Exploring the Impact of Socio-Economic Status on Student Participation in Extracurricular Activities

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DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2023.7011149

Received: 23 October 2023; Revised: 14 November 2023; Accepted: 16 November 2023; Published: 10 December 2023

ABSTRACT

Understanding the impact of socioeconomic status on student participation in co-curricular activities is essential for promoting equity and inclusivity in education, ensuring that all students, regardless of their background, can fully engage in and benefit from these activities. This research aimed to investigate the level of student engagement in co-curricular activities among secondary school students in Sri Lanka, specifically focusing on the influence of socioeconomic status, such as parent income and parent education. The study used a survey research design and a questionnaire as the primary data collection instrument. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to select a sample of 1350 secondary school students. Descriptive analyses, including mean and standard deviation, were employed to analyse data. MANOVA was conducted to explore the relationship between socioeconomic status and student participation in co-curricular activities. The assessment of the internal consistency of the instrument was conducted by calculating Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which yielded a value of 0.940 for measuring access to educational resources. The findings of the study demonstrated that student participation in extracurricular activities with a mean score of 3.351 and Standard Deviation 0.939, and the interpretation is moderately high. The MANOVA analysis of the study revealed there are significant differences based on educational level towards student participation in extracurricular activities as the student participation in co-curricular activities significantly icreases as parent highest educational level increases. However, results of the study shows that there is no any significant differences of student participation in co- curricular activities based on parental income. By addressing these factors, educational institutions can strive to ensure that students from all socio-economic backgrounds have equal access to and benefit from extracurricular activities. In light of the study's findings, there is a compelling need for educational institutions to proactively tailor and enhance their co-curricular programs, taking into account the influence of socioeconomic factors, to create more equitable opportunities for all students.

Keywords: Student Participation, Extra Curricular Activities, Parent Income, Parent Education, Secondary School Children

INTRODUCTION

School activity or co-curricular activity is an extension of the learning process implemented in or outside the classroom (Rahman & Azman, 2007). Student participation in school activities is an essential outcome of schooling. Besides, student participation in school activities is essential in reinforcing the classroom's learning process, causing behavioral changes, and enhancing students' personalities. Also, it could improve students' critical experiences and skills (Reaves et al., 2010). Student overall wellbeing in terms of social, academic, emotional, psychological and physical well-being assisted by outdoor education is considered a holistic form of education. (Harun & Salamuddin, 2014).

Co-curriculum or school activity can be defined as an educational workout or outdoor activity that provides students with learning experiences (Coburn et al., 2010; Roslan et al., 2017). Students overall condition in terms of social, academic, emotional, psychological and physical wellbeing as assisted by outdoor education

is considered a holistic form of education (Harun & Salamuddin, 2014). Student participation in school activities is positively related with academic achievement, self-concept (Miller, 2017; Zaman, 2017), and soft skills development, enriching students' experience and providing them with additional benefits to raise their employability (Veronesi et al.,2012; Thompson et al., 2013).

The socio-economic status of students can indeed have an impact on student participation in extracurricular activities. Socio-economic status refers to the social and economic standing of an individual or a family, considering factors such as income, occupation, and educational level. Students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds face financial constraints that limit their ability to participate in extracurricular activities requiring fees for membership, equipment, uniforms, or transportation, which can be difficult for families with limited financial resources to afford. Students from lower socio-economic backgrounds sometimes prioritise academic achievement over extracurricular involvement. Due to the importance of securing future opportunities and financial stability, they focus more on studies to enhance their chances of success. The parent's education determines extracurricular activities, parental income and ethnicity (Jelani et al., 2015). Students with fathers who obtained degrees participated more frequently than those with fathers with lower educational levels (La Torre et al., 2006). In this study, student participation in school activities refers to involvement in co-curricular activities such as literary associations, sports, academic clubs, competitions, publications, and community-based programmes.

This research article endeavors to provide a comprehensive analysis of the influence of socioeconomic status on student engagement in extracurricular activities. Through an exhaustive review of extant scholarly literature, empirical investigations, and rigorous quantitative data analysis, this study delves into the multifaceted aspects by which socio- economic status exerts its effects on students' capacity to partake in extracurricular endeavors. By rigorously assessing the interconnected factors at play, this research aims to elucidate the intricate dynamics of socioeconomic disparities within the realm of extracurricular involvement, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the impact of socio-economic strata on students' extracurricular participation.

Objectives of the Study

1. To assesss the extent of student engagement in co-curricular activities among secondary school children in Sri
2. To investigate potential disparities in student involvement in co-curricular activities in relation to their parents' income levels
3. To examine variations in student participation in co-curricular activities based on the income levels of their
4. To investigate whether there is a statistically significant interaction between the educational levels of fathers and mothers concerning student participation in co- curricular

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a survey-based, quantitative research design to investigate the extent of secondary schoolchildren's engagement in extracurricular activities in Sri Lanka. The study's target population comprised secondary schoolchildren throughout the country. A stratified random sampling method was utilized to select a study sample of 1350 secondary schoolchildren. In alignment with the research objectives, a questionnaire was devised as the principal instrument for data collection. The questionnaire encompassed two distinct sections: one section was dedicated to assessing the socio-economic status of the students, while the other sought to gauge the students' perceptions regarding their participation in extracurricular activities.

To quantify student involvement in extracurricular activities, the Likert Scale was employed, providing

respondents with five response options: Never (1), Rarely (2), Occasionally (3), Often (4), and Always (5). Rigorous measures were undertaken to ensure the questionnaire's validity and reliability, including seeking expert opinions from the field of sociology of education. The instrument's internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which yielded a robust value of 0.940, signifying a high level of reliability.

Subsequently, the collected data underwent both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses. Descriptive analysis was employed to ascertain the mean and standard deviations, yielding valuable insights into the overall extent of student engagement in extracurricular activities. Additionally, inferential statistical techniques, specifically the Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA), were conducted to investigate potential significant differences in student participation, taking into account variables such as parental income and parental educational level among secondary schoolchildren in Sri Lanka.

For the purpose of data analysis, the researchers utilized the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 23 software, a widely recognized and accepted tool known for its proficiency in handling data relevant to social science research. By employing appropriate statistical methodologies, the study aimed to comprehensively comprehend student participation in extracurricular activities, with a particular emphasis on examining potential disparities associated with parental income and educational backgrounds.

FINDINGS

Socio Economic Background of the Students

This part presents data on the demographic particulars of the student respondents from 1350 secondary schools in Sri Lanka, which this study covered. Frequency and percentage were used to analyze the respondents' demographic information. The demographic factors investigated were, father's education level, mother's education level and parents' income. Demographic profiles of the respondents surveyed for this study are shown in detail in Table 01.

Table 1. Socio Economic Background of the Students

Profile	**Demographic**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Parent Income	Less than Rs. 15,000 (Less than RM. 333)	487	36.1
	Rs. 15,001 -46,000 (RM 334 – RM 1,022)	609	45.1
	Rs. 46,001- 150,000 (RM 1023 – RM 3,333)	215	15.9
	More than Rs. 151,001 (More than RM. 3,334)	39	2.9
Father's level of Education	No schooling	56	4.1
	Primary	332	24.6
	G.C.E O/L	565	41.9
	G.C.E A/L	307	22.7
	Tertiary education	90	6.7

Mother's level of Education	No schooling	47	3.5
	Primary	292	21.6
	G.C.E O/L	613	45.4
	G.C.E A/L	320	23.7
	Tertiary education	78	5.8

Table 1 presents a detailed breakdown of the respondents' parental income and the educational levels of their fathers and mothers. It is evident that a diverse range of backgrounds and circumstances are represented among the respondents.

In terms of parental income, the largest portion of the respondents (609 individuals or 45.1%) reported that their parents' income fell within the range of Sri Lankan Rupees 15,001 to 46,000. Notably, 487 respondents (36.1%) indicated that their parents' income was below Rs.15,000, signifying a significant proportion facing financial constraints. Another 215 respondents (15.9%) reported their parents' income as falling between Rs.46,001 to 150,000. Only a small fraction of the respondents (39 individuals or 2.9%) mentioned that their parents' income exceeded Rs.150,000

With regard to the educational background of the respondents' fathers, the majority (565 respondents or 41.9%) disclosed that their fathers had attained the G.C.E 'O' Level qualification. However, a notable minority of respondents (56 individuals or 4.1%) stated that their fathers had no formal education. Additionally, a substantial number of respondents (332 individuals or 24.6%) reported that their fathers had only received primary education. On the other hand, a considerable number of fathers held higher qualifications, with 307 respondents (22.7%) having completed G.C.E 'A' Level and 90 respondents (6.7%) having attained tertiary education. In the case of mothers' educational backgrounds, a significant proportion (613 respondents or 45.4%) stated that their mothers possessed G.C.E 'O' Level certificates. Conversely, a smaller number of respondents (47 individuals or 3.5%) mentioned that their mothers had no formal schooling. A substantial segment of respondents (292 individuals or 21.6%) reported that their mothers had only received primary education. The remaining respondents had mothers with more advanced educational qualifications, with 320 individuals (23.7%) indicating that their mothers had completed G.C.E 'A' Level and 78 individuals (5.8%) specifying that their mothers had received tertiary education.

These findings underscore the diversity in parental income and educational backgrounds among the surveyed secondary schoolchildren, highlighting the need to consider these factors in the analysis of their extracurricular activity participation.

Extent of Student Engagement in Co-curricular Activities

The descriptive analysis (mean and standard deviation) is used to determine the level of socio-educational participation from the aspect of the students' involvement in school activities. Seven items were constructed to determine the respondents' level from the aspect of students' participation in school activities, as shown in Table 2

Table 2. Level of of Students' Involvement in Co-curriculur Activities

No.	Item	Mean	S. D	Interpretation
C1	I take part in events in the Literary Association in the school	3.485	1.254	Moderately High

C2	I participate in sports activities (Netball, Volleyball, Cricket, Swimming, Athletics, etc.) in school	3.936	1.194	Moderately High
C3	I participate in aesthetic activities such as dancing, art, music, calligraphy at my school	3.278	1.383	Moderately High
C4	I take part in school academic clubs (environmental, media, health, English, literally, art, reading etc.)	3.414	1.324	Moderately High
C5	I participate in competitions such as English day, Sinhala day, Tamil day, Olympiad etc. in school or zonal or national level	3.394	1.358	Moderately High
C6	I am involved in writing for publications	2.877	1.383	Moderately High
C7	I am involved in the community-based program (scout, girl guide, cadet)	3.073	1.461	Moderately High
	Overall	**3.351**	**0.939**	**Moderately High**

Table 2 shows various items and the level of students' participation in co-curricular activities); the overall mean is 3.351, overall S.D. is 0.939, and the interpretation moderately high. The highest item for this aspect is item C2, which refers to students' participation in sports activities such as Netball, Volleyball, Cricket, Swimming, Athletics, etc. in school; this has a mean of 3.936 (S.D. =1.194) and the interpretation is moderately high. The next highest item is about students who take part in the events conducted by the Literary Association of the school; the mean for this is 3.485 (S.D. =1.254), and the interpretation is moderately high. The lowest item (C6) is about students involved in writing for publications and the mean for this is 2.877 (S.D. =1.383), with the interpretation being moderately low.

Disparities in Student Cnvolvement in Co-curricular Activities based on Parental Income

Table 3 shows the MANOVA analysis for the difference in mean scores for student participation in co-curriculur activities based on parental income.

Table 3. MANOVA Difference Aspects of Student Participation in Co-Curricular Activities based on Parental Income Level

Variable	**Income Level**	**N**	**Mean**	**S. D**	**Type III Sum of Squares**	**Df**	**Total Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Student Participation in Co- Curricular Activities	>Rs. 15,000	487	3.398	0.936	2.952	3	0.984	1.114	0.342
	Rs.15,00 1-46,000	609	3.304	0.926					

	Rs.46,001-150,00	215	3.360	0.989					
	< Rs.151,001	39	3.465	0.887					

Table 3 Shows that there is no significant difference in terms of parental student participation in in co-curricular activities (F = 1.114 and sig = 0.342, p <0.05) based on parental income.

Variations in Student Participation in Co-curricular Activities Based on Parent Income

Table 4 and Table 5 show the MANOVA analysis of the difference in mean scores for student participation in co-curricular activities based on parental education level.

Table 4. Two Way MANOVA Difference Aspects of Student Participation in Co- curricular Activities based on Parental Educational Level

Variable	**Dependent Variable**	**Type III Sum of Squares**	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Father's Highest Educational Level	Students Participation in School Activities	11.084	4	2.771	3.195	0.013
Mother's Highest Educational Level	Students Participation in School Activities	8.485	4	2.121	2.445	0.045
Father's*Mother' s Highest Educational Level	Students Participation in School Activities	22.111	15	1.474	1.699	0.045

Table 5. Mean Scores Difference Aspects of Student Participation in Co-curricular Activities Based on Parental Educational Level

	Father's Highest Educational Level	**Mother's Highest Educational Level**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviatio n**	**N**
Student Participation in Co-Curricular Activities	No Schooling	No Schooling	3.58	0.80	21
		Primary	3.64	0.70	19
		G.C.E(O/L)	2.80	1.41	14
		G.C.E(A/L)	4.85	0.20	2
		Total	3.45	1.03	56
	Primary	No Schooling	3.05	1.02	17
		Primary	3.28	0.95	183
		G.C.E(O/L)	3.28	0.97	116
		G.C.E(A/L)	3.17	1.17	15
		Tertiary Education	4.00	0.00	1
		Total	3.26	0.96	332
	G.C.E(O/L)	No Schooling	3.05	1.20	5
		Primary	3.06	0.89	77
		G.C.E(O/L)	3.32	0.93	357
		G.C.E(A/L)	3.41	0.85	113
		Tertiary Education	3.26	0.97	13

		Total	3.30	0.91	565
	G.C.E(A/L)	No Schooling	3.64	0.50	2
		Primary	3.48	0.81	10
		G.C.E(O/L)	3.27	0.93	114
		G.C.E(A/L)	3.45	0.97	159
		Tertiary Education	3.83	0.79	22
		Total	3.41	0.94	307
	Tertiary Education	No Schooling	4.57	0.00	2
		Primary	3.47	1.64	3
		G.C.E(O/L)	3.64	0.76	12
		G.C.E(A/L)	3.69	0.72	31
		Tertiary Education	3.63	0.79	42
		Total	3.67	0.78	90
	Total	No Schooling	3.38	0.95	47
		Primary	3.25	0.93	292
		G.C.E(O/L)	3.30	0.95	613
		G.C.E(A/L)	3.45	0.92	320
Tertiary Education			3.63	0.83	78
Total			3.35	0.93	1350

Table 4 shows significant differences in students' involvement in co-curricular activities [F = 3.195 and sig = 0.013] based on the father's highest education level. Students who have fathers with tertiary education have the highest mean compared to other students.

Based on mother's highest education level, the table shows there are significant differences in students' participation in co-curricular activities [F = 2.445 and sig = 0.045]. As for students' participationin co-curricular activities, those who have mothers with tertiary education have the highest mean compared to other students.

Table 4 also shows significant interaction between father's and mother's education levels in the context of students' participation in co-curricular activities [F = 1.699 and sig = 0.045].

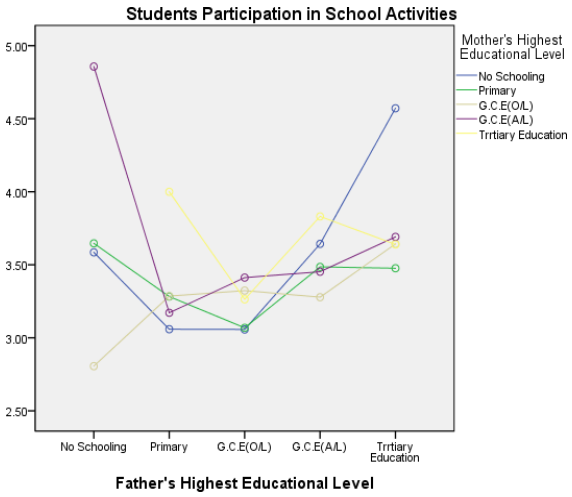

Figure 1. Interaction Between Father's and Mother's Highest Education Levels and its Effect on ofStudents' Participation in Co-curricular Activities or School Activities

The graph above shows significant interaction between father's and mother's highest education levels and its effect on student participation in school activities. Students who have fathers

without schooling and mothers with G.C.E (A/L) have the highest mean compared to other students in terms of student participation in co-curricular activities.

DISCUSSION

This study finds a moderately high level of student participation in co-curricular activities. Adolescent students tend to participate more in extracurricular activities with high support from their parents and peers (Wang & Eccles, 2012). The highest mean value for student participation in co-curricular activities is 'I participate in sports activities in school'., Most of the adolescent students are involved in sports activities (95%), horse riding (78%) and music (73%) in Uttar Pradesh, India (Annu & Sunita, 2013). Sports activities tend to control students' emotions and increase their self-concept, leadership skills, learning capabilities and academic achievement (Zaman, 2017) . The lowest mean value and interpretation is moderate- low for the statement 'I am involved in writing for publications'. This finding contradicts Martinez et al. (2016) that student participation in art and club activities is associated with a high level of connectedness with school. However, Craft (2012) found that students who participate in extracurricular activities—either sports, club or music programmes—score higher point averages than those who did not participate in such activities.

This study identified significant differences in socio-educational participation in terms of students' involvement in co-curricular activities based on the father's and mothers' highest educational levels. In the sample, students whose parents both have tertiary education have the highest mean. Student participation in co-curricular activities increases as their parents' qualifications, either their mother's or father's, increases. Students whose parents had the highest level of qualifications actively participate in extracurricular activities compared with their peers., Parents' educational level predicts their adolescent children's extracurricular physical activities in Italy (La Torre et al., 2006). Students with fathers who obtained degrees participated more frequently in school activities than students whose fathers have lower educational levels. Furthermore, adolescents with mothers who graduated with degrees participated in school activities more than three hours every week than students whose mothers had lower academic levels. Children of tertiary-educated parents are more likely to engage in extracurricular activities, likely due to their parents' heightened awareness of the benefits of such activities for their children's socioemotional and cognitive development(Jelani et al., 2015). The nature of student participation in extracurricular activities is contingent on parental educational levels, with parental experience and values being stronger predictors for student engagement in language programs, while parents with lower educational qualifications are more influential in predicting student involvement in music programs (Ashbourne & Andres, 2015).

The results of this study offer interesting insights into the relationship between parental income and student participation in co-curricular activities. Contrary to the findings of of Jelani et al. (2015), which suggested that household income significantly influenced student participation in extracurricular activities, this study did not find a substantial difference in student participation based on parent income. These results indicate that there may be variations in the impact of income on co-curricular versus extracurricular activities, suggesting that co-curricular activities might be more accessible to a wider range of students regardless of their family's economic status. Moreover, the findings of this research challenge the notion that student participation in extracurricular activities is solely dependent on household income, as higher income levels did not appear to be the primary driving factor for involvement. Instead, it underscores the importance of parental values, experience, and educational background as critical predictors for student engagement in specific programs, such as language and music activities. It is worth noting that these findings deviate from the results of Burkhardt (2016), who found that poverty did not affect students' participation in

extracurricular activities among middle school children in Anne Arundel County. These inconsistencies suggest that the relationship between income and student participation in extracurricular and co-curricular activities can vary depending on factors like geographic location, cultural context, and the specific nature of the activities in question.

CONCLUSION

In summary, this study underscores the significance of parental education in influencing student engagement in co-curricular activities, while revealing no discernible association between parental income and such participation, thus contributing to the ongoing discourse on the intricate determinants of student involvement in both extracurricular and co-curricular programs, emphasizing the necessity for further research across diverse educational contexts to comprehensively elucidate the factors influencing student participation.

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