

Influence of Curricular and Co-Curricular Activities on Academic and Social Skill Development in Elementary Students: A Study

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of curricular and co-curricular activities on fostering academic and social competencies among elementary school students. Employing a descriptive survey design, the research involved 60 students from public and private elementary schools. A researcher-designed five-point Likert scale, comprising 20 items (11 assessing academic skills and 9 evaluating social skills), was administered to the participants. The scale included 18 positive and 2 negative statements. Findings indicate that both curricular and co-curricular activities significantly contribute to the development of academic and social skills, equipping students for future success. Statistical analysis revealed no significant differences in skill development across gender, school type (public vs. private), or family structure (nuclear vs. joint). These results underscore the universal benefits of such activities in elementary education.

Keywords: Curricular Activities, Co-Curricular Activities, Academic Competencies, Social Competencies, Elementary Education

1. INTRODUCTION

Education transcends the mere transmission of knowledge, serving as a cornerstone for personal and societal growth. It shapes individuals' character, enhances their capabilities, and fosters critical thinking, distinguishing humans from other species. In India, education is enshrined as a fundamental right, ensuring equitable access irrespective of gender, caste, or socioeconomic status. Government initiatives such as the Right to Education Act and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan reflect this commitment.

Education is a vital form of human capital, offering a reliable avenue for personal and economic advancement. An educated populace is essential for addressing societal challenges, including poverty, corruption, and inequality. Educated citizens are better equipped to make informed decisions, particularly in democratic processes, thereby strengthening governance.

Holistic education extends beyond academic achievement to encompass personality development, including values, communication skills, and social interactions. As Jawaharlal Nehru emphasized, children represent the future of a nation, necessitating a curriculum that nurtures their comprehensive growth. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 advocates for experiential learning, encouraging active student participation through diverse teaching methods.

Curricular activities, such as debates and seminars, and co-curricular activities, including arts, yoga, and competitions, play a pivotal role in this process. These activities foster engagement, creativity, and networking opportunities, enhancing students' academic and social development. Prior research (e.g., Karthikeyan, 2011; Rathore et al., 2018) supports the positive correlation between participation in such activities and improved academic performance and social skills.

2. OBJECTIVES

The study pursued the following objectives:

1. To examine the influence of curricular and co-curricular activities on academic and social skill development.
2. To compare academic skills between boys and girls students.
3. To compare social skills between boys and girls students.
4. To compare academic skills between students in public and private schools.
5. To compare social skills between students in public and private schools.
6. To compare academic skills between students from nuclear and joint families.
7. To compare social skills between students from nuclear and joint families.

3. HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses were tested:

H0₁: No significant difference exists in academic skill development between boys and girls students.

H0₂: No significant difference exists in social skill development between Boys and girls students.

H0₃: No significant difference exists in academic skill development between public and private school students.

H0₄: No significant difference exists in social skill development between public and private school students.

H0₅: No significant difference exists in academic skill development between students from nuclear and joint families.

H0₆: No significant difference exists in social skill development between students from nuclear and joint families.

4. METHODOLOGY

A descriptive survey method was employed to explore the role of curricular and co-curricular activities. The sample comprised 60 elementary students from public and private schools, selected purposively. A five-point Likert scale, developed by the researcher, was used to measure academic and social skills. The scale included 20 items (11 for academic skills, 9 for social skills), with 18 positive and 2 negative statements. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) and inferential statistics (t-tests) to test the hypotheses.

Results and Analysis

Objective 1: To Examine the Influence of Curricular and Co-Curricular Activities on the Development of Academic and Social Skills

Table 1 summarizes the mean scores and standard deviations for academic and social skills across different groups.

Table 1: Comparison of Academic and Social Skills Across Groups

Group	N	Academic Skills		Social Skills	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Boys	36	40.80	5.31	42.05	4.72
Girls	24	42.05	4.71	44.30	5.45
Private School	36	40.50	5.83	43.00	6.55
Public School	24	41.76	4.61	43.72	5.42

Joint Family	21	40.80	5.31	42.70	6.05
Nuclear Family	39	40.90	5.42	42.64	6.25

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics related to academic and social skills across various demographic variables. The mean scores for academic skills among boys and girls students were 40.80 (SD=5.31) and 42.05 (SD=4.72), respectively. Similarly, students enrolled in private schools scored a mean of 40.50 (SD=5.83), whereas those in government schools scored 41.76 (SD=4.61). Furthermore, students from joint and nuclear families scored means of 40.80 (SD=5.31) and 40.90 (SD=5.42), respectively.

Regarding social skills, boys and girls had mean scores of 42.70 (SD=6.05) and 44.30 (SD=5.45), respectively. Students from private schools scored a mean of 43.00 (SD=6.55), while those from government schools had a slightly higher mean of 43.72 (SD=5.42). The mean scores for students from joint and nuclear families were 42.70 (SD=6.05) and 42.64 (SD=6.25), respectively.

These results provide a synthesized overview of the analysed data and form the basis for subsequent inferential comparisons.

Objective 2: To Compare Academic Skills Between Boys and Girls Students

Table 2: Academic Skills by Gender

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t-Value	Significance Level
Boys	36	40.80	5.31	58	0.10	Not significant
Girls	24	42.05	4.72			

Table 2 highlights the comparison of academic skills across gender. The mean academic scores for boys and girls were 40.80 and 42.05, respectively, indicating only a marginal difference. The computed t -value ($t = 0.10, p > 0.05$) was statistically insignificant, suggesting that gender does not significantly influence academic skill development. Consequently, the null hypothesis stating no significant difference in academic skills between boys and girls is retained.

Objective 3: To Compare Social Skills Between Boys and Girls Students

Table 3: Social Skills by Gender

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Significance Level
Boys	36	42.70	6.05	58	0.20	Not significant
Girls	24	44.30	5.45			

As indicated in Table 3, boys and girls achieved mean social skill scores of 42.70 and 44.30, respectively. The difference between the two groups was not statistically significant ($t = 0.20, p > 0.05$), indicating that gender does not play a significant role in the development of social skills. Therefore, the null hypothesis asserting no significant gender-based difference

Objective 4: To Compare Academic Skills Between Students from Private and Government Schools

Table 4: Academic Skills by School Type

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Significance Level
Public School	24	41.76	4.61	58	0.95	Not significant
Private School	36	40.50	5.83			

Table 4 shows that students in government schools attained a slightly higher mean score ($M=41.76, SD=4.61$) in academic skills compared to their private school counterparts ($M= 40.50, SD=5.83$). However, this difference was not statistically significant ($t=0.95, p > 0.05$). As such, the null hypothesis suggesting no significant difference in academic skill development based on school type is accepted.

Objective 5: To Compare Social Skills Between Students from Private and Government Schools

Table 5: Social Skills by School Type

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Significance Level
Public School	24	43.72	5.42	58	0.46	Not significant
Private School	36	43.00	6.55			

As illustrated in Table 5, students in government schools had a slightly higher mean social skill score ($M=43.72$, $SD=5.42$) than students in private schools ($M=43.00$, $SD=6.55$). The observed t -value ($t = 0.46$, $p > 0.05$) was not significant, indicating negligible difference between the two groups. Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted, suggesting that social skill development does not vary significantly based on the type of school.

Objective 6: To Compare Academic Skills Among Students from Joint and Nuclear Families

Table 6: Academic Skills by Family Structure

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Significance Level
Nuclear Family	39	40.80	5.42	58	0.59	Not significant
Joint Family	21	40.50	5.31			

According to Table 6, students from nuclear and joint families showed nearly equivalent mean scores in academic skills, with 40.92 ($SD=5.42$) and 40.80 ($SD=5.31$), respectively. The t -test revealed no statistically significant difference ($t = 0.59$, $p > 0.05$), thereby supporting the null hypothesis that family structure does not influence the development of academic skills.

Objective 7: To Compare Social Skills Among Students from Joint and Nuclear Families

Table 7: Social Skills by Family Structure

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Significance Level
Nuclear Family	39	40.80	6.05	58	0.22	Not significant
Joint Family	21	42.70	6.26			

As reported in Table 7, the mean scores of social skills for students from joint and nuclear families were 42.70 ($SD=6.05$) and 42.64 ($SD=6.25$), respectively. The analysis indicated no statistically significant difference ($t = 0.22$, $p > 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis that social skill development is not significantly associated with family type is retained.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings affirm that curricular and co-curricular activities significantly enhance academic and social skills among elementary students, consistent with prior studies (e.g., Karthikeyan, 2011; Ahmad, 2020). The lack of significant differences across gender, school type, and family structure suggests that these activities are universally beneficial, promoting equitable skill development. However, some studies (e.g., Dikshit & Kumar, 2017) report no impact on academic achievement, indicating potential contextual variations.

Regarding social skills, the results align with Mancha and Ahmad (2016) but contrast with Rani (2016), who noted benefits for students with intellectual disabilities. These discrepancies highlight the need for further research into specific activity types and student populations.

6. CONCLUSION

Curricular and co-curricular activities are integral to fostering holistic development in elementary students. Their positive impact on academic and social skills, irrespective of demographic factors, underscores their importance in educational curricula. Educators and policymakers should prioritize integrating diverse activities to maximize student engagement and growth.

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