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Involvement of Higher Secondary Students in Curricular and Co-Curricular Activities

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Abstract

This study examines the level of involvement of higher secondary students in curricular and co-curricular activities and its impact on their overall development. The research investigates factors influencing participation, benefits derived, and challenges faced by students. Data were collected through surveys and interviews from a representative sample of students across multiple institutions. Findings suggest that balanced engagement in both curricular and co-curricular activities enhances academic performance, social skills, and emotional well-being.The present study compared higher secondary students' involvement in curricular and co-curricular activities by gender, standard of study and level of involvement. A sample of 120 higher secondary students were selected through simple random sampling. Students therefore take part in curricular and co-curricular activities at broadly similar levels. Schools are advised to sustain balanced programs and encourage male students to develop positive attitudes and perceptions toward activities.

Keywords: curricular activities, co-curricular activities, student involvement, higher secondary students, gender differences

I. INTRODUCTION

Education extends beyond classroom instruction to include co-curricular activities that complement academic learning. Higher secondary education is a critical phase where students develop essential skills for personal and professional growth. This paper explores the extent of student involvement in curricular and co-curricular activities, emphasizing the role of such engagement in fostering holistic development.

Education at the higher secondary stage is meant to develop the whole student, not only examination marks. Curricular activities are the planned classroom learning tied to the syllabus, such as lectures, assignments, laboratory work and tests. Co-curricular activities such as sports, arts, clubs, community service and cultural programmes extend that learning outside the formal timetable. India's National Education Policy 2020 argues for holistic and multidisciplinary education and states that there should be no hard separation between curricular, co-curricular and extracurricular areas (Ministry of Education, 2020).

The idea of involvement gives a useful lens for studying both kinds of activity. Astin (1984) defined student involvement as the amount of physical and psychological energy a student devotes to the academic experience, and he held that learning grows in proportion to the quality and quantity of that involvement. Organized activities are also recognized as important contexts in which adolescents build skills, relationships and a sense of belonging (Mahoney et al., 2005).

Research links participation in such activities to positive outcomes. Mahoney and Cairns (1997) found that extracurricular participation lowered the risk of early school dropout, particularly for students who were already at risk. Marsh and Kleitman (2002) reported that participation was related to better grades, school engagement and educational aspirations. Darling et al. (2005) found that students who joined school-based activities showed better academic and psychological adjustment. Fredricks and Eccles (2006) similarly observed beneficial associations with both academic and psychological outcomes, although these varied with the type of activity. Eccles and Barber (1999) stressed that the type of activity matters, suggesting that students may differ in the areas they choose.

Most of these studies came from outside India, and they often treat curricular and co-curricular participation separately. Few studies compare how male and female students, students of different standards, and students with different levels of involvement take part across several dimensions of school activity. The present study addresses this gap among higher secondary students and tests whether their involvement differs by gender, standard of study and involvement group.

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II. OBJECTIVES

1. To find out the significant difference between male and female higher secondary students in their involvement in curricular and co-curricular activities .
2. To find out the significant difference between Standard XI and Standard XII students in their involvement in curricular and co-curricular activities.
3. To find out the significant difference between the involvement groups in their involvement in curricular and co-curricular activities

III. HYPOTHESES

All hypotheses are stated in the null form and tested at the .05 level of significance.

1. H1: There is no significant difference between male and female higher secondary students in their involvement in curricular and co-curricular activities .

2. H2: There is no significant difference between Standard XI and Standard XII students in their involvement in curricular and co-curricular activities.

3. H3: There is no significant difference between the involvement groups in their involvement in curricular and co-curricular activities.

IV. METHODOLOGY

***DESIGN*:** The study adopted a descriptive, survey design.
***POPULATION AND SAMPLE*:** The population consists of all the higher secondary students studying in Tirunelveli District. The sample size consist of 120 higher secondary students.
***SAMPLING TECHNIQUE*:** Simple random sampling was used so that every student in the population had an equal chance of selection.
***TOOL*:** Data were collected with the help of the Curricular and Co-curricular Activities Scale. The scale has five dimensions.
STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES. Means and standard deviations described each group. The independent samples t-test compared two groups at a time, and Levene's test checked equality of variances (Field, 2018). Cohen's d was calculated as a measure of effect size and read as small (0.20), medium (0.50) or large (0.80) (Cohen, 1988). All analyses were run in SPSS, and results were judged at $p < .05$.

V. DATA ANALYSIS

The data of 120 students were analyzed with independent samples t-tests (df = 118). Levene's test was not significant for any dimension (all $p > .05$), so the equal-variances-assumed results are reported. Dim1 to Dim5 are the five dimensions of the involvement scale. Group codes are taken from the SPSS file: gender 1 = male and 2 = female, standard 1 = XI and 2 = XII, and involvement groups 1 and 2. [Please confirm these codes and rename the dimensions.]

Comparison by gender

Table 1. H1: There is no significant difference between male and female higher secondary students in their involvement in curricular and co-curricular activities .

Dimension	Male M (SD)	Female M (SD)	t	p	Cohen's d	Remark
Partcipation & engagement	22.88 (3.36)	23.78 (3.06)	1.47	.145	0.28	NS
Attitude & Perception towards activities	15.35 (2.52)	16.69 (2.28)	2.93	.004	0.55	**S**
Personal Development & Skills	20.76 (3.07)	20.84 (2.76)	0.15	.880	0.03	NS
School Support & environment	20.93 (2.84)	20.62 (2.88)	0.58	.564	0.11	NS
Recongnition , motivation & time Management	15.08 (2.94)	15.13 (3.05)	0.10	.925	0.02	NS
Total	95.00 (8.00)	97.07 (7.50)	1.40	.163	0.26	NS

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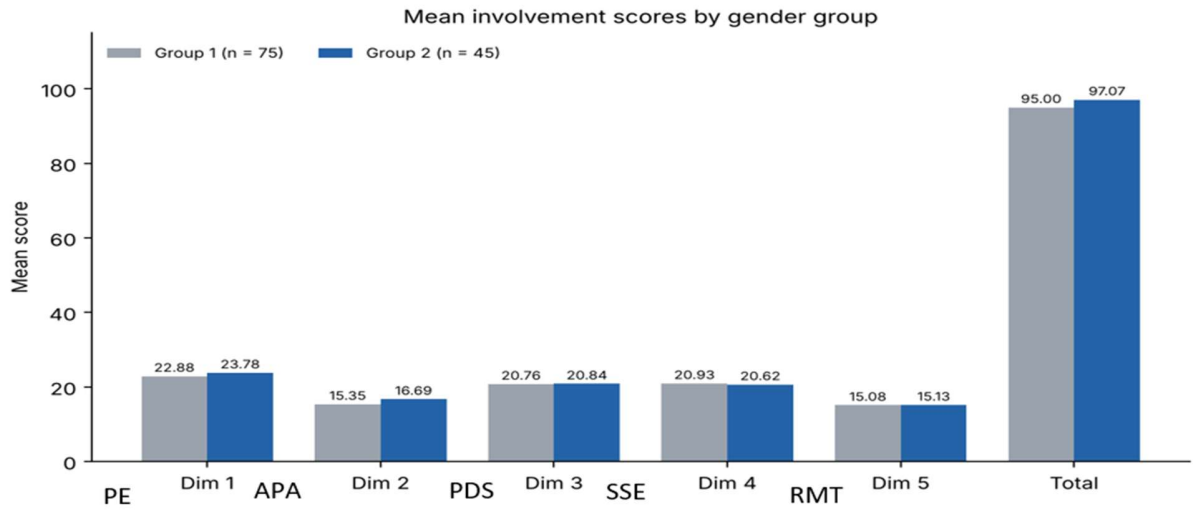

Figure 1. Mean of Curricular and Co-Curricular Involvement Scores of Higher Secondary Students

Comparison by standard of study

Table 2. H2: There is no significant difference between Standard XI and Standard XII students in their involvement in curricular and co-curricular activities.

Dimension	XI M (SD)	XII M (SD)	t	p	Cohen's d	Remark
Partcipation & engagement	23.41 (3.12)	23.00 (3.44)	0.68	.499	0.13	NS
Attitude & Perception towards activities	15.69 (2.74)	16.04 (2.22)	−0.76	.450	0.14	NS
Personal Development & Skills	21.27 (2.85)	20.25 (2.97)	1.91	.059	0.35	NS
School Support & environment	20.95 (2.80)	20.66 (2.91)	0.56	.577	0.10	NS
Recongnition , motivation & time Management	15.23 (2.84)	14.95 (3.13)	0.53	.599	0.09	NS
Total	96.55 (7.43)	94.89 (8.27)	1.15	.251	0.21	NS

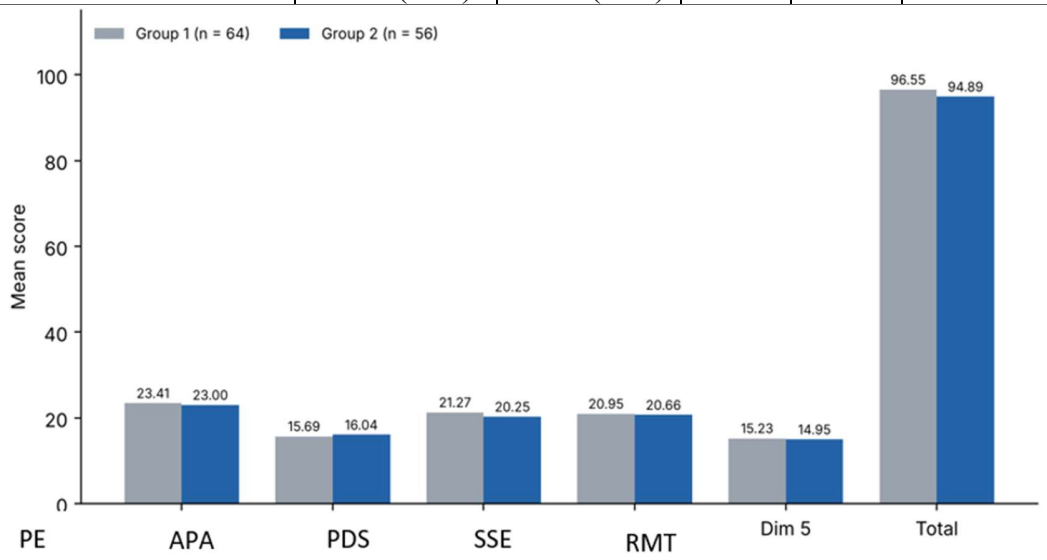

Figure 2. Mean of Curricular and Co-Curricular Activities involvement scores of Higher Secondary Students

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Comparison by involvement group

Table 3. H3: There is no significant difference between the involvement groups in their involvement in curricular and co-curricular activities.

Dimension	Group 1 M (SD)	Group 2 M (SD)	t	p	Cohen's d	Remark
Partcipation & engagement	23.36 (3.12)	23.08 (3.42)	0.47	.639	0.09	NS
Attitude & Perception towards activities	15.86 (2.33)	15.84 (2.68)	0.05	.960	0.01	NS
Personal Development & Skills	20.91 (2.76)	20.68 (3.13)	0.44	.662	0.08	NS
School Support & environment	20.97 (2.71)	20.68 (2.98)	0.55	.582	0.10	NS
Recongnition , motivation & time Management	15.36 (3.07)	14.85 (2.88)	0.93	.352	0.17	NS
Total	96.47 (7.35)	95.13 (8.29)	0.93	.353	0.17	NS

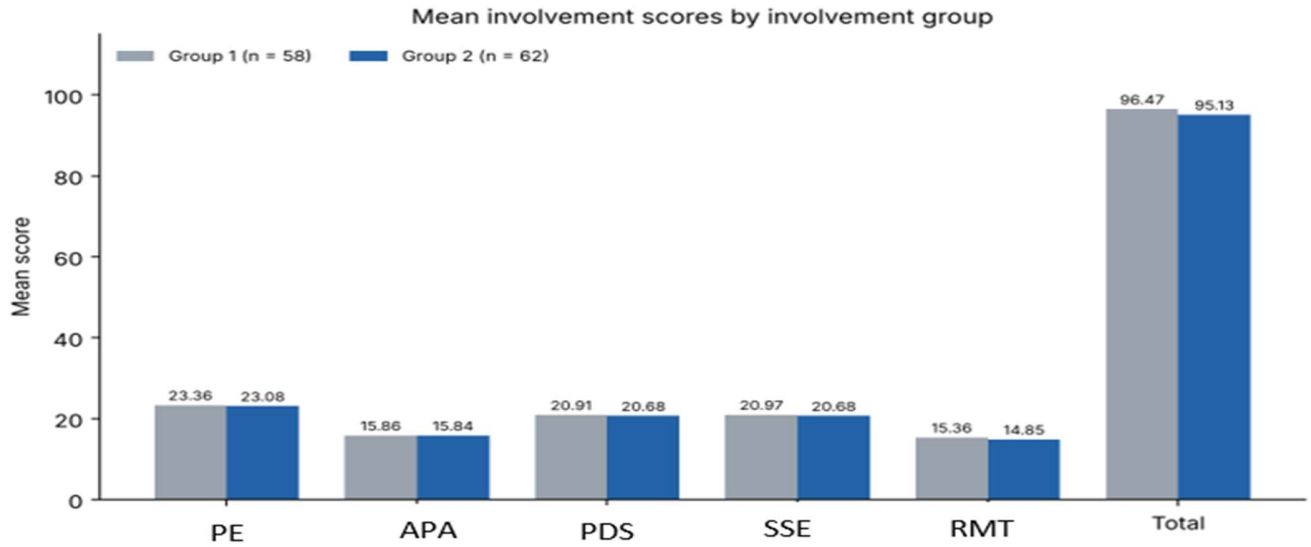

Figure 3. Mean of Curricular and Co-Curricular involvement scores of Higher Secondary Students
Source: SPSS independent samples t-test output (N = 120). Cohen's d was calculated from the reported means and standard deviations.

VI. FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

1. **Gender and Attitude & Perception towards activities:** Female students (M = 16.69, SD = 2.28) scored significantly higher than male students (M = 15.35, SD = 2.52) on Dim2, t(118) = −2.93, p = .004, d = 0.55. H01 is rejected for Attitude & Perception towards activities.
2. **Gender and the other dimensions.** Male and female students did not differ significantly on Participation & Engagement (p = .145), Personal Development & Skills (p = .880), School Support & Environment (p = .564), Recognition, Motivation & Time Management (p = .925), or the total score (p = .163). H_{01} is retained for these. Girls scored slightly higher on Attitude & Perception towards activities and the total, but the gaps are small (d = 0.28 and 0.26) and could be due to chance. Overall involvement is similar for boys and girls.
3. **Standard of study.** Standard XI and Standard XII students did not differ significantly on any dimension or on the total score (p from .059 to .599). H_{02} is retained. came closest (XI M = 21.27, XII M = 20.25, p = .059, d = 0.35), which hints that younger students may be slightly more involved in this area, possibly because Standard XII students

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give more time to board examinations. This is only a tendency and needs a larger sample to confirm.

4. **Involvement group.** The two involvement groups did not differ significantly on any dimension or on the total score (p from .352 to .960). H_{03} is retained. Effect sizes were negligible (d = 0.01 to 0.17), so the groups behave alike on the scale.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Schools should offer a balanced of curricular and co-curricular activities, since students of both genders and both standards take part at similar levels. Extra effort is not needed to close gaps in most dimensions.
2. Teachers and coordinators should look into why male students score lower on Attitude & Perception towards activities and add activities in that area that appeal to boys, such as team-based and project-based options.
3. Standard XII students should be helped to keep up their participation through flexible schedules and short activity periods during examination months, because personal development and skills tended to decline in the higher standard.
4. Activity choice should be left to students, in line with the call for flexible, holistic education in the National Education Policy,because students differ in the types of activity they prefer.
5. Schools should record participation each year and review it by gender and standard, as continued involvement is linked to better school engagement and adjustment.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The involvement of higher secondary students in curricular and co-curricular activities plays an important role in their overall development. Curricular activities help students improve their academic knowledge, intellectual abilities, and learning skills, while co-curricular activities develop leadership qualities, communication skills, creativity, teamwork, discipline, and self-confidence. Both activities provide opportunities for students to identify and develop their talents, interests, and abilities. Active participation in these activities also promotes physical, emotional, social, and moral development. Therefore, schools should encourage and motivate students to participate equally in curricular and co-curricular activities to ensure their holistic development and prepare them to become responsible, confident, and successful individuals in society.

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