

Abstract 2:

Participation in extracurricular activities and perceived barriers to participation among female management and commerce students of the University of Jaffna

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Background and objective: Extracurricular activities (ECAs) are defined as purely voluntary activities done outside of the academic curriculum. Despite numerous studies regarding participation in ECAs at universities, few studies focus on the participation of female undergraduates in ECAs and the specific barriers they face. These barriers vary by setting and are influenced by numerous factors. This study aims to describe the participation in extracurricular activities of female students of Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Jaffna, and determine the sociodemographic factors and perceived barriers associated with participation.

Methods: This descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out among female students at the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce of University of Jaffna. Stratified random sampling was employed and data were collected with a self-administered questionnaire. Frequencies, percentages and Chi-square tests were used in the analysis with SPSS (v26).

Results: A total of 387 students participated (response rate = 93.25%), with 62.0% (n = 240) reporting that they have participated in ECAs at least once during their university period. Among them, 67.9% organized or participated in cultural/religious events, MACOS, fresher's party etc.; 59.1% were involved in aesthetic activities; 52.9% participated in sports. Most (69.7%) students stated that their participation in ECAs had decreased compared to when they were in school. Significant associations were found between participation status and the course followed (p=0.03), age (p=0.006), religion (p=0.007) and type of transport (p=0.01). Being B.Com students, senior students, Christian or Muslim students and students with access to a vehicle showed greater participation in ECAs. Most students perceived night time safety concerns and long distance between accommodation and facilities as barriers to participation. Many students were concerned regarding time management between ECAs and studies.

Conclusions and recommendations: A significant proportion of female students participated in ECAs. Organization or participation in cultural/religious or social events was higher than that in sports. Measures should be taken to address self-reported barriers such as night-time safety, long distance to facilities and time management issues to increase participation.

Keywords: Extracurricular Activities, Female undergraduates, Jaffna