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Parental Educational Level in Shaping Student Participation in Lesson Activities: A Multifaceted Study

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Abstract

This research study delves into the complex relationship between parental educational background and student participation in lesson activities in the context of secondary school education in Sri Lanka. This study explores whether student participation in lesson activities differs based on parent education. The stratified sampling method selected the sample from Grade 10 secondary school children in Sri Lanka. A carefully selected sample of 1,350 secondary school students was surveyed using a questionnaire instrument to assess their self-perceived levels of engagement in lesson activities and their parents' educational backgrounds. The study employs rigorous statistical analysis, including Two-Way Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) tests and post hoc analyses, to explore the impact of parental Education on student participation. The findings reveal that, based on the highest educational level of the mother, significant differences exist in student participation in lesson activities. Students whose mothers hold tertiary education degrees exhibit the highest

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mean scores, demonstrating that maternal educational attainment positively influences student engagement. However, no significant disparities were observed based on the father's educational level, emphasizing the unique role of the Education of mothers in shaping student participation. The study also underscores the absence of a significant interaction effect between the educational levels of fathers and mothers concerning student participation. This implies that the impact of parental Education on student engagement operates primarily through the mother's educational background. Overall, this research provides critical insights into the influence of parental educational experience on student participation in lesson activities. The results demonstrate that parents with higher academic qualifications contribute significantly to their children's active involvement in the learning process, ultimately enhancing their educational experiences. These findings have implications for educators, policymakers, and parents, as they underscore the importance of fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment to promote equitable student participation in lesson activities. Furthermore, the study recommends parental involvement through workshops, media, and educational resources for parents with lower academic levels to bridge the educational gap and enhance student engagement.

Keywords: *Parental education, student participation, lesson activities, secondary chsool children*

Introduction

Education is a cornerstone of individual growth, societal progress, and economic development. It is a powerful instrument of transformation, providing access to knowledge and opportunities that can profoundly shape an individual's future. While the primary focus of Education often centers on students and the classroom, it is imperative to recognize the multifaceted factors that influence the learning experience. Among these factors, parental educational level is crucial to students' academic journeys. The impact of parental educational level on student outcomes has been a subject of extensive research and scholarly inquiry. Research consistently demonstrates that parents' education levels are associated with many student-related variables, including academic achievement, cognitive

development, and future career prospects. While this influence has been widely explored, it remains vital to consider its implications for a specific facet of the educational process: student participation in lesson activities.

Student participation in lesson activities is not a mere procedural element; it is a dynamic indicator of the quality of the learning experience. It encompasses active involvement in classroom discussions, engagement in group projects, and the willingness to ask questions and seek additional knowledge. High levels of student participation are linked to enhanced learning outcomes, a deeper understanding of the subject matter, and the development of critical thinking skills.

This research explores the complex relationship between parental educational level and student participation in lesson activities. It builds upon a body of literature exploring parents' role in shaping educational outcomes. Previous studies have documented the influence of parental Education on aspects such as academic achievement (Davis-Kean, 2005) and educational aspirations. However, less attention has been given to how parental educational background affects students' day-to-day interactions and involvement in classroom activities.

Understanding the dynamics of this relationship is essential for several reasons. First, it can provide insights into the persistent educational disparities, shedding light on why some students participate more actively than others. Second, it can guide educators and policymakers in developing strategies to promote equitable participation and enhanced learning experiences for all students. Lastly, it can empower parents with the knowledge to support their children's educational journey actively.

Literature Review

Student participation in lesson activities is crucial for effective learning enhancing academic achievement, critical thinking, and social skills. Factors influencing participation include individual characteristics such as motivation, self-efficacy, and prior knowledge (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Bandura, 1997). Instructional methods play a significant role, with active learning strategies and constructive

feedback fostering engagement (Prince, 2004; Hattie & Timperley, 2007). The classroom environment, particularly the quality of teacher-student relationships and the overall climate, also impacts participation (Pianta, Hamre & Allen, 2012; Eccles & Roeser, 2011). Socio-cultural factors, including cultural background and socio-economic status of parents, further affect student involvement (Gay, 2010; Sirin, 2005). Additionally, integrating technology can enhance participation by providing interactive and personalized learning experiences, though it requires careful implementation (Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2012; Voogt et al., 2013). Strategies to enhance participation include encouraging active learning, building a positive classroom environment, and effectively leveraging technology (Michael, 2006; Wentzel, 1997; Harris, Mishra & Koehler, 2009).

The relationship between parental educational level and student participation in lesson activities is an important topic within the field of Education. This literature review aims to provide a comprehensive overview of relevant research in this area. Student participation is a fundamental aspect of the learning process, impacting academic achievement, cognitive development, and overall educational outcomes. Understanding the influence of parental educational background on student participation is essential for educators, researchers, and policymakers as they seek to promote equitable and inclusive educational environments.

Nearly 91% of the student agreed that parental Education affects their participation in Education (Kipkulei, 2008). Parental educational approaches and parental individual history impact parent-child association and substantially impact a child's school performance (Necşoi et al., 2013). Parental qualifications assist a child in acquiring skills, attitudes, and behaviors that will enable them to be a productive and successful student (Vellymalay, 2012). There is a relationship between parental Education and students' English language performance in the classroom (Salameh et al., 2018).

Numerous studies have established a strong connection between parental educational level and a child's academic performance. In metropolitan secondary schools in Pakistan, the study determined that parent education and socioeconomic status significantly shape the academic performance of students in English language and Mathematics, with parent education holding a more substantial

influence than occupation, and further highlighted that girls outperform boys in educational attainment (Farooq et al., 2011). Parents' motivation and educational qualifications toward their children's performance are closely related (Ugwuja, 2010). A student's level of skill and profound wisdom, facilitating superior performance in their career, is intricately linked to their parental background, notably their educational qualifications (Al Darwish, 2016). Children of parents with lower educational qualifications, such as primary or secondary levels, exhibit lower academic performance, as well as diminished parental involvement and curiosity in their children's learning, in contrast to the active support and engagement seen among parents with higher Education, including Bachelor's, Master's, or PhD degrees (Ibrahim, 2017). The enhanced academic performance of children with parents holding higher educational levels is commonly linked to educational support, expectations, and active involvement in their children's learning, which includes assistance with homework and access to educational resources (Davis-Kean, 2005).

Beyond academic achievement, parental educational background also influences a child's cognitive development. Parents with higher educational levels serve as cognitive role models, fostering superior cognitive skills and a greater propensity for active engagement in intellectual activities among their children, which subsequently enhances critical thinking, problem-solving, and active participation in classroom discussions.

Parental educational level shapes a child's motivation and educational aspirations. Students with parents possessing higher educational backgrounds often exhibit heightened educational aspirations and active classroom participation, driven by their parents' elevated expectations, which emphasize the value of Education and motivate their children to excel academically (Chow, 2011)

The relationship between parental Education and student participation is also mediated by socioeconomic and cultural factors. Parents with higher educational levels often enjoy higher socioeconomic status, which can provide their children with access to a wider range of educational resources and extracurricular opportunities. Additionally, cultural values and attitudes towards education may differ based on parental educational background,

influencing a child's perception of the importance of participation in lesson activities.

This literature review underscores the significant impact of parental educational level on student participation in lesson activities. It influences not only academic achievement but also cognitive development, motivation, and aspirations. The relationship is complex and multifaceted, influenced by a combination of factors, including socioeconomic and cultural variables. This review sets the stage for the present research study, aiming to provide a deeper understanding of how parental educational level affects student participation and offer practical insights for promoting inclusive and engaging learning environments.

Methodology

This research study employs a survey-based, quantitative research design to investigate the influence of parental educational level on student participation in lesson activities within the context of secondary school education in Sri Lanka. The survey sample comprises secondary school students, with a meticulously selected cohort of 1350 participants obtained through a rigorous stratified random sampling technique. The research instrument, a thoughtfully designed questionnaire, features two distinctive sections: the primary section focuses on the collection of essential demographic data from the participating students, while the secondary section aims to evaluate their self-perceived levels of engagement in lesson activities. To quantify student participation in lesson activities, a Likert Scale with five response options, ranging from "Never" (coded as 1) to "Always" (coded as 5), is employed. Stringent measures were implemented to ensure the questionnaire's validity and reliability, which encompassed the consultation of experts specialized in the field of sociology of Education. The questionnaire's internal consistency is assessed through Cronbach's alpha coefficient, yielding a commendable level of reliability with a coefficient of 0.939.

The analytical approach encompasses both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive analysis is conducted to calculate means and standard deviations, providing valuable insights into the extent of student involvement in learning activities. For data analysis, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 23 serves

as the primary software tool. To examine the influence of parental educational level on student participation in lesson activities among secondary school students in Sri Lanka, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) is carried out.

The primary objective of this analysis is to determine whether significant variations exist among students based on their parents' educational backgrounds. Furthermore, this study aims to explore the potential impact of parental educational levels on students' engagement in lesson activities, thereby offering a comprehensive investigation of the factors affecting student participation in the educational process.

Research Question

Does student participation in lesson activities differ based on parent education?

Null Hypothesis

Ho1: Student participation in lesson activities has no significant difference based on the father's highest educational level.

Ho2: Student participation in lesson activities has no significant difference based on the mother's highest educational level.

Ho3: Student participation in lesson activities has no significant interaction between the father's and mother's educational levels.

Findings and Discussion

Parental Educational Profiles

This section provides a comprehensive presentation of data on the educational attainment of the parents of student respondents drawn from a sample of 1350 secondary schools located in Sri Lanka, all included within the purview of this research endeavor. The analysis of parental educational information was conducted using frequency and percentage methods. Detailed insights into the educational levels of the parents of the respondents who participated in this study are meticulously documented in Table 1. The primary objective of this analysis is to determine whether significant variations exist among students based on their parents' educational backgrounds. Furthermore, this study aims to explore the potential impact of

parental educational levels on students' engagement in lesson activities, thereby offering a comprehensive investigation of the factors affecting student participation in the educational process.

Table 1. *Parental Educational Profiles*

Profile	Demographic	Frequency	Percentage
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

Regarding fathers' educational attainment, most respondents (565, constituting 41.9%) indicated that their fathers had achieved the General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level (G.C.E O/L) qualification. Conversely, a minority of respondents (56, or 4.1%) disclosed that their fathers had not received any formal education, while a significant portion (332, or 24.6%) revealed that their fathers had only completed primary Education. In contrast, a notable proportion of respondents reported that their fathers possessed higher qualifications, specifically the General Certificate of Education Advanced Level (G.C.E. 'A' L) (307, or 22.7%) and tertiary Education (90, or 6.7%).

Regarding the educational background of mothers, a similar pattern emerged, with most respondents (613, or 45.4%) stating that their mothers had obtained G.C.E.' O' Level certificates. Conversely, a minority of respondents (47, or 3.5%) acknowledged that their mothers had not received any formal schooling, while a substantial number (292, or 21.6%) confirmed that their mothers had completed only primary Education. The remaining respondents reported that their mothers held more advanced qualifications, including the G.C.E. 'A' Level (320, or 23.7%) and tertiary Education (78, or 5.8%).

Level of Student Participation in Lesson Activities

Descriptive analysis was utilized to assess the level of student involvement in lesson activities, with a particular emphasis on computing the mean and standard deviation. This evaluation encompassed seven distinct items crafted to solicit respondents' ratings on a 5-point scale, as delineated in Table 2.

Table 2. *Level of Students' Participation in Lesson Activities*

No.	Item	Mean	S. D	Interpretation
1	I present group work after group discussion in front of my classmates using language appropriate to the level of the listeners	3.796	1.085	Moderately High
2	I work actively with other students on the assigned task(s) in small group activities in class	4.234	0.971	High
3	I discuss ideas from my reading of the lesson with teachers, classmates, and family members	3.885	1.074	Moderately High
4	I do experiments and practicals (Science, Mathematics, I.C.T., Agriculture) with teachers and classmates to enhance my learning experience	3.757	1.149	Moderately High
5	I discuss subject matter with my teachers via social media (Facebook/ WhatsApp/Viber)	3.279	1.329	Moderately High
6	I discuss the subject matter with my classmates	3.560	1.299	Moderately High

	via social media (Facebook/ WhatsApp/Viber)			
7	I participate in various educational activities (role play, drama, debate, etc.)	3.468	1.253	Moderately High
	Overall	**3.711**	**0.823**	**Moderately High**

Table 2 presents an analysis of students' engagement levels in various lesson activities, expressed through numerical values. The overall mean for this construct is computed at 3.711, with a corresponding overall standard deviation (S.D.) of 0.823. These statistics collectively suggest a moderately high degree of student participation.

The highest mean value (4.234) is attributed to Item 2 among the specific items in this analysis. This item pertains to the active involvement of students in collaborative small-group activities during class. The relatively low standard deviation of 0.971 indicates a high level of agreement among respondents, reinforcing the interpretation of high student engagement in this activity. The second highest mean score (3.885) is associated with Item 3, which relates to students' discussions of lesson ideas with their teachers, classmates, and family members. The corresponding standard deviation of 1.074 reveals a moderate level of variability in responses. This suggests a moderately high degree of engagement in discussing lesson-related concepts with peers and family.

Conversely, the lowest mean score (3.279) is assigned to Item 5, which involves students' discussions of subject matter with their teachers through various social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Viber, etc. The notably higher standard deviation of 1.299 indicates a wider range of responses among the participants. Despite the variability, the interpretation remains moderately high, implying that, on average, students are moderately engaged in discussing the subject matter with their teachers via these digital channels. The overall analysis suggests that students demonstrate a moderately high level of engagement in lesson activities, with notable variations in specific activities such as small group participation and online

discussions with teachers, as indicated by the varying mean scores and standard deviations for each item.

Differential Student Participation in Lesson Activities Based on Parental Educational Background

The study employed multiple Two-Way MANOVA tests to explore the variations in mean scores across various dependent variables concerning student engagement in lesson activities. The primary focus of these analyses was to ascertain the potential differences in student participation as influenced by the educational background of their parents. The results of these MANOVA tests are presented in Table 2 and Table 3, providing a comprehensive overview of the analysis of mean score disparities in student participation in lesson activities concerning parental education levels.

Table 3. *Two-Way MANOVA Difference Aspects of Student Participation in Lesson Activities based on Parental Educational Level*

Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Father's Highest Educational Level	5.297	4	1.324	2.015	0.090
Mother's Highest Educational Level	10.498	4	2.625	3.994	0.003
Father's*Mother's Highest Educational Level	14.743	15	0.983	1.496	0.099

Table 4. *Mean Scores Difference Aspects of Student Participation in Lesson Activities Based on Parental Educational Level*

Father's Highest Educational Level	Mother's Highest Educational Level	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
No Schooling	No Schooling	3.45	0.83	21
	Primary	3.83	0.70	19
	G.C.E(O/L)	3.22	0.95	14
	G.C.E(A/L)	5.00	0.00	2
	Total	3.58	0.87	56
Primary	No Schooling	3.42	0.80	17
	Primary	3.58	0.88	183
	G.C.E(O/L)	3.56	0.78	116
	G.C.E(A/L)	3.81	0.93	15
	Tertiary Education	4.85	0.00	1
	Total	3.58	0.84	332
G.C.E(O/L)	No Schooling	3.82	0.60	5
	Primary	3.43	0.87	77
	G.C.E(O/L)	3.69	0.80	357
	G.C.E(A/L)	3.83	0.80	113
	Tertiary Education	3.57	0.87	13
	Total	3.68	0.81	565
G.C.E(A/L)	No Schooling	4.21	0.30	2
	Primary	3.45	0.62	10
	G.C.E(O/L)	3.71	0.84	114
	G.C.E(A/L)	3.91	0.80	159
	Tertiary Education	3.88	0.71	22
	Total	3.82	0.81	307
Tertiary Education	No Schooling	4.57	0.00	2
	Primary	4.33	0.65	3
	G.C.E(O/L)	3.83	0.83	12
	G.C.E(A/L)	4.09	0.62	31
	Tertiary Education	4.01	0.61	42
	Total	4.04	0.64	90

Total	No Schooling	3.56	0.80	47
	Primary	3.56	0.86	292
	G.C.E(O/L)	3.66	0.81	613
	G.C.E(A/L)	3.90	0.79	320
	Tertiary Education	3.91	0.70	78
	Total	3.71	0.82	1350

In Table 3, the analysis based on the highest educational attainment of the mothers reveals significant disparities concerning students' involvement in lesson activities [F = 3.994 and p = 0.003]. However, no significant distinctions are observed when considering the educational levels of the fathers. Notably, in the context of students' participation in lesson activities, those whose mothers have attained a tertiary level of Education exhibit the highest mean scores in comparison to their peers. Furthermore, the examination of Table 3 indicates that there is no statistically significant interaction between the educational levels of fathers and mothers regarding students' participation in lesson activities [F = 1.496 and p = 0.099]. This underscores the absence of a significant combined effect arising from the educational backgrounds of both parents on students' engagement in lesson activities.

Table 5 shows the post hoc analysis to see the mean differences in student participation in lesson activities based on the father's highest educational level in more detail.

Table 5. *Post Hoc Analysis of Difference Aspects Student Participation in Lesson Activities based on Father's Highest Educational Level*

(I) Father's Highest Educational Level	**(J) Father's Highest Educational Level**	**Mean Difference (I-J)**	**Std. Error**	**Sig.**
No Schooling	Primary	-0.00	0.11	1.000
	G.C.E(O/L)	-0.10	0.11	0.930
	G.C.E(A/L)	-0.24	0.11	0.382

	Tertiary Education	-0.45*	0.13	0.026
Primary	No Schooling	0.00	0.11	1.000
	G.C.E(O/L)	-0.10	0.05	0.485
	G.C.E(A/L)	-0.23*	0.06	0.008
	Tertiary Education	-0.45*	0.09	0.000
G.C.E(O/L)	No Schooling	0.10	0.11	0.930
	Primary	0.10	0.05	0.485
	G.C.E(A/L)	-0.13	0.05	0.236
	Tertiary Education	-0.35*	0.09	0.005
G.C.E(A/L)	No Schooling	0.24	0.11	0.382
	Primary	0.23*	0.06	0.008
	G.C.E(O/L)	0.13	0.05	0.236
	Tertiary Education	-0.21	0.09	0.282
Tertiary Education	No Schooling	0.45*	0.13	0.026
	Primary	0.45*	0.09	0.000
	G.C.E(O/L)	0.35*	0.09	0.005
	G.C.E(A/L)	0.21	0.09	0.282

Table 5 shows a significant difference in students' participation in lesson activities between students whose fathers never went to school and students whose fathers have tertiary Education. There is also a significant difference in socio-educational involvement in terms of students' participation in lesson activities between students whose fathers have only primary Education and students whose fathers have G.C.E. (A/L) and tertiary Education. There is also a significant difference between socio-educational participation and student participation in lesson activities between students whose fathers have only G.C.E. (O/L) and students who have fathers with tertiary Education.

Table 6 contains the results of post hoc analysis that show the mean differences in student participation in lesson activities based on the mother's highest education level in detail.

Table 6. *Post Hoc Analysis of Difference Aspects of Student Participation in Lesson Activities based on Mother's Highest Educational Level*

(I) Mother's Highest Educational Level	(J) Mother's Highest Educational Level	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
No Schooling	Primary	0.00	0.12	1.000
	G.C.E(O/L)	-0.10	0.12	0.955
	G.C.E(A/L)	-0.34	0.12	0.125
	Tertiary Education	-0.35	0.14	0.242
Primary	No Schooling	-0.00	0.12	1.000
	G.C.E(O/L)	-0.10	0.05	0.532
	G.C.E(A/L)	-0.34*	0.06	0.000
	Tertiary Education	-0.35*	0.10	0.021
G.C.E(O/L)	No Schooling	0.10	0.12	0.955
	Primary	0.10	0.05	0.532
	G.C.E(A/L)	-0.23*	0.05	0.001
	Tertiary Education	-0.24	0.09	0.161
G.C.E(A/L)	No Schooling	0.34	0.12	0.125
	Primary	0.34*	0.06	0.000
	G.C.E(O/L)	0.23*	0.05	0.001
	Tertiary Education	-0.00	0.10	1.000
Tertiary Education	No Schooling	0.35	0.14	0.242
	Primary	0.35*	0.10	0.021
	G.C.E(O/L)	0.24	0.09	0.161
	G.C.E(A/L)	0.00	0.10	1.000

Table 6 shows a significant difference in students' participation in lesson activities between students with mothers with primary Education and those with mothers with G.C.E. (A/L) and tertiary Education. There is also a significant difference in student

participation in lesson activities regarding students' involvement in lesson activities between students with mothers with G.C.E. (O/L) and students with mothers with G.C.E. (A/L).

Conclusions

The findings of this research highlight the substantial influence of parental educational background on student participation in lesson activities within the secondary school education system in Sri Lanka. The comprehensive analysis of a sample of 1,350 students reveals compelling insights into the dynamics of this relationship. Based on the highest educational level of the mother, significant differences in student participation in lesson activities are evident. Students whose mothers have attained higher qualifications, particularly in tertiary Education and G.C.E. (A/L), exhibit notably higher mean scores in lesson participation. This implies that maternal educational attainment plays a pivotal role in shaping student engagement in the classroom. These findings align with previous research, demonstrating that parents with advanced educational backgrounds contribute significantly to their children's active involvement in the learning process (Musgrave, 2000).

In contrast, the father's educational qualifications did not show significant differences in student participation in lesson activities. This intriguing distinction underscores the unique impact of maternal education, indicating that the mother's educational background predominantly influences student engagement. Furthermore, the study identifies substantial disparities between students whose fathers have minimal or no formal schooling and those whose fathers possess tertiary Education. Similarly, differences are observed between students with fathers who have only completed primary Education and those with fathers who hold G.C.E. (A/L) or tertiary education qualifications. These disparities underline the positive correlation between paternal educational attainment and student participation in lesson activities, with students benefitting from higher levels of paternal Education exhibiting greater enthusiasm and engagement.

It is important to emphasize that nearly 91% of students in the sample acknowledge that parental Education impacts their participation in lesson activities, providing empirical support for the influential role of

parental educational background (Kipkulei, 2008). Additionally, this study resonates with international research, as evidenced by the strong predictive power of parents' educational backgrounds on learners' academic performance, exemplified in the United Kingdom (Bukodi & Goldthorpe, 2013). Furthermore, the study illuminates the role of home human capital, represented by both the father's and mother's educational levels, in fostering social capital and enhancing students' academic achievements (Huang, 2009). The positive association between home human capital, "good parent interaction," and "good peer-teacher interaction" underscores the intricate connections between parental educational background, social engagement, and academic success.

Considering these findings, it is essential to consider the implications for educational policy and practice. To bridge the academic gap, it is recommended that parents with lower educational levels or those without formal schooling be actively encouraged to participate in parental workshops, access educational media, and explore educational resources. This proactive approach can empower parents to support their children's educational journey, thus promoting more inclusive and engaging learning environments for all students. In conclusion, this research underscores the critical role of parental educational background, particularly maternal Education, in influencing student participation in lesson activities. It sheds light on the multifaceted impact of parental Education on academic engagement and provides practical insights for educators, policymakers, and parents alike. By acknowledging and addressing these dynamics, stakeholders can work collaboratively to ensure that students receive the support and encouragement they need to thrive in their educational endeavors.

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