

Factors Preventing Parents from Enrolling Young Children in Extracurricular Activities

Claudia Orenczuk

Abstract

In this quantitative study, the purpose was to explore the factors that prevent parents of children aged 0-12 in the Region of Peel from enrolling their children into extracurricular activities. This was explored through the sub-themes of parent's perceived benefits of extracurricular activities, parental influences, and income as a factor. Through these themes, it helped answer the main research question of, "What are the factors that prevent parents from enrolling young children into extracurricular activities?" The number of participants that helped answer this research question were 30 (n=30). They answered a 20-question survey. The key findings of this research study through the sub-themes was 67% of participants believed they had basic knowledge of the benefits of extracurricular activities, 63% of physically active parents only had 74% enrolled into extracurricular activities, and time was the number one factor that influenced the participants in enrolling their children into extracurricular activities. Based on these findings, the researcher identified results that supported the literature review which were that parental influences did impact children's enrollment. Literature that contradicted the study was that time was the number one factor instead of money. These could potentially lead to future research.

Introduction

A 2018 statistic from ParticipACTION Canada (2018) for children and youth says that 46% of three to four-year-old children are participating in organized activities. The objective of this study was to gain insights on parents' perspectives on enrollment of their child into extracurricular activities and which factors applied to their decision making. This research study explored the sub-themes of parent's perceived benefits of extracurricular activities, parental influences on children's interest in extracurricular programs, and income as a factor. From the sub-themed results, the principal investigator gathered valuable information that helped answer the overarching research question which is, "What are the factors that prevent parents from enrolling young children into extracurricular activities?"

Literature Review

Benefits of Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular activities offer a wide range of benefits that can help a child flourish developmentally. Caput-Joginica, Loncaric and De Privitellio (2009) and ParticipACTION Canada (2018), have identified many important benefits that help children develop into an enriched healthy child. However, the gap in this literature is that it is unknown if parents are being told these benefits by the people running the programs or if there is information given to parents when they enroll their children into extracurricular activities. This related to the research problem because it was important to know if parents were getting the adequate resources that will help their children benefit from extracurricular activities.

Parental Influences

Cleland, Venn, Fryer, Dwyer and Blizzard (2005) and Rodrigues, Padez and Machado-Rodrigues (2017) says that there is a positive correlation between parental exercise and children's physical activity. Kurnik, Kajtna, Bedenik and Kovac (2013) discussed role modelling physical activity which lead to parental encouragement and support. These are major factors when determining if children will be enrolled into extracurricular activities. This related to the research topic because it was important to know that children will look up to their parents as role models and need influence to get them into extracurricular programs.

Income as a Factor

Many extracurricular activities cost money which would put a burden on parents to have to pay a specific fee to enroll their children to participate in these programs. Powell, Peet, and Peet (2002) say that children who come from higher income families are often in extracurricular activities whereas children from lower income families are seen to be more at home. This relates to the research topic because it was important to know what was preventing parents from enrollment into programs.

This study was important because it brought more awareness to the benefits, influences and financial supports to parents in the Region of Peel.

Methodology

Research Design

This study involved the collection of quantitative data.

Instrument

- 20-question survey.
- Question 1 was about consent to participate in the survey. Questions 2-6 are demographic. 7-9 supported the sub-theme of the benefits of extracurricular activities. Questions 10-12 supported the next sub-theme of parental influences. 13-19 are about the last sub-theme if income was a factor. Question 20 was a concluding question.
- The total completed amount of surveys was 30.

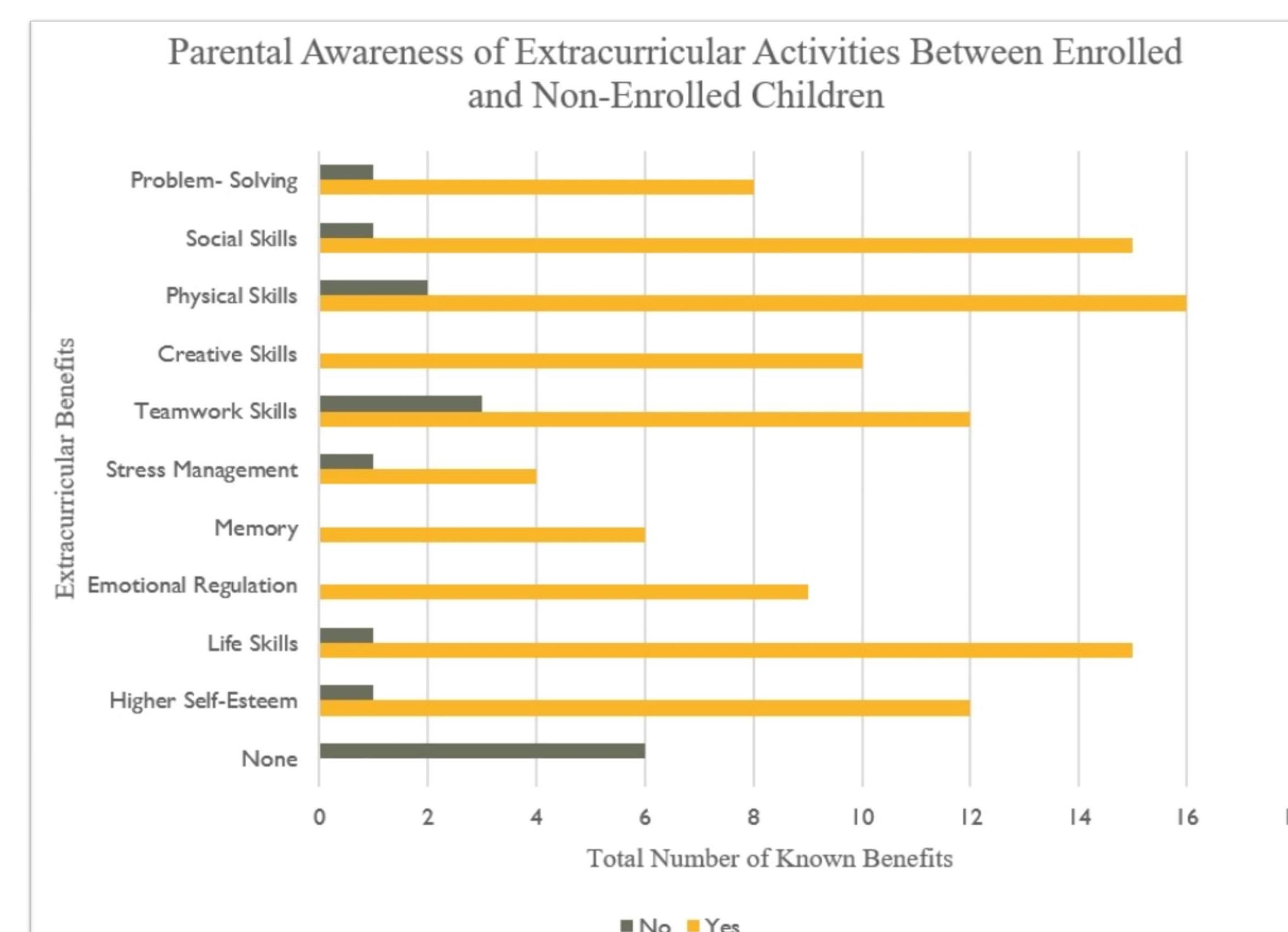
Procedure

- Gained approval from Sheridan Research Ethics Board to complete research study.
- Participants received an invitation through email or social media to complete the online survey.
- The principal investigator obtained approval from the moderator of the social media page so that the survey could be posted.
- Data collection was through Survey Monkey.
- The data was then analyzed the results received from the participants.

Participants

- Participants that were recruited for this research study were parents who have children between the ages of 0-12 in the Region of Peel.
- They were recruited through convenience and snowball sampling. Convenience sampling refers to participants that want to participate in this research study (Creswell & Gutterman, 2019). Snowball sampling refers to participants that have already done the survey that would recommend or suggest other parents that would participate in this study (Creswell & Gutterman, 2019).
- Total number of participants was 30.

Figure 2: The total number of participants that are aware of the benefits of extracurricular activities from both parents whose children are enrolled and not enrolled.

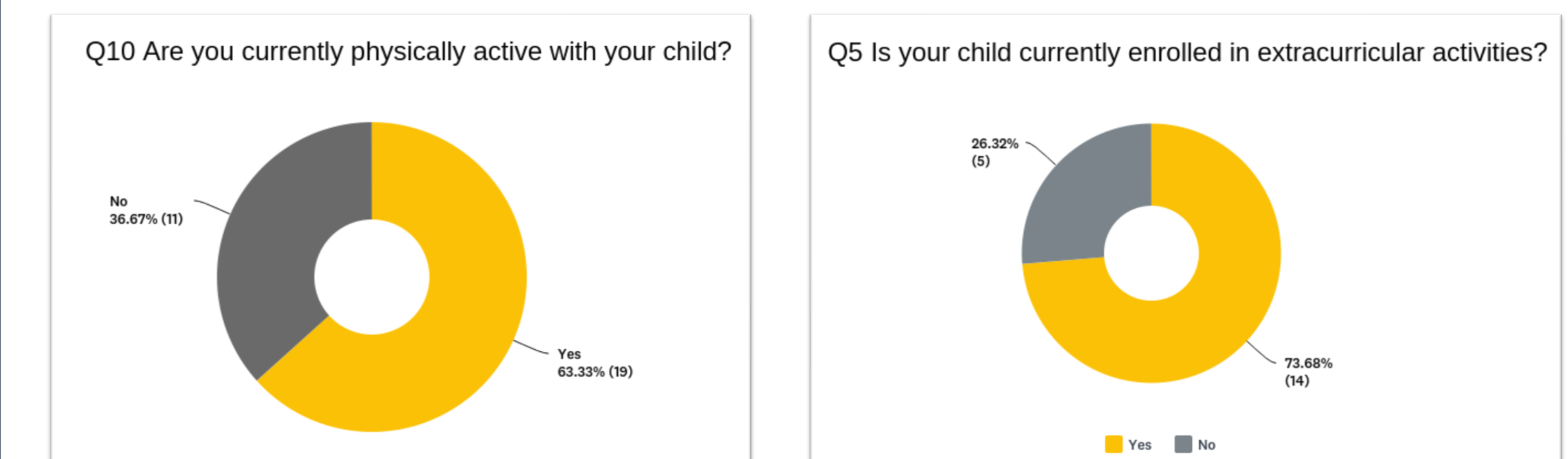


Results and Discussion

Benefits of Extracurricular Activities

There was a difference between which types of benefits children who were enrolled versus which types of benefits children who were not enrolled into extracurricular activities parents were aware of. In figure 2, it shows such a contrast between parents whose children were enrolled into extracurricular activities and the benefits they know, versus the parents whose children were not enrolled into these programs and the benefits they might not know. This supports the literature because those parents who enrolled their children into extracurricular activities had more knowledge and continued to help children gain and learn new skills that could be used throughout the rest of their lives (Kurnik, Kajtna, Bedenik and Kovac (2013). This is relevant to the research topic because the results clearly state that the parents who do not have children enrolled into extracurricular activities do not know as many benefits as those parents who had children enrolled into these programs. It shows that if parents knew more benefits, then they would have their children enrolled into extracurricular activities.

Figure 3: Total percentages of participants who are physically active with their children versus percentages of children enrolled and not enrolled in extracurricular activities.



Parental Influences

The key findings were that 63% of participants are currently physically active with their child. Of those, only 74% are enrolled into extracurricular activities. This supports the literature because Cleland, Venn, Fryer, Dwyer and Blizzard (2005) and Rodrigues, Padez and Machado-Rodrigues (2017) suggest that there is a positive correlation between parental exercise and children's physical activity. However, the percentage of those parents who are physically active but do not have their children enrolled into extracurricular activities, 26%, contradicts this evidence from the literature. The reason for this is because the literature clearly states that there is a positive relationship between active parents and the enrollment of children into extracurricular activities. For the most part, the results are relevant to the research topic because by the parent being physically active, they are more likely to enroll their children into extracurricular activities.

Time and Money

From the data analysis, the key findings for this sub-theme is that time was the number one factor that influenced parents on enrolling their children into extracurricular activities. Time had a higher point score than money. Time had 107 points, whereas money had only 106. The literature clearly represented the second most influential factor from this research study, which was money. Simoncini and Caltabiono (2012) did a study based on money being the number one factor that prevents parents from enrolling into extracurricular activities. It was interesting to learn that from all the previous research studies on the factors that prevent parents from enrolling their children into extracurricular activities money was the number one factor, while in this research study, that was not the case. This is relevant to the research topic because the results clearly show which of the factors prevent parents to enroll their children into extracurricular activities, which are time and money.

Future Research

Based on the results, additional research would be to investigate why there is a substantial gap between parents whose children are not enrolled into extracurricular activities that know little to no benefits while parents whose children are enrolled know many benefits. Since extracurricular activities provide many valuable benefits, it is important for future research.