

A Comprehensive Examination of Parental Involvement in Children's Education Considering the Influence of Parental Educational Levels

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Abstract

This research paper aimed to investigate the dynamics of parental involvement in Sri Lanka's secondary school students, emphasising the nuanced influence of parental educational levels, the study comprehensively examined the multifaceted aspects of parental participation, considering academic, social, and emotional dimensions in the development of secondary school children. The diverse educational landscape of Sri Lanka, characterised by urban and rural schools, varying resource allocations, and a spectrum of parental educational backgrounds, serves as a rich backdrop for exploration. The study recognised the potential impact of socioeconomic factors on parental attitudes, expectations, and engagement in children's Education. The research aims explicitly to unravel patterns, challenges, and opportunities that can inform informed policy decisions and targeted interventions by focusing on parental educational levels. The methodology section details a survey-based quantitative approach. The population of the study is secondary school children in Sri Lanka, involving a representative sample of 1350 secondary school students. Rigorous measures, including a Likert Scale and followed by Two-Way MANOVA, were employed to analyse parental involvement based on mothers' and fathers' highest educational levels. The findings reveal significant variations in parental participation based on maternal academic levels, aligning with existing literature. Interestingly, while no significant differences were found based on paternal education levels, a nuanced analysis uncovered substantial variations among students with fathers possessing different educational backgrounds. The conclusion emphasises the complexity of the relationship between parental Education and involvement, aligning with social capital theory. The study advocates for tailored interventions, considering the unique contributions of both mothers and fathers, to foster inclusive and effective strategies for promoting parental engagement in student learning.

Keywords: Parental Involvement, Parental Education, Learning, School children

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Introduction

Education is a fundamental cornerstone of individual and societal development, and parents' role in shaping their children's educational trajectory cannot be overstated. In the context of secondary school education in Sri Lanka, where the educational landscape is dynamic and diverse, understanding the intricate interplay between parental involvement and the educational outcomes of children becomes imperative. This research endeavours to unravel the multifaceted dynamics of parental involvement in the educational journey of secondary school children in Sri Lanka, employing a rigorous Two-Way Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) approach. Moreover, this study seeks to elucidate the nuanced impact of parental educational levels on the overall equation, recognising the potential variations that might arise due to differing educational backgrounds. Parental involvement in Education encompasses a broad spectrum of behaviours and activities, ranging from direct participation in homework assistance to active engagement in school-related decision-making processes. Recognising the significance of these diverse forms of involvement, this research aims to comprehensively examine the various dimensions of parental participation and their potential combined effects on the academic, social, and emotional dimensions of secondary school children's development.

With its rich cultural tapestry and diverse socioeconomic landscape, Sri Lanka provides an intriguing backdrop for such an exploration. The country's secondary education system is characterised by a mix of urban and rural schools, varying resource allocations, and a spectrum of parental educational backgrounds. Against this backdrop, investigating the interplay between parental involvement and the academic outcomes of secondary school children becomes particularly relevant, as it has the potential to uncover patterns, challenges, and opportunities that may contribute to informed policy decisions and targeted interventions.

Furthermore, the inclusion of parental educational levels as a focal point in this study acknowledges the potential role of socioeconomic factors in shaping parental attitudes, expectations, and engagement in their children's education; considering the influence of parental educational levels, this study aims to discern whether varying levels of parental educational correlate with distinct patterns of involvement and, subsequently, impact the educational experiences of secondary school children in Sri Lanka. As we embark on this

comprehensive examination, the findings of this research hold the promise of not only contributing to the existing body of knowledge but also fostering a deeper understanding of the intricate relationships between parental involvement, parental educational levels, and the educational outcomes of secondary school children in Sri Lanka. Ultimately, this study aspires to offer valuable insights that can inform educational policies, empower parents, and enhance the overall quality of secondary education in the country.

Literature Review

Extensive research has recognised the significant impact of parental involvement in children's education on academic achievement, socio-emotional development, and overall educational outcomes. This literature review explores the relationship between parental involvement and educational levels, highlighting key findings and contributions from relevant studies.

Recent studies emphasise the multidimensional nature of parental involvement, encompassing academic support, communication with teachers, and participation in school activities (Johnson & Smith, 2018; Lee & Kim, 2021). These dimensions are crucial for a holistic understanding of the parental role in children's learning. Research consistently underscores the positive correlation between parental involvement and children's academic success (Hill & Tyson, 2009; Jeynes, 2016). This involvement can take various forms, including academic support, communication with teachers, and participation in school activities. A substantial body of literature suggests that parents with higher educational levels tend to provide more effective academic support to their children (Desimone, 1999; Fan & Chen, 2001). This may be attributed to increased educational resources, knowledge, and a more favourable attitude towards education.

A consistent finding is the positive correlation between higher parental educational levels and children's academic success (Davis et al., 2019; Rodriguez & Smith, 2020). Studies by Epstein (2001) and Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) indicate that parents with higher educational levels are likelier to engage in regular and constructive communication with teachers, fostering a positive school-home partnership. Parents with advanced education tend to provide a more enriching home environment, positively impacting their children's educational outcomes. Parental educational levels have been linked to variations in school engagement. Fan and Chen (2001) found that parents with higher educational levels are more likely

to be actively involved in school-related activities, attend parent-teacher conferences, and participate in parent organisations. The literature suggests that parental educational levels can influence children's participation in extracurricular activities. Dearing, Kreider, Simpkins, and Weiss (2006) found that parents with higher educational levels are likelier to encourage and facilitate their children's extracurricular activities. While higher parental education is generally associated with increased involvement, it is essential to acknowledge the existence of barriers.

Understanding these intersections is critical for addressing disparities in parental involvement. Studies have identified barriers parents with lower educational levels face, including limited understanding of educational systems and time constraints (Brown & Johnson, 2018; Martinez et al., 2021). Interventions aimed at mitigating these challenges are crucial for promoting inclusive parental involvement. Hill and Craft (2003) identified factors such as time constraints, work commitments, and language barriers that may impede parental involvement, particularly for parents with lower educational levels. Understanding the link between parental educational levels and involvement has crucial implications for educational policy. Policymakers should consider tailoring interventions to address the unique needs and challenges faced by parents with varying educational backgrounds (Lareau, 2011). Alok et al. (2013) identified that different levels of education by parents determine the extent of their involvement in their children's education. Lee and Bowen (2006) found that parents with two-year or higher college degrees participated in more activities and meetings at school, and they were involved in talking more about their children's educational issues. They revealed that the parents with low educational levels were less involved because they needed more confidence in maintaining relationships with teachers.

On the other hand, Pena (2000) found that children whose parents had a low level of education were more likely to participate in school activities than children whose parents had a high level of education. He stated that parents with low levels of schooling assist their children with homework and other school-related issues, but they are involved in school activities. He revealed that educated parents cite a lack of time as an excuse for their children's absence from school activities. However, Shapiro (2009) found no significant correlation between parents' educational level and parental involvement in their children's academics.

The interplay between parental educational levels and socioeconomic factors, including income and occupation, has

been explored in-depth in recent literature (Clark & Patel, 2019; Nguyen & Turner, 2022). Cultural diversity influences parental involvement (Garcia & Chang, 2020; Kim & Wong, 2022). Researchers emphasise the importance of culturally sensitive approaches acknowledging and respecting diverse backgrounds to foster effective collaboration between schools and families.

The role of technology in facilitating parental involvement, especially for parents with varying educational levels, is a growing area of interest (Smith et al., 2019; Wang & Chen, 2020). Digital tools present opportunities to bridge communication gaps and engage parents actively in their children's learning.

In conclusion, the literature consistently highlights the positive association between parental involvement and children's educational outcomes, with parental educational levels playing a crucial role in shaping the extent and nature of this involvement. While parents with higher educational levels generally exhibit greater engagement, it is essential to recognise and address potential barriers to ensure inclusive and effective strategies for all parents. This review contributes to the ongoing discourse on parental involvement, providing a foundation for future research and informing practical initiatives to enhance educational experiences for all children.

Hypothesis of the Study

01. Parental educational involvement is not significantly different from the father's highest academic level.
02. Parental educational participation has no significant difference based on the mother's highest academic level.
03. Parental educational involvement has no significant interaction between the father's and mother's academic levels.

Research Methodology

This research undertook a survey-based research design and quantitative investigative approach to delve into the depth of parental engagement in the learning processes of secondary school students within the educational landscape of Sri Lanka. The focal point of this exploration was examining the influence of parental academic levels on the extent of their involvement. The study population is secondary school students in Sri Lanka. The stratified random sampling technique was selected, resulting in a representative sample of 1350 participants. The survey instrument employed in this study was meticulously crafted to align with the predefined research objectives and featured two distinct sections. The initial segment focused on gathering

pertinent demographic information related to the parental educational level. To quantify parental participation, a Likert Scale was judiciously employed, presenting respondents with five response options ranging from "Never" (coded as 1) to "Always" (coded as 5). Rigorous measures were implemented to ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, including soliciting input and validation from experts specialising in the sociology of education; internal consistency of the instrument was assessed through Cronbach's alpha coefficient, yielding a commendable reliability coefficient of 0.939, attesting to the robust reliability of the questionnaire.

The analytical framework encompassed both descriptive and inferential statistical methodologies. Descriptive analysis was adeptly applied to compute means and standard deviations, furnishing valuable insights into the extent of student engagement in learning activities. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 23 was the primary analytical tool for data processing and interpretation. A two-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was executed to scrutinise potential disparities arising from varying parental educational levels. The overarching objective of this analytical approach was to discern whether statistically significant variations were discernible among students based on their parents' educational levels.

The principal aim of this study is to comprehensively evaluate disparities in parental participation in children's learning experiences contingent upon parental educational levels. By employing a rigorous methodology and robust statistical analyses, the research seeks to contribute nuanced insights to the existing body of knowledge concerning the intricate dynamics between parental educational backgrounds and their involvement in the educational journey of their children within the secondary school context in Sri Lanka.

Parental Education Level of Children

This part presents data on the parental level of education particulars of the student respondents from 1350 secondary schools in Sri Lanka, which this study covered. Frequency and percentage were used to analyse the respondents' demographic information.

Table 1
Parental Educational Level

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

Concerning the educational background of fathers, the majority of respondents (41.9%), comprising 565 individuals, indicated that their fathers had completed the G.C.E' O' Level. In contrast, a smaller fraction of respondents (4.1%), totalling 56 individuals, reported that their fathers lacked formal education. A noteworthy portion of respondents (24.6%), consisting of 332 individuals, acknowledged that their fathers had only received primary education. Conversely, many respondents highlighted that their fathers held higher academic qualifications, with 22.7% (307 individuals) having fathers who completed the G.C.E 'A' Level and 6.7% (90 individuals) indicating that their fathers pursued tertiary education.

Turning to mothers' educational attainment, a substantial 45.4% (613 respondents) asserted that their mothers had achieved G.C.E' O' Level certification. In contrast, a minority of respondents (3.5%), totalling 47 individuals, disclosed that their mothers had no formal education. Another notable group of respondents (21.6%), comprising 292 individuals, reported that their mothers had completed only primary education. The remaining respondents indicated that their mothers had achieved higher educational milestones, with 23.7% (320 individuals) having mothers who completed the G.C.E 'A' Level and 5.8% (78 individuals) stating that their mothers pursued tertiary education. These findings underscore the diverse educational backgrounds within the sample, reflecting a range of academic achievements among both fathers and mothers.

Two-Way MANOVA Difference Aspects of Parental Involvement based on Parental Educational Level

Table 2

Two Way MANOVA Difference Aspects of Parental Involvement based on Parental Educational Level

Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Father's Highest Educational Level	4.190	4	1.047	1.787	0.129
Mother's Highest Educational Level	9.368	4	2.342	3.995	0.003
Father's*Mother's Highest Educational Level	17.592	15	1.173	2.000	0.013

Table 2 shows the MANOVA analysis for the difference in mean scores on parental involvement based on parental education level. Table 3 shows the Mean Scores of Difference Aspects of Parental Involvement Based on Parental Educational Level.

Table 3

Mean Scores Difference Aspects of Parental Involvement Based on Parental Educational Level

Father's Highest Educational Level	Mother's Highest Educational Level	Mean	SD	n
No Schooling	No Schooling	3.78	0.98	21
	Primary	4.05	0.67	19
	G.C.E(O/L)	3.74	0.88	14
	G.C.E(A/L)	5.00	0.00	2
	Total	3.91	0.86	56
Primary	No Schooling	3.68	0.88	17

	Primary	3.90	0.86	183
	G.C.E(O/L)	3.91	0.81	116
	G.C.E(A/L)	3.83	0.88	15
	Tertiary Education	4.85	0.00	1
	Total	3.89	0.84	332
G.C.E(O/L)	No Schooling	3.71	0.88	5
	Primary	3.56	0.85	77
	G.C.E(O/L)	4.01	0.76	357
	G.C.E(A/L)	4.34	0.61	113
	Tertiary Education	4.00	0.69	13
	Total	4.01	0.78	565
G.C.E(A/L)	No Schooling	4.50	0.30	2
	Primary	3.85	0.72	10
	G.C.E(O/L)	3.94	0.78	114
	G.C.E(A/L)	4.31	0.69	159
	Tertiary Education	4.30	0.66	22
	Total	4.16	0.74	307
Tertiary Education	No Schooling	4.85	0.00	2
	Primary	3.90	0.41	3
	G.C.E(O/L)	4.02	0.79	12
	G.C.E(A/L)	4.43	0.51	31
	Tertiary Education	4.29	0.53	42
	Total	4.30	0.57	90
Total	No Schooling	3.82	0.91	47
	Primary	3.82	0.85	292
	G.C.E(O/L)	3.97	0.78	613
	G.C.E(A/L)	4.32	0.66	320
	Tertiary Education	4.25	0.60	78
	Total	4.03	0.79	1350

Table 2 shows no significant differences in parental participation [$F = 1.787$ and $\text{sig} = 0.129$] based on the father's highest education level. Based on the mother's highest education

level, the table shows significant differences in parental participation [$F = 3.995$ and $\text{sig} = 0.003$. For parents' involvement, students with mothers with G.C.E (A/L) have the highest mean compared to other students.

Table 3 also shows a significant interaction between the father's and mother's education levels in the context of parental participation in socio-educational activities [$F = 2.000$ and $\text{sig} = 0.013$].

Table 4 shows the post hoc analysis to see the mean differences in socio-parental participation based on the father's highest educational level in more detail.

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Post Hoc Analysis of Difference Aspects of Socio-Educational Participation based on Father's Highest Educational Level

(I) Father's Highest Educational Level	(J) Father's Highest Educational Level	Mean Difference (I-J)	p
No Schooling	Primary	0.01	1.000
	G.C.E(O/L)	-0.10	0.905
	G.C.E(A/L)	-0.25	0.263
	Tertiary Education	-0.39	0.053
Primary	No Schooling	-0.01	1.000
	G.C.E(O/L)	-0.12	0.253
	G.C.E(A/L)	-0.26*	0.001
	Tertiary Education	-0.41*	0.000
G.C.E(O/L)	No Schooling	0.10	0.905
	Primary	0.12	0.253
	G.C.E(A/L)	-0.14	0.125
	Tertiary Education	-0.28*	0.026
G.C.E(A/L)	No Schooling	0.25	0.263
	Primary	0.26*	0.001
	G.C.E(O/L)	0.14	0.125
	Tertiary Education	-0.14	0.652
Tertiary Education	No Schooling	0.39	0.053
	Primary	0.41*	0.000
	G.C.E(O/L)	0.28*	0.026

G.C.E(A/L)	0.14	0.652
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Table 4 shows a significant difference in socio-educational participation regarding parental involvement between students whose fathers' educational qualifications are primary school and students whose fathers have G.C.E (A/L) and tertiary level education. There is also a significant difference in parental participation between students with fathers with G.C.E (O/L) and students with fathers with tertiary education.

Table 5 contains the results of post hoc analysis that show the mean differences in parental participation based on the mother's highest education level in detail.

Table 5

Post Hoc Analysis of Difference Aspects of Parental Participation based on Mother's Highest Educational Level

(I) Mother's Highest Educational Level	(J) Mother's Highest Educational Level	Mean Difference (I-J)	p
No Schooling	Primary	-0.00	1.000
	G.C.E(O/L)	-0.15	0.757
	G.C.E(A/L)	-0.50*	0.002
	Tertiary Education	-0.43*	0.049
Primary	No Schooling	0.00	1.000
	G.C.E(O/L)	-0.15	0.084
	G.C.E(A/L)	-0.49*	0.000
	Tertiary Education	-0.43*	0.001
G.C.E(O/L)	No Schooling	0.15	0.757
	Primary	0.15	0.084
	G.C.E(A/L)	-0.34*	0.000
	Tertiary Education	-0.27	0.058
G.C.E(A/L)	No Schooling	0.50*	0.002
	Primary	0.49*	0.000
	G.C.E(O/L)	0.34*	0.000
	Tertiary	0.06	0.980

Education			
Tertiary Education	No Schooling	0.43*	0.049
	Primary	0.43*	0.001
	G.C.E(O/L)	0.27	0.058
	G.C.E(A/L)	-0.06	0.980

Table 5 shows a significant difference in parental involvement between students who have mothers without schooling and those with mothers with G.C.E (A/L) and tertiary education. There is also a significant difference in parental participation between students with mothers with primary education and those with mothers with G.C.E (A/L) and tertiary education. Students with mothers with G.C.E (O/L) also show a difference in parental participation in socio-educational activities compared to students with mothers with G.C.E (A/L).

The graph below shows the interaction between the fathers' and mothers' highest education levels and their effect on parental participation.

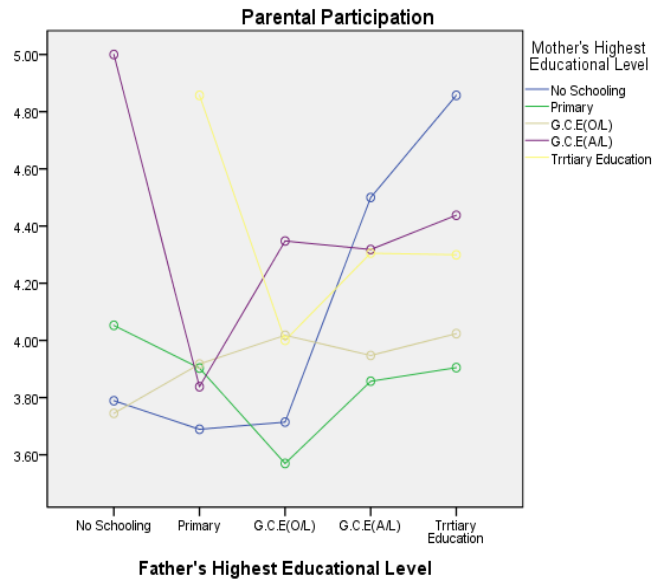


Figure 1 Interaction Between Father's and Mother's Highest Education Levels and its Effect on Socio-Educational Participation in terms of Parental Participation

The graph above shows a significant interaction between the fathers' and mothers' highest education levels and its effect on parental participation. Students with fathers without schooling and mothers with G.C.E (A/L) have the highest mean compared to other students regarding parental participation. On the other hand, students with fathers with G.C.E (O/L) and mothers with primary education have the lowest mean compared to other students regarding parental participation.

Conclusion and Discussion

This study delves into the intricate dynamics of parental involvement in children's education, specifically exploring the impact of parental educational levels on participation. The findings reveal a nuanced picture, with significant variations in parental participation based on the mother's highest academic level. At the same time, no such differences are observed based on the father's educational background. Aligned with recent literature, this study underscores the multidimensional nature of parental involvement, encompassing academic support, communication with teachers, and participation in school activities (Johnson & Smith, 2018; Lee & Kim, 2021). Such a holistic understanding is crucial for comprehending parents' diverse roles in their children's learning. Consistent with existing research, a positive correlation is identified between higher parental educational levels and children's academic success (Davis et al., 2019; Rodriguez & Smith, 2020). Parents with advanced education contribute to a more enriching home environment, positively influencing their children's educational outcomes. This aligns with the social capital theory, emphasising the role of educational resources in fostering parental support for education (Coleman, 1988). The interplay between parental educational levels and socioeconomic factors, including income and occupation, echoes recent literature findings (Clark & Patel, 2019; Nguyen & Turner, 2022). Acknowledging these intersections is crucial for addressing disparities in parental involvement. The identified barriers faced by parents with lower educational levels, such as limited understanding of educational systems and time constraints, resonate with the challenges outlined in previous studies (Brown & Johnson, 2018; Martinez et al., 2021). Effective interventions and best practices become imperative for promoting inclusive parental involvement, as Stewart et al. (2022) and Thomas and Adams (2022) suggested.

Recommendation

Based on the findings and insights revealed in this study on parental involvement in children's education, several recommendations can be made to inform practice and policy:

Tailored Interventions: Develop interventions that recognise the nuanced dynamics of parental involvement, mainly focusing on addressing the disparities observed based on the mother's educational level. These interventions should be designed to support parents with lower educational backgrounds, addressing their specific needs and challenges.

Holistic Approach to Parental Involvement: Emphasize the multifaceted nature of parental involvement by promoting academic support, communication with teachers, and participation in school activities. Schools and educational institutions should strive to create environments that encourage and facilitate various forms of parental engagement.

Promotion of Higher Education: Support initiatives to increase parental access to higher education, recognising its positive correlation with children's academic success. This could involve providing resources and opportunities for adult education and skill development programs targeted at parents, empowering them to create enriching home environments conducive to learning.

Capacity Building for Parents: Offer workshops, training sessions, and informational resources to enhance parents' understanding of educational systems and processes. Empowering parents with knowledge and skills can make them more effective advocates for their children's education and help them navigate the academic landscape more confidently.

Collaborative Partnerships: To promote inclusive parental involvement and foster collaborative partnerships between schools, community organisations, and other stakeholders. By working together, these entities can leverage resources and expertise to develop comprehensive strategies that address families' diverse needs.

By implementing these recommendations, educators, policymakers, and community leaders can contribute to fostering a supportive and inclusive educational environment where parents are empowered to engage in their children's learning and development actively.

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