role of afterschool programmes emphasizing improved educational achievement (Noam, Biancarosa & Dechausay, 2003). Adding to the complexity around the social versus academic purposes of afterschool programmes, there are competing discourses about what children and young people need from digital media and how to serve those needs (Ammari, et al., 2015; Livingstone, 2016). This situation might be emphasized in Swedish SAECs because the institution, as mentioned, is being coordinated by the government policies for the educational institutions. This could make some of the highlighted issues more visible in the Swedish SAECs.

The regulations stipulate that Swedish SAECs are places where self-directed and group-based learning should be designed around each pupil's interests, adapted to children's culture and formal learning goals. In 2016, the national curriculum for SAECs was first revised to strengthen the learning goals in general, and then also the importance of developing digital competence among children was highlighted (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017; Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011, rev. 2018 and 2019; Swedish Municipalities and Regions, 2019). So, teachers working at SAECs in Sweden, who undergo three-year teacher education at the university level, are increasingly expected to be adept at a variety of technology-based approaches for content delivery, goal-oriented learner support, and assessment. At the same time, they are also supposed, as mentioned, to organize learning activities that are characterized by informal learning situations where children's perspectives are considered important (Lager, 2020).

Hence, in this study it is of particular interest, to examine teachers' accounts of what is happening in SAECs practices when faced with pressure from policy reforms to adopt digital technology and make SAECs an institution where digital competence is promoted as both a requirement and a right for all children (UN, 2021). The aim is to explain anticipated tensions that may produce the (im)possible digital practices of SAECs by scrutinizing the following research questions:

# Promoting Commitment: The Influence of School Culture and Work-Related Emotional Variables on the Affective Commitment of Teachers at German All-Day Schools

Karsten Wutschka, Karin Lossen

**Abstract:** A variety of reform and development efforts in the German educational system, especially the extension of the school day, going along with an increasing autonomy of individual schools and extending demands on teachers led to growing interest in business science concepts being applied in the field of school development research. A main emphasis lies in the commitment of teachers who are responsible for the implementation and the success of these reforms. The aim of this paper is to identify reasons that lead to a high level of commitment of the teaching staff with a focus on German all-day schools. The intended results will be obtained by a structural equation model based on the information provided by 649 primary all-day school teachers. In addition to the relationships with other actors in the school, which are summarised under the heading of school culture, variables relating to the personalities of the teachers can be identified as predictive.

**Keywords:** Teacher, Commitment, Leadership, School Culture, All-Day Schools

## Introduction

Since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century the expansion of German all-day schools has been promoted extensively, not least because of the disappointing results of international student assessments such as PIRLS, TIMSS and PISA (Baumert et al, 2001; Mullis, Martin, Gonzalez & Kennedy, 2003; OECD 2001, 2003). Traditionally, the school day in Germany ended between noon and 1 pm in primary and secondary schools. These schools are labelled as “half-day schools” in contrast to schools with an extended extracurricular program, which are called “all-day schools”, which also cover the afternoon. (KMK – The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany, 2002). According to public and educational policy discussions, the goals of implementing all-day school programs are very challenging, as the following list illustrates: improving subject-related competencies and key skills, promoting individual development by offering differentiated learning opportunities, qualified supervision to support families, providing a space for socialization to improve social integration and cultural orientation, extending the socio-cultural infrastructure and raising equity of education (Holtappels & Rollett, 2009). In 2002, only 16.3 percent of German schools were operating as all-day schools. By 2020, this percentage had risen to an impressive 71.5 percent (KMK, 2006, 2021). So, in every year of this period the percentage of all-day schools rose by 3.1 points on average. More than 19,000 of the schools in Germany today offer an all-day program to their students (own calculations based on the KMK 2021). This development was driven by a broad public

discussion about how to improve the outcomes of the school system in Germany, a massive financial investment by the German government and the federal states of Germany, and a rising demand of families for day care for their children. The KMK distinguishes between three types of schools: 1) *Fully compulsory* all-day schools where all students have to take part in the all-day program for at least three days a week; 2) *partly compulsory* all-day schools in which students of certain grades or classes have to participate for at least three days a week; 3) *voluntarily* all-day schools where an all-day program is provided for at least for three days and students have the option to enrol. The most widely encountered type is the voluntarily model, especially for elementary schools. Due to a teacher shortage in general and the broader pedagogical functions for the extended extracurricular program, additional staff with pedagogical qualification conduct the all-day part of school life in most schools. Therefore, teachers' active involvement and participation in conducting the extracurricular programs vary a lot regarding the intensity and often results from personal interest and engagement.

Furthermore, the German school system has been coined by several procedural and developmental changes, which are complemented by an increasing degree of autonomy of the individual schools (cf. Rürup, 2007). These changes and the accompanying effects they have on teachers have not yet been subject to many studies (cf. van Ackeren, Klemm, & Kühn, 2015; Terhart, 2013).

## Theoretical Framework

School reforms and its implementation are mostly driven by the teachers, which increases their workload and challenge their existing practices (Day & Smethem, 2009). Extending the school day leads to various changes concerning the whole organization of the individual school as well as teachers' professional responsibilities. Regarding German all-day school teachers face different changes in their work, such as being involved in the planning and organization of the all-day program or the extracurricular activities. The teachers have to cooperate not only with their teaching colleagues, but also with the additional pedagogical staff and partly actively engaging, for example, in the extended school program by conducting an extracurricular activity.

Looking at the development of the theoretical and empirical discourse, commitment, which has been adapted from work and organisational psychology (see Harazd et al. 2012; Felfe, & Six, 2006; Canrinus, Helms-Lorenz, Beijaard, Buitink, & Hofman, 2012; Webs, 2016; Abd Razak et al. 2010), gained attention and has become more relevant for the analyses when examining teachers. Commitment describes a personal and emotional bond between an individual and an organization (cf. van Dick, 2017), which is said to have a beneficial effect on the performance and motivation of teachers (cf. van Dick, 2004; Gautam, Van Dick, & Wagner, 2004). Thus, the construct becomes one of the decisive variables regarding participation in, acceptance of and internalisation of school development processes and their results. The relevance of commitment can be emphasized especially with regards to the school system, since there are no possibilities to set incentives for the school management and since teachers, due to their semi-professional position, only have rudimentary contact with the organization as a whole and rather act as individual workers (cf. Rolff, 2012; Blutner, 2004). Commitment

# Examining the Dynamic Interplay of Motivation and Friendships within a Collegiate Extracurricular Activity in the U.S.: The Case of Marching Band

Andrea Vest Ettekal, Brittany Thompson, Olga Kornienko

**Abstract:** Research links extracurricular activity (ECA) participation to developmental outcomes, yet little is known about social processes that occur within ECAs. We examine associations between motivation (intrinsic, extrinsic) and friendship processes (selection, influence) within a collegiate marching band in the US ( $n=193$ ). Using social network analysis, we found evidence of selection, but not influence, on motivation. Selection findings differed by motivation type, such that extrinsic motivation was associated with increased friend nominations, whereas intrinsic motivation was associated with decreased nominations. Unexpected findings are explained by the context of this highly specialized ECA. Implications for supporting motivation in extended education settings are discussed.

**Keywords:** social network analysis, extracurricular activities, college students, friendships, motivation

## Introduction

Friends are key socialization agents across the life span (Rubin et al., 2015), such that friends tend to be similar to one another on a wide range of attributes (Veenstra et al., 2013). Friend similarity is explained by two distinct processes: selection and influence. Selection is the process of choosing friends who share similar attributes, whereas influence is the process of becoming increasingly similar to friends on a given attribute (Brechwald & Prinstein, 2011). The peer relations literature is ripe with studies using social network analysis to distinguish selection and influence on a variety of attributes (Veenstra et al., 2013). However, the social network scholarship has predominantly focused on observable attributes (e.g., problem behaviors, Osgood et al., 2015). There is initial evidence of friend similarity on non-observable attributes, including motivation, that warrants attention (e.g., Wild & Enzle, 2002).

Friends are important for motivation, such that youth make decisions about how to spend their free time based on their friends (Arnett, 2000). Indeed, friends are a primary factor in choices about participating in extracurricular activities (ECAs) (Schaefer et al., 2011). In this study, we examine the associations between friendship processes and motivation to participate in a highly specialized ECA, namely marching band. Marching band requires technical skills and a substantial time commitment and, thus, youth must be motivated to participate (Cumberledge, 2017). We use social network analysis to test whether youth choose friends with similar motivation (selection) and whether youth socialize one another to become more similar over time (influence). We distinguish internally derived (intrinsic) and externally derived (extrinsic) motivation to participate in marching band because of their salience in ECAs (Wigfield et al., 2015). Based on initial social network research on motivation (e.g.,

Wild & Enzle, 2002), we expect both friendship processes (i. e., selection and influence) to be present in the marching band. However, given the highly specialized nature of marching band, we expect friendship processes to be stronger for intrinsic than extrinsic motivation.

### Collegiate Extracurricular Activities: The Case of Marching Band

In the Western world, traditional college students (ages 18–22) often postpone the responsibilities of adulthood, such as employment and marriage, and extend the self-exploration activities that are typical of adolescence (Arnett, 2000). During college, ECAs can provide important self-exploration experiences, which vary depending on the type of ECA (Vandell et al., 2015). ECAs are often categorized in social science research into one of five broad types (Larson et al., 2006): faith-based and service, academic and leadership, performance and fine arts, community organizations and vocational clubs, and sports. Marching band is a hybrid type of ECA that has characteristics common to performance and fine arts activities (e. g., music performance), as well as athletics (e. g., physical coordination, breath control, mental focus). Participation patterns in marching band follow the general ECA participation pattern of early sampling and later specialization, such that the highest attrition occurs during the transition from high school to college. One study found that nearly 75% of high school band members did not participate in college (Mantie & Dorfman, 2014). Thus, motivation is a critical factor in retaining participation in marching band in college.

Participating in collegiate marching band involves both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Intrinsic factors include interest and personal satisfaction. That is, students who participate in marching band in college are typically those who are interested in music, enjoy the band, and, as well, are willing to sacrifice the cost of participation in terms of their time and alternative opportunities (Mantie & Dorfman, 2014). There are also many personal benefits to participating in marching band, such as the opportunity to develop social skills, discipline, teamwork, and leadership (e. g., Garrison, 1986; Hash, 2021). The extrinsic factors involved in collegiate marching band are similar to those which characterize American sports. For example, the marching band performs at major athletics events (e. g., American football games), which offers prestige for the university (Allsup & Benedict, 2008) and entertainment for spectators (Cumberledge, 2017). Moreover, similar to sports, marching band emphasizes American cultural values of competitiveness and achievement (e. g., Allsup & Benedict, 2008), which are common extrinsic factors involved in ECA participation. Thus, decisions to continue participating in marching band in college are likely complex and involve both intrinsic and extrinsic factors.

Collegiate ECAs may also be specialized contexts for friendships, which likely matters for motivation. On the one hand, as an arts activity, marching band fosters creativity and self-expression, a common foundation from which friendships are formed and reinforced (e. g., Vandell et al., 2015). However, on the other hand, marching band is highly competitive, has a limited number of positions (e. g., section leaders, members), and is segmented by section (e. g., woodwinds, brass, etc.), each of which may inhibit friendship formation or maintenance (e. g., Patrick et al., 1999). Understanding the interrelation of motivation and friendships may inform retention in marching band as well as other highly specialized ECAs.

# Pattern of Out-of-Class Activities of Korean University Students: Latent Profile Analysis

Sang Hoon Bae, Soo Jeong Hwang, Bo Kyoung Byun

**Abstract:** This study examined how HIP participation patterns differ among students in different Korean universities. Moreover, this study explored whether there is an association between the likelihood of a student belonging to a specific group and their individual characteristics along with their university's supportive campus environment. This study analyzed the data from the 2019 wave of the Korean-NSSE (National Survey of Student Engagement), and the samples included 12,784 college seniors from 112 institutions. Furthermore, it employed latent profile analysis and multinomial logistic regression. As a result, this research identifies five distinctive HIP participation patterns. Family income and student-faculty interaction levels determine which group a student belongs to. For example, economically disadvantaged students tend to belong to a group with lower participation in study abroad programs. Finally, the supportive campus environment was strongly associated with being a member of actively participating groups compared to being in a less engaged group.

**Keywords:** high impact practices, pattern, Korean University, latent profile analysis

## Introduction

A great educational philosopher, John Dewey (1938), emphasized that students' diverse experiences are a source of growth and development. He stated that it is the educators' responsibility to guide students on the path of growth by designing and offering educationally purposeful programs and activities that could enhance the change and growth of children and youth as well as by continuously interacting with them throughout the experiences. These experiences can be largely divided into two categories: regular class-based learning and out-of-class activities, which are termed "extended education."

Unlike high school, college students have a wide range of educational opportunities and participate in various activities while in college, and these experiences may either be on or off campus. Based on the purpose and focus of activities, researchers classify these experiences as either academic or social experiences. Previous studies have found an intimate relationship between participation in these experiences and institutional commitment, academic persistence, learning outcomes, and socio-emotional development of the students (Tinto, 1993; Pascallera, 1985; Weidman, 1989). Kuh (2008), supported by American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), investigated and classified various cases to identify programs and activities that positively influenced the change and growth of the students. Additionally, he created the term "high impact practices (HIPs)" that involved various programs, including freshman seminars, liberal arts programs, learning communities, intensive writing, collaborative learning projects, undergraduate research, global learning experiences, service learning, internships, and capstone projects (Kuh, 2008).



Meanwhile, educational experiences can also be categorized into two types based on their goals and whether participation is mandatory. The first type is the regular class-based learning, which is required to complete and graduate from a degree program. In this case, students must follow the so-called “curriculum” or “coursework,” which is designed and taught by universities and professors. The other type involves educational programs and activities that students voluntarily attend to satisfy their interests, for their career development, and personal growth. This second type differs from the first in that it is based on a student’s choice, and not on graduation or credit grant conditions.

These out-of-class activities, which are not part of regular classes to develop domain knowledge and skills, are gaining increased popularity among Korean higher education institutions (Kim, 2018). It is believed that they contribute to promoting educational accountability as they actively respond to the increasingly diverse needs of students. In addition, some extended education programs are widely offered to develop students’ core competencies (Baek & Jeong, 2012; Lunenburg, 2010). Recently, out-of-class activities, such as internships and global programs, have often been transformed into regular courses. Finally, increasingly intensified competitions for student recruitment, which is due to a dramatic decrease in the school-age population, has forced universities to provide these attractive programs as a survival strategy.

However, some universities are known for not being active in offering extra-curricular programs, but rather emphasizing more on regular classes that, albeit not substantiated, are considered effective in enhancing employment opportunities (Son, 2021).

Due to declining tuition income associated with a sharp decline in the school-age population, it also seems true that universities impose fiscal austerities to overcome financial hardships. Therefore, it becomes difficult to provide a variety of programs that students want (Unipress, 2021).

Furthermore, the high cost of some programs may limit the participation of low-income students. In addition, it can be challenging for self-sponsored students who have to work in order to pay for tuition and living expenses to attend the programs they want to participate in (Kim, Lee, & Lee, 2007).

Finally, due to limited time, even students without financial challenges may have to face a situation where they have to cautiously choose programs and activities to participate in.

Taken together, there may be significant disparities in student participation in HIPs. Additionally, the difference may appear in students’ choice of activities in which they will invest their time and effort. Finally, these differences can lead to a gap in student outcomes. From the perspective of educational opportunities and equality, therefore, careful analysis of who participates in which programs and appropriate policy efforts to resolve problems, if any, are required. To this end, it is necessary to explore the patterns of students’ participation in extracurricular activities and empirically analyze factors that inhibit or promote students’ participation.

This study’s purpose is twofold. First, the study investigated whether differences exist in the participation pattern in HIPs among different student groups. In this regard, special attention is given to six HIPs: learning community, service learning, study abroad, research with the faculty, culminating experiences, internships, and field experiences. Second, this study examined whether there was a relationship between the HIP participation pattern and the student’s personal background information, such as gender, family income, major, and the level of interaction with the faculty. In addition, the study investigated whether the pattern is