

Targeting Informal Contexts to Increase Physical Activity levels of School Children

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Abstract

This investigation was conducted in relation to the out-of-school activities of 63 class four children in three Fiji primary schools, an informal context outside of the formal school environment. Out of this group, 33 (52.4%) were male and 30 (47.6%) female. The average age was nine years at the time of the data collection. In addition, 29 (46%) were from rural schools while 34 (54%) were from an urban school. Using a Recall method, children were asked to recover activities that they did after school on the previous day. This was facilitated by their class teachers. Data was analyzed utilizing the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The findings were that when compared with other activities, television viewing has the highest participation after school. It is considered that this would contribute to the diminishing opportunities where children can be physically active. In particular, rural children are 'playing outside' their homes more than urban children and in addition girls significantly participate in more 'household

chores' than boys. This indicates the need to construct interventions to reduce the television viewing habits of particularly urban children.

Introduction

The hours between 2 and 6 p.m., when students are out of school, has always been a concern in terms of what they are doing in comparison to what they should be doing (Belloti, 2005). Interest in this area was more fervent in the early 1900s when educators became interested in the overall development of the child, not just when they are at school (Schreiber, 2002). These 'empty' afternoons have been considered as potentially 'dangerous times' when some students are known to commit crimes, get involved in drugs and other anti-social activities. This is supported by research citing between 3 and 4 p.m. as the period of the day when crimes peak for juveniles. Thus, the focus on after-school programs was the prevention and deterrence of students from such crimes by keeping them occupied (Belloti, 2005; Vinluan, 2005; Williamson & Georgiadis, 1992).

In terms of time for physical activity, television has disturbingly been found to take up a very large share of children's out-of-school time (Evans, 2003; Wells & Blendiger, 1997). It is considered that children left unattended after school may not receive sufficient levels of physical activity (Zhang & Byrd, 2005). In a study by Dale, Corbin, and Dale (2000), they reported the lack of physical activity by most students after school. This is exacerbated further if these students had not been given opportunities for physical activity during the school day. Children need time to unwind after school, to use their imagination and invent their own games. Not having that time can cause stress, and that kind of stress should not be a part of childhood and youth (McCarthy, 2005). In Norway and Finland, children's use of time and place are differently

regarded. In these countries, self-determination out-of-school hours are highly valued. The issue is control of learning, whether students should be adult controlled the rest of the day or given environment to participate in physical activities determined and organized by themselves at their own time (Mayall & Hood, 2001). Globally, children return home to an empty home. Their parents are still at work or elsewhere when the child gets home. These ‘latchkey’ children usually spend one or more hours at home alone. Through this experience various children may develop independence at an early age (Vannoy, 1988). On the other hand, it can lead children to negative habits of juvenile delinquency, drug and alcohol abuse. These hours are critical and whether out-of-school time should be adult imposed or invented by children in a safe environment, parents need to recognize the importance of the after school hours (Vannoy, 1988).

In Fiji, there are concerns about students committing violent robberies and theft (Delaivoni, 2006; Vunileba, 2006). There are concerns about sex crimes (Biumaiono, 2006); and that forty per cent of students had consumed alcohol (Lalakato, 2006). Moreover, schools in certain locations of Fiji are reported to have higher use of drugs and inhalants even at primary schools (Ralogaivau, 2008) and that there are concerns about students having fist fights afterschool (Bola, 2006; Sam, 2008). Therefore, there are a host of other situations children can find themselves in after school. For example, a boy drowned in the Wailoa River in Naitasiri, while swimming with other children. Furthermore, a boy was hit by a car in Nabua, Suva City, and was hospitalised (Chand, 2010a). There is also concern that students are lingering around Suva City after-school up to 6 p.m. without being engaged positively (Ward, 2006).

There was the tragic death of an eight-year-old boy who attempted to gain entry through their family home window and as he was half way through, one of the glass windows broke and

pierced him in the stomach. He died from excessive bleeding. The boy attempted going through the window when he returned home from school and parents were not at home and the door was locked. This happened in Tavua, in the West of Fiji (Volau, 2010). A psychologist raised serious concerns about children as young as 7 to 14 years of age who stay overnight in internet cafes in Suva City (Raicola, 2010). The popular time is after school on Friday to Saturday mornings. This psychologist stresses that parents and the community need to be more thoughtful about where their children are, as these children who stay overnight at internet cafés are mostly from functional homes. Parents should realize that children staying overnight in e-cafes has no benefit. Early association with unsavoury peers, watching porn, and playing games the whole night are obviously not considered developmentally appropriate for children (Raicola, 2010). In addition, there are also children in Fiji who are spending time after school in the sex trade to buy themselves materials for school and other needs. This prompted the Fiji Head Teachers Association to advise parents and guardians to be vigilant about the possibility of this (Wise, 2008). According to an International Labor Organization report, about 109 children are involved in prostitution in Fiji. Children who live with extended families, suffer parental neglect, live in violent homes, and are victims of physical and sexual abuse, are more vulnerable to such exploitation (Elbourne, 2010).

It is not only what children are engaged in out of school but also the danger they are exposed to through the unhealthy behavior of others. Children are often reported being raped often by close relatives and many of who are under-aged children (Bautolu, 2008; Chand, 2010b; Marau, 2008; Ralogaivau, 2009; Singh, 2011). Many children are also not safe at home. A ten-year-old boy fought for his life at the Lautoka Hospital after being kicked and beaten by his father. The Fiji Social Welfare Department is extremely concerned and states that the

Department's statutory responsibility is to ensure that no child under the age of 17 years is exposed to any form of physical or moral danger. The Police and Social Welfare Department are treating the case seriously (Marau, 2010). Cases of child abuse reported to the Fiji Social Welfare Office have increased by 15 per cent (Niumataiwalu, 2009). Between 1995 and 2009, a total of 1008 cases of child neglect were reported to Fiji Social Welfare Department. Out of this, 666 were reports of sexual abuse, 610 of physical abuse, 430 beyond control cases, 314 abandoned and lost cases, and 250 of emotional abuse (Rina, 2010). Clearly, what children do out of school and what is done to them is important. What happens to children out school should be a concern for educators, as is also the concern for others such as parents, the police, or welfare departments. The array of situations children find themselves involved in out of school is justification for an investigation into what they actually do after school.

The following research questions are therefore considered:

- What activities do Fiji primary school children engage in out-of-school?
- Are there gender differences in what activities school children engage in after-school?
- Are there differences in after-school activities between rural and urban primary schools?

Method

Three schools were involved in the study with sample being the class four pupils from each of these schools. An information sheet, explaining the research, was included with the consent forms. Signed consent was taken from the parents of all participating students. The class teacher also explained to pupils about the research and that it will not necessarily disturb their

out-of-school activities. This research project uses an adaptation of the out-of-school recall instrument (Appendix 1) by Wells and Blendiger (1997). The major adaptation was particularly for the timing of the instrument, as schools in Fiji finish classes at 3pm. This instrument was set up to consider the out-of-school behavior of children and to gather information about how children spent their time outside of school from Monday through to Sunday over a two week period. The instrument listed ten mutually exclusive activities and an 'other' to allow children to write further activities that did not fall within those listed. The activities were playing outside, playing sport, playing inside, television watching, reading, playing video games, home chores, homework, shopping, and others. Weekdays and weekends were differentiated with the weekend data collection having longer time frames. Each child completed the data once a day and it was administered to them daily for two weeks. The data collection was completed in the school environment and administered by the class teacher. The first task in the morning was that the class teacher gave the children time to recall and put down what they had done after school on the day before. For consideration is that children may do more than one activity in an hour. The children could indicate this by putting a tick against multiple activities. On the other hand, they may be involved in a single activity for more than an hour. Pupils were able to ask questions if they were not clear about what was being requested of them.

The instrument (Wells & Blendiger, 1997) utilizes a Recall method of gaining information. Participants were asked to recall their activities about the previous day, preferably early in the morning of the following day. This was so as to avoid confusion with the current day's activities (Belton & Donncha, 2010). There are Recall methods such as the 3 Day Physical Activity Recall (3dPAR), in which activities are recalled over three days, administered on a Wednesday (Stanley, Boshoff, & Dollman, 2007). This study however utilized the 24-Hour

Recall (Calabro, Welk, Carriquiry, Nusser, Beyler, & Mathews, 2009), which applies to the collection of information and behavior from only the previous day. This is chosen because recapturing activities done by class fours over three days would be a highly complex cognitive task for them to perform. Recovery of information just in the previous day from 3 p.m. to bed was the preferred procedure. The collection proceeded over the two weeks. The fact that the data was collected in a classroom situation, where the children congregated each day, than a scattered population, enhanced the efficiency of the data collection.

Results

In the study, there were 63 pupils who completed the data collection, of which 33 (52.4%) were male and 30 (47.6%) female. School X's class four had 34 (54%) pupils, School Y 14 (22.2%) pupils and School Z 15 (23.8%) pupils. Most children 44 (69.8%) were nine years of age, 14 (22.2%) were 10 years old, 2 (3.2%) were 8 years of age, 2 (3.2%) were 11 years old, while only 1 (1.6%) child was 12 years of age. Of the sample, 33 (52.4%) are Fiji Indians while 30 (47.6%) are Fijians. There are no children from minority groups in these classes. The Fiji Indian students are Hindus while the Fijians are Christians. 34 (54%) were from an urban school. School X is the urban school in the Nasinu municipality, in the outskirts of Suva City. 29 (46%) of the pupils are from a rural environment in Tailevu, a province of Fiji. School Y and Z were from this rural context. There were two schools chosen, compared to one urban school, because the enrolments are low in these rural areas. This would allow pupil numbers to be more comparable for rural and urban settings.

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted with Location (rural vs urban) as the independent variable and Playing Outside as the dependent variable. A significant effect

was found for Location, $F(1, 61) = 7.405$, $p < .0005$. It is found that pupils located in the urban school, $M = 10.50$, $SD = 5.57$, display significantly lower mean ratings of Playing Outside, out of school, than rural pupils, $M = 15.97$, $SD = 10.05$. A significant effect was also found for Location against Playing Inside, $F(1, 61) = 17.38$, $p < .0005$. It is found that rural pupils, $M = 5.03$, $SD = 3.99$, display significantly lower mean ratings of Playing Inside, after school, than urban children, $M = 11.44$, $SD = 7.41$. ANOVA on other variables were not significant against Location. However, results for Location against Watching Television showed the highest means, rural $M = 18.33$, $SD = 3.99$, and urban school $M = 21.41$, $SD = 13.78$, indicating high television watching in both locations. This is in contrast to Playing Sport, rural $M = 3.21$, $SD = .45$, urban $M = 6.44$, $SD = 6.85$; Playing Video Games rural $M = 3.90$, $SD = 4.05$, urban $M = 7.06$, $SD = 5.99$; or Homework rural $M = 11.21$, $SD = 3.37$; urban $M = 5.59$, $SD = 5.38$. In terms of gender, all other variables were not significant except for Home Chores. A significant effect was found for Gender, $F(1, 61) = 5.83$, $p < .0005$. It is found that males significantly have a lower mean rating for Home Chores $M = 6.67$, $SD = 5.85$, than females $M = 11.30$, $SD = 9.17$.

Discussion

The study aimed to investigate activities children do after school. One of the significant findings of this study was that rural children engaged in 'playing outside' more than their urban counterparts. Potvin, Gauvin, and Nguyen (1997), found a similar situation in a study of 4,768 grade 4 to 6 children of Quebec, Canada, that rural children have the highest rates of readiness for physical activity in comparison to those in suburban and inner city communities. They also noted the relationship between the structural or environmental aspects of communities in which children live that helps to decide the frequency of participation in physical activity. Loucaides,

Chedzoy, and Bennett (2004), after studying 256 Greek-Cypriot school children, explain that the environmental aspect that influences physical activity levels for children of rural schools is that they had more space in the garden and neighborhoods. This is in contrast with urban children who have less space in their own outside environment and were more likely to be transported to where they would be physically active. In rural School Y, for example, children engage in a lot of swimming in their village river after school. The open and wider village environment allows these rural children to be more active and play outside after school than urban children. Using the swimming example, in an urban environment, children would need to pay to use the City Council's pool, which may be a barrier for many children. Therefore, structural and environmental issues help provide explanation to the rural-urban difference in 'playing outside'.

Contrary to findings of rural students being more active than urban children, Plotnikoff, Bercovitz, and Loucaides (2004), in a study of 2, 697 students of parts Canada, found that the prevalence of being overweight and inactivity are higher among rural than urban children. They explained that recreational facilities might be limited in rural communities and may be one of the causes of such outcome. However, rural environments would be different from context to context. The rural context from Canada would obviously be different from the rural context in Fiji or other countries. In the study of 5, 535 English school children Francis (1999) found that rural children have a higher leisure satisfaction level than urban children. Louie and Chan (2003) investigated physical activity trends among young children in Hong Kong schools using pedometry and found that children in the rural district were more active than their counterparts in urban schools. Louie and Chan also identified that time spent outdoors was a prime factor affecting children's physical activity levels. Moreover, Van den Bergh (1997) investigated the nature and quality of living conditions and competence of 1,798 6 to 12 year old primary pupils.

Comparison was made regarding the experiences of children attending school in a village with those of children attending school in a city in Belgium. It was found that children in villages play outside and visit their friends to play more than city children do. Therefore, the finding in Fiji of children playing outside more than city children do is congruent with various studies conducted elsewhere.

Another finding of this study is that of children in the urban school 'play inside' their homes, such as drawing or play with toys, more than rural children do. This certainly has a relationship with the previous finding of rural children 'playing outside' more than their urban counterparts. If rural children spend more time playing outside than urban ones, they would overtly spend less time playing inside their homes, vice versa. However, the finding that was consistent in both rural and urban schools, in all three schools involved in the study, in boys and girls, in both Fijians and Fiji Indians, and receives the highest scoring, is watching television. Watching television is increasingly taking up children's time outside of school. McHale, Crouter, and Tucker (2001) found in the United States, studying 198 pupils, that television viewing was children's most common free-time activity. Wells and Blendinger (1997) also studied 75 United States fifth graders in a semi-rural school and reported that watching television is the most prevalent activity. They added that children are watching television too much and reading too little. This can also be said in this Fiji study, as reading and particularly doing homework received much lower ratings than watching television. This according to Wells and Blendinger (1997) interferes with family interaction. As a result, children are spending lesser and lesser time in meaningful interaction with significant adults and peers and more engaged with screens.

In a comparative study between 8, 912 U.S students and 5, 309 Korean middle school students, Won and Han (2010) found that in both countries, watching television and playing with friends were the most common activities. However, Korean students spend more than 30 per cent of their out-of-school time using the internet and playing computer games on their personal computers, while American students spend 27 per cent of their time out-of-school hours playing sport, work at home or into a paid job. U.S students spend time doubling that of Korean counterparts playing sport out of school. Korean students may lack youth sport programs, leisure activities or have tight schedules for study. In this Fiji study, playing sport outside of school rates very low, in both rural and urban children. The reasons could also be a lack of children's sports programs out of school, a lack of leisure facilities, and/or parents' attitude towards sports. The urban school of the Fiji study are mostly Fiji Indians, whose participation in sports, especially females is very low. Fiji Indian males participate mostly in soccer while Fiji Indian females are barely represented in community and representative sports. In the nationwide Fiji school athletics competition in 2010, for example, of the 128 gold medals presented, 97 per cent of it were received by Fijians while 3 per cent were awarded to Fiji Indians, all of whom were boys (Khan, 2010). Khan suggests that parents may need to change their mindset towards an appreciation of the importance of sports to children's development. The low participation rate in sport after school among children in this study may reflect a low participation rate for many children generally in Fiji. It also indicates the salience of providing structures within the community in order to promote developmentally appropriate and inclusive sports programs so that children have an array of options to be physically active.

Patriarca, Giuseppe, Albano, Marinelli, and Angelillo (2009), in their study of 11 to 16 year olds in a region of Italy suggested that immediate and comprehensive actions needed to be

taken in order to reduce the time that children's time were spending on watching television. Chen, Liou, and Wu (2008), who studied 660 Taiwanese adolescents, found that excessive television viewing is negatively associated with adopting health-promoting behaviors such as health responsibility and exercise behavior. They emphasized that parents need to be educated on how to become a healthy electronic media user. Healthy electronic use for both parents and children is imperative, as Jago, Fox, Page, Brockman, and Thompson (2010) found that high television viewing by parents is associated with high television viewing among children. This was in an investigation of year six children and their parents from 40 primary schools in the United Kingdom. Jago and colleagues suggest that changing the television environment at home may be important in reducing television viewing among children. A simple but practical suggestion made by Sonnevile and Gortmaker (2008) is to avoid having meals such as the dinner in front of the television, but rather have it properly on a dinner table away from the television. Sonnevile and Gortmaker suggested this because television watching is related to an increase in students' body mass index (BMI). Their investigation of 538 students of Boston, United States, revealed a daily energy surplus associated with watching television. Other activities such as reading and doing homework were neutral in their relationship with energy surplus, except for television watching.

Increased food intake during television viewing, especially of unhealthy snacks, result in incremental increases in BMI that contributes to eventual obesity. Parson, Manor, and Power (2008) conducted a longitudinal study of 11, 301, 16-year-old English, Scottish and Wales youths. BMI was measured following 45 years. They found that frequent television viewing during adolescence was associated with greater BMI accumulation and obesity during adulthood. Earlier television habits were likely to result in unhealthy weight gains through to adulthood. A

study of similar design by Hancox and Poulton (2006) of 1, 037 children aged 3 and then later at age 15 in Dunedin, New Zealand, also uncovered television viewing as a significant predictor of increased BMI and of being overweight in childhood. Thus, the highest occurrence of pupil activities after school in the three Fiji schools being studied is watching television, poses a cause for concern. The obesity levels of Fiji children between 1993 to 2004 have more than doubled (Senilagakali, 2006). A contributing factor could be increasing time spent on watching television, which is a sedentary activity in itself. Not only is it a sedentary behavior but, as has been mentioned previously, it is also a behavior associated with intake of energy surplus and increased BMI. Therefore, television viewing among children should be a valuable target for strategies to reduce obesity levels. Studies of what children do after school is important as knowledge of how students spend their hours out of school can assist educators and policymakers to intervene appropriately. Children's television environment at home is a useful venue for intervention.

A dimension of television watching that is also associated with increased BMI and obesity is food advertising targeted at children and youth. As Zimmerman and Bell (2010) explain that there are three main avenues in which television encourages obesity. Children are exposed to food advertising of goods that are low or without nutritional value, it displaces time that could have been used for physical activity and active play, and that television promotes eating while viewing. In terms of food advertising, there needs to be relevant policies established to limit advertising obesogenic foodstuff that is targeted at children. Relevant policies are important because Kelly, Halford, Boyland, and Chapman (2010) compared television advertising patterns in 13 countries over 5 continents and found that the marketing of unhealthy products was consistent throughout these nations and continents. Children are exposed to high

volumes of food advertising on television. These advertisements influence children's food preferences, purchase requests, and consumption. Advertising of unhealthy foodstuff to children allows an obesity-promoting environment. Therefore, it is important that policies are formulated and implemented vigorously against obesogenic food advertising on television. In order for changes to occur, Fiji and Pacific countries must formulate comprehensive interventions, as such programs can increasingly be limited by forces of globalization. This is so because transnational corporations, which have developed brand names and know their marketing strategies, have adapted these to local tastes. These corporations employ aggressive marketing strategies to consumers, which also mean that countries must attempt to promote healthy lifestyles vigorously. This is particularly going to be a huge task, when we consider the fact that the combined spending on the advertising of Coca-Cola and PepsiCo, was more than the entire budget of the WHO for the years 2002-03 (Nestle, 2006).

Such transnational corporations cause 600 million urban-based 5-14 year olds to spend more than US\$200 billion each year on themselves. This in turn influences parental spending, a large proportion of which is spent on fast food, soft drinks, cigarettes, and alcohol (Beaglehole & Yach, 2003). Beaglehole and Yach further emphasize that these transnational companies exploit weak regulatory environments and use deceptive advertising to reach their target. For instance, transnational tobacco companies see the potential of growth in sales in developing countries and aggressively pursue marketing campaigns particularly those targeted at women and youth. Therefore, it is important that there are advertising restrictions, control of packaging and labeling, and product regulation. In Fiji, Coca-Cola sponsors national school sport tournaments on a regular basis. These Fiji school tournaments get television coverage. They target young

people as a market so that they establish loyalty early. Pillai (2007) commented that while Fiji Coke Games in athletics are enjoyable to watch it is also a graphic example of transnational commercialization and globalization. Obesity-promoting environments need to be reduced, as obesity is the most powerful risk factor for diabetes, created by excessive caloric intake, changing diet, and physical inactivity (WHO, 2003). Pacific Islands traditional diets of staple root vegetables (sweet potato, taro, yams, cassava) that are high in fibre and rich in starch, are increasingly replaced by manufactured food that is low in fibre.

Nauru, with a prevalence rate of 34.4 per cent for diabetes, is one of the highest ever recorded in the world (Coyne, 2000; Serjeantson, 1989; WHO, 2003). However, when Nauru's health reports from 1923 to 1966 were investigated only one case of diabetes in 1937 was found (Serjeantson, 1989). This is an example of the enormity of the change in the Pacific Islands towards high non-communicable disease incidences. Rates of diabetes in many Pacific Island Countries are nine to ten times higher than Western countries (Coyne, 2000; WHO, 2003). Even more worrying is, of the top ten most obese countries in the world, Pacific Island Countries make up eight of those (Streib, 2007). These are not only statistics but also real issues that need focused attention from all Pacific Island nations. The fact is that chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease are not transmittable via an infectious agent, in the way infectious diseases ravaged the islands before, and mostly arrested effectively today. But the behaviors that predispose to these non-communicable diseases can be transmitted via advertising, product marketing and social interactions (Huynen, Martens, & Hilderink, 2005). Thus, sustained, creative and relevant communications strategies are required to penetrate the primary settings

such as the home, pre-schools, and schools to curb unhealthy food advertisements aimed at children.

Another concern in television viewing relates to the inappropriate content that children are watching. In Fiji, there is concern over certain television programs put on during prime time when children are still awake, such as *The Secret Life of an American Teenager*. This program, according to Sugutanaivalu (2011), depicts sexual behavior that parents would not like their children to be engaged in. Sugutanaivalu also stresses that with increasing incidences of teenage pregnancy and rape in Fiji, such television programs do not contribute to the moral development of children. Morrell (2011) supports the sentiments of Sugutanaivalu, adding that many programs aired by Fiji television during early evenings such as *Shortland Street* and *Groove Thang* have negative influence on children. Morrell suggests that Fiji parents and the viewing public should have a Mass Media Network to advocate programs that are healthy for children. Singh (2011) also advocates regulating television in Fiji to enable programs children watch to have children's contents on science, education, drama, sports, and other appropriate programs that children and parents can watch comfortably together. A major obstacle, according to Lockington (2011) is that the Fiji Censor Board only censors movies for cinemas but not for television programs. This Censor Board should also be responsible for censoring television programs.

Moreover, 69 per cent of indigenous Fijian girls have indicated in a survey to having dieted as a means of emulating television characters. They often articulate the desire to lose weight to be like Western television characters (Elbourne, 2011). Anschutz, Engels, Leeuwe, and Strien (2009), who studied 245 girls aged 7 to 9, also found that watching soaps and music television is related to higher thin ideal internalization. A high thin ideal internalization leads to

higher body dissatisfaction and restrained eating. Unrealistic Western stereotypes of female attractiveness influences young people's bulimic eating behavior. These implications of excessive television viewing and the high incidence of television watching in this Fiji study indicates that innovative ways of steering children away from commercial television and regulated control of television contents, may have meaningful effect in reducing childhood obesity and other negative impacts.

The only significant difference between the genders, against all variables in this Fiji study, is that girls are helping out in 'household chores' more than boys do. Assaad, Levison, and Zibani (2010) also found in Egypt that girls substantially do more domestic work than boys are. They also were able to connect the lower rates of school attendance of Egyptian girls to the much higher rates of household chores. Hsin (2007) who studied 2, 929 Indonesian students concluded that by 18 years of age, girls spend an hour more than boys in daily chores and as a result, have significantly lesser leisure time. Across all age groups, Indonesian girls also do more household chores than boys do. However, when gender gap in Indonesia in schooling is investigated, unlike the Egyptian study, it is not significant. Indonesian girl's higher participation in household chores than boys does not affect their attendance at school, while it does in the Egyptian study. The Fiji study does not investigate the relationship between household chores and school attendance, but for a developing country, Fiji's literacy rate is more than 92 per cent and a primary school enrollment of 98 per cent (Prasad, 2005), are rates other developing countries can only envy. It can be said then that the higher participation in household chores by Fiji girls than boys would not affect girls' school attendance.

Dunlevy (2010) reports that one in three Australian teenage boys are doing absolutely no household chores. Increasingly, more teenage girls also do not want to contribute to household chores. If their brothers do not help in household chores, why should they? This is what many girls in Australia ask. Girls are catching up to their brothers in Australia when it comes to dodging household chores (Lunn, 2010). The situation is similar in Spain. Pena, Mendez, and Torio (2010) reported that children who participate in household chores are becoming occasional and scant. If they do so, it is usually centred on 'their own' task than 'communal' chores that benefits the household. This is not conducive to building a family environment that is democratic, equitable, participatory, and tolerant. Parents should not allow a situation that leads children to being incapable of coping independently. Schoefer (2005) emphasizes that housework can also teach children important life lessons. Household tasks can give children the satisfaction of contributing to the greater good of the family. It can also be a way to show respect for other family members, cultivate an appreciation of the home, and develop independence. Schoefer also suggests that household chores need to be distributed evenly for daughters and sons. Furthermore, it is important to compliment children when they contribute to housework such as washing, cooking, or watering plants.

Conclusion

It may be said that out of the various developments in the last millennium, there is probably none of greater impact on many children than television. Children around the globe spend enormous time on television and electronic media. It is no different in Fiji. The paper had thought that television viewing may be lower in the sampled rural schools, but it is just as high as the urban children do. As access to electricity and television gets to rural communities, watching television has become children's most popular after school activity in both rural and urban

situations. As children spend excessive time watching television after school, the danger of relying on the media for social norms and values is an issue. Transnational corporations and advertisers target children in food advertisements and television viewing itself is associated with energy surplus intake and increased gain in BMI. Control of the television environment can help reduce the obesity trends by getting children to be involved in activities that shape positive development among children. The act of watching television is a sedentary activity so finding ways to channel interests into active play and household activities, such as helping to clean the lawn and gardens, will go a long way into promoting an active lifestyle. Children are increasingly being indoors in urban environments than playing outside. Sports clubs can provide a venue for children to be physically active after school. Cities and towns can create environments and recreation spaces by which children can use to play. Interventions can, therefore, be made at home, schools, towns and villages, and at government levels to ensure children have opportunity to be physically active after school.

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Appendix 1

Out-of-School Activities Form

Student's name: _____ Date: _____ Day: _____

School: _____ Class: _____

Weekdays

	3-4 pm	4-5 pm	5-6 pm	6-7 pm	7-8 pm	8-9 pm	9-10 pm
PO							
PI							
GP							
TV							
RD							
WV							
PV							
HC							
SH							
HW							
Others	Please write other activities here: _____						

Out-of-School Activities Form

Weekends

	8-10am	10-12pm	12-2pm	2-4pm	4-6pm	6-8pm	8-10pm
PO							
PI							
GP							
TV							
RD							
WV							
PV							
HC							
SH							
HW							
Others	Please write other activities here: _____						

PO – Playing Outside; PI – Playing Inside; GP – Games and Puzzles; TV – Watching television; RD – Reading; WV – Watching Videotapes/DVD; PV – Playing Video games; HC – Doing House Chores; HW – Doing Homework; SH – Shopping.