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LEVEL OF PARENTAL EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT FOR STUDENT LEARNING

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Abstract

Parents are the first teachers of their children, and their performance in school and overall well-being is influenced by them. Playing a significant role in educating children, parents are individuals who influence student behaviour through direct or indirect action. Parental support for student learning has a significant effect on student wellbeing and academic achievement. This research was aimed at determining parental educational support for student learning, mainly taking into account gender differences as a factor among secondary school children in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka faces notable gender disparities in academic performance, with girls outperforming boys at every level of the educational system (Tushani and Sarma. The study used a survey research design and a questionnaire instrument for data collection. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select 1350 secondary school students. To analyse the data, the research used descriptive analyses such as mean, standard deviation and MANOVA analysis. The findings of the study demonstrate that parental educational support for student learning is was at a high level (overall mean of 4.296, overall S.D. of 0.702) among secondary school children in Sri Lanka. MANOVA analysis shows significant differences in parental educational support based on gender as parental educational support for female student learning is significantly higher than male students. Both father and mother should maximise their educational support for boys' education, such as providing necessary educational materials or resources, encouraging learning that can improve the educational wellbeing of children in Sri Lanka.

Key words: Parental Educational Support, Gender, Student Learning.

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Introduction

A family is more than a legal or biological relationship between individuals; it involves an intangible connection based on relationship and relatedness (Woolley, Kol et al. 2009). Home environmental support could be described as the consistent contribution of the father and mother in a meaningful way encouraging and providing for their children's educational needs to become essential people (Bronfenbrenner 1992, Suhaimi 2013, Ahmad and Noor 2017)^{1,2,3}.

Positive parents support student learning by providing a comfortable learning environment at home, encouraging students to do schoolwork or engaging in home-based learning activities positively affecting student academic and personal wellbeing. Therefore, parental support, encouragement and motivation can enhance student academic achievement (Suhaimi 2013, Ahmad and Noor 2017)^{2,3}. Kaspi-Baruch (2013)⁴ elucidates that both parents are directors of their children's lives by guiding and helping them choose their academic careers. He asserts that children can be succeeded in choosing any career with the help of their parents. It is further asserted that the academic career of children is linked to parental support. Educators, researchers, and policymakers have paid increasing attention to parent support for children's education and learning. These broad conceptualizations include the numerous ways and procedures by which parents can assist their children's education.

In this study, parental educational support includes encouraging, assisting, guiding, motivating and supplying educational materials for children education. Parents can use this study in guiding and leading their children towards achieving outstanding academic wellbeing in secondary schools in Sri Lanka This study is expected to guide, motivate and encourage parents to provide educational support that can increase the involvement of their children in lessons and school activities, which cultivate educational wellbeing among secondary school students in Sri Lanka. Moreover, parents can gain the idea that apart from providing educational support, their involvement in learning is an inevitable factor in continuing children's education smoothly and enhancing wellbeing. The findings can serve of great importance to parents towards collaborating with their children, teachers, other parents and school management to enhance the educational wellbeing of students in secondary schools in Sri Lanka.

Literature Review

Without a doubt, research has shown that parental educational support for student learning is associated with student involvement in learning in terms of behavioural, cognitive, and socio-affective involvement. This is evidenced by the findings of Felizardo, Cantarinha et al. (2016)⁵ research on students' participation in school and parental care and support: Contributions to the socio-educational intervention in Portugal. Felizardo et al. showed that there is a strong relationship between parental support (students' personal development, school development,

behavioural support and assistance for their studies) and student involvement in learning in terms of behavioural, cognitive and socio-affective involvement. Moreover, Ruholt, Gore et al. (2015)⁶ found that parental educational support and involvement has a significant relationship with academic self-esteem and self-efficacy.

Parental educational support for doing homework is very important because students perform well in their education due to parental homework assistance. This is evidenced by Torrecilla and Hernández-Castilla (2019)⁷ showed that students performed well in their exams because of parental support for homework assistance for mathematics and reading. Likewise, Chohan and Khan (2010)⁸ examined the impact of educational support on academic achievement. Chohan et al. showed a significant effect of parental consent towards the academic achievement of children. Further, Chohan et al. highlighted that parental support in doing homework has a significant impact on students' academic performance. Moreover, a study carried out in Spanish by Núñez, Suárez et al. (2015)⁹ also showed that perceived parental support for homework significantly related to students' homework behaviours such as homework time management, time spent on homework and amount of homework completed and homework support correlated with academic performance.

Moreover, Meunier (2015)¹⁰ demonstrated that school support programmes (Homework support programme by school) positively influence academic success, but not more than for two years. It was highlighted that some frequent educational support programmes lead to the the best success in education.

Parental educational support in supplying educational materials, financial assistance, transportation, and psychological support with parental hope and enthusiasm plays a big role in children's education Ahmad and Awang (2016)¹¹. They showed that parents seem to be more motivated to support their children's education as their children could get a better job in the future. Moreover, Ahmad & Awang demonstrated that parent tends to provide fundamental educational support, such as financial assistance and transportation support for their student learning. They showed that parents did not show any indication in terms of educational guidance for their children in a Aboriginal community. Further, Núñez, Suárez et al. (2015)⁹ showed that students whose parents encourage and provide basic needs perform better in classroom activities than their peers.

Affectional and psychological support of parents towards students' learning cannot be ignored when parents help in their children's education. Several studies have highlighted that the failure of psychological and affectional support affects student learning. Parents can motivate and encourage their children to be involved in learning. Once student are inspired and motivated by parents, they tend to involve in learning.

According to Ahmad and Awang (2016)¹¹ many parents realised that providing educational materials for their children is not enough and that they also need to support their children psychologically. Even though parents are more supportive and enthusiastic about their children's education, they face challenges to provide adequate educational support due to limited skills and knowledge. It was suggested to organize a specific program to improve aboriginal parents' knowledge and skills and promote parents' awareness.

Furthermore, Olusiji (2016)¹² found that parental encouragement toward learning was more important in motivating students to learn English. Further, Wu, Chou et al. (2016)¹³ suggest that parents should provide more affectionate support for Grade-12 students to deal with pressures from the heavy schoolwork. Moreover, Shukla, Tombari et al. (2015)¹⁴ demonstrated that parental consent influenced student motivation and persistence in a variety of ways. Moreover, they demonstrated that parental support for learning in terms of students personal mastery goal orientations' stronger than 'students' performance goal orientation'. Moreover, Shahzad, Abdullah et al. (2015)¹⁵ showed that parental encouragement for learning positively influences the students' academic outcome. Furthermore, they demonstrated that the students whose parent encourage them for learning showed better performance in their academic achievement than the students whose parent do not encourage them for education.

Undoubtedly, research has shown that parental educational support for student learning related to student involvement in learning in terms of behavioural, cognitive and socio-affective involvement leads to academic achievement and wellbeing. Parental educational support in supplying educational materials, financial aid, transportation, and psychological support with parental hope and enthusiasm plays a significant role in children's education. Parental academic support for doing homework is critical because students perform well due to parental homework assistance. Affectional and psychological support of parents towards students' learning

Aim of the Study

This study attempted to identify the level of parental educational support for student learning and differences of parental educational support based on gender among secondary school children in Sri Lanka.

Methodology

This survey used a quantitative research design. The population of the study consists of secondary schoolchildren in Sri Lanka. A total of 1350 secondary schoolchildren were selected for the study using a stratified random sampling technique to select the study sample. The questionnaire tool

was developed in line with the needs of the survey. The questionnaire instrument consists two sections to determine students’ demographic background and students’ perception with regard to parental educational support. The respondents were given five choices for parental educational support construct based on the Likert Scale (1–5): Never (1), Rarely (2), Occasionally (3), Often (4) and Always (5). The opinions of experts from the sociology of education were used to establish the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. The internal consistency of the instrument was based on the report of Cronbach’s alpha coefficient values (0.912). Descriptive and inferential statistics were used in analysing the data. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 23 was used for the data analysis. Descriptive analysis was used to obtain the mean and standard deviations, to determine the overall level of parental educational support for student learning. MANOVA analysis is used to determine any significant differences in parental educational support based on gender amongst Sri Lankan secondary school children.

Results

The values such as mean and standard deviation, obtained from the descriptive analysis, are used to determine the level of parental educational support. Seven items were constructed that would be rated by the respondents using a 5-level scale (Never, Rarely, Occasionally, Often, Always) on the aspect of parental educational support, as shown in Table 01.

Table 1
Level of Parental Educational Support for Student Learning

No.	Item	Mean	S. D	Interpretation
My parents				
B.1	help me to do my homework which enable me to complete given tasks successfully on time	3.94	1.13	Moderately High
B.2	supply me enough educational materials (pen, colors) which I use for my studies	4.63	0.79	High
B.3	motivates me for learning school subjects	4.56	0.82	High
B.4	praise me when I do well in my learning which encourage me to involve further in my learning	4.31	1.00	High
B.5	buys the recommended textbooks to enable me to master the subjects	4.45	0.88	High
B.6	encourages me to use the library and internet facilities to enable me to find a variety of learning-related materials.	3.69	1.33	Moderately High

B.7	have set a special room / space for me to study at home	4.45	1.04	High
		6	7	
	Overall	4.29	0.70	High
		6	2	

Table 01 shows the overall findings related to parental educational support for student learning with a mean score of 4.296, standard deviation of 0.702, and with the interpretation as high. The highest item in this construct is B1.2 which is about supplying educational materials such as pen, pencil, etc. by parents to students with a mean of 4.639 (S.D. = 0.794) and interpretation as high. The next item B1.3 is about motivating children for learning school subjects and in this case the mean is 4.565 (S.D. = 0.822), and the interpretation is high. However, the lowest item B1.6 is about encouraging students to use the library and Internet facilities to enable them to find a variety of learning-related materials. This has a mean of 3.697 and S.D. of 1.331 and the interpretation for this item is moderately high.

Table 2

MANOVA Difference Aspects of Socio-Environmental Support based on Gender

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	S. D	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Total Square	F	Sig.
Parental Support	Male	675	4.247	0.734	3.311	1	3.311	6.739	0.01
	Female	675	4.346	0.666					

MANOVA Difference Aspects of Socio-Environmental Support based on Gender shows that socio-environmental support in terms of parental support is higher for female students (Mean = 4.346 and S.D. = 0.666) than for male students (Mean 4.247 and S.D. = 0.734).

Discussion and Conclusion

This study finds that parental educational support for student learning is high. Similarly, Ahmed & Awang (2016)¹¹ demonstrated that parents in the aboriginal community appear to be more motivated to support their children’s education to enable them to obtain better jobs in the future. In addition, Shahzad, Abdullah et al. (2015)¹⁵ demonstrated that the students whose parent encourage them for learning show better performance in their academic achievements compared with their peers. However, despite the high overall level, parental educational support for doing homework and encouragement to use the Internet is only moderate. Núñez, Suárez et al. (2015)⁹

showed that parental support for homework is significantly related to students' homework behaviours such as time management, time spent on homework, amount of homework completed. Meunier (2015)¹⁰ suggested that frequent homework support programme by the school for parents produces the best success in children's education. Dogruer, Eyyam et al. (2011)¹⁶ found that students use the Internet for e-encyclopaedias, e-dictionaries, and translation tools to complete their homework and projects, download photos or pictures, and necessary files, and find sources of information. Parents can encourage their children to use the Internet for their learning, and schools can help them navigate the use of such media and technology (Patrikakou 2016)¹⁷.

The results show significant differences in parental educational support based on gender. In all aspects, support is higher for female students than male students among secondary school children in Sri Lanka. This finding agrees with Sartor and Youniss (2002)¹⁸, that the girls report a higher level of parental support, social monitoring and school monitoring than boys, indicating a higher level of connection with parents.

The implication of the Study

This study shows that parental educational support is significantly lower for boys than girls. Aturupane et al. (2018)¹⁹ revealed that boys' participation in education is low due to parental confidence in their skills to easily obtain jobs without education. However, a focus on student wellbeing is integral to the United Nations' goals for education to enable people to become wiser, more knowledgeable, better informed, ethical, responsible citizens who are critical thinkers and capable of and motivated to be lifelong learners (Noble et al. 2015)²⁰. Accordingly, both father and mother should maximise their educational support for girls' and boys' education, such as providing necessary educational materials or resources, encouraging learning that can improve the educational wellbeing of children in Sri Lanka.

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