

CURIOUS MINDS: Pupil Premium as a Predictor of Engagement

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INTRODUCTION

Starting with the research project title of “Who Participates and Who Misses Out?”, I was tasked to analyse data collected by Curious Minds to find interesting and key trends that may be used by them to further their work as a bridge organisation.

“CURIOUS MINDS IS DEDICATED TO IMPROVING THE LIVES OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH GREAT ART AND CULTURE”
(<https://curiousminds.org.uk/>)

OBJECTIVES

This research project aimed to find out if a correlation exists between disadvantage and engagement with the organisation. The idea was sourced from sociological research showing arts and cultural education to have positive effects, contributing to reducing the attainment gap, as well as theory claiming the disadvantaged being less likely to have the means or opportunity to access arts and culture.

As Curious Minds work to deliver arts and cultural opportunities for young people, and aim to do so for all, this quantitative project is useful to their mission. The findings acted as an indicator of areas that are most disadvantaged and therefore are in the most urgent need of accessing arts and cultural education, in order to not miss out even more compared to their advantaged peers.

METHOD

The variables analysed were the percentage of Pupil Premium (PP) students in each school engaging with Curious Minds, added and divided to create a mean for the geographical sub-region they are situated in, and the average percentage of pupils accessing Free School Meals (FSM) per geographical sub-region as found by the Department for Education.

Curious Minds had Pupil Premium data for most schools engaging with the organisation in their database, as well as those yet to, which allowed me to access data without any issues. The Department for Education data regarding FSM was readily available online, and hence a young person must be eligible for FSM in order to qualify as a PP pupil, it made for a sound dataset to compare to Curious Minds data in this project.

Recoding took place prior to starting the Excel analysis, where educational institutions that are not eligible to be granted Pupil Premium based on their pupil population, and institutions outside the North West were removed from the sample. Data blanks were substituted with zeros, and recoding to create 23 geographical sub-regions was conducted.

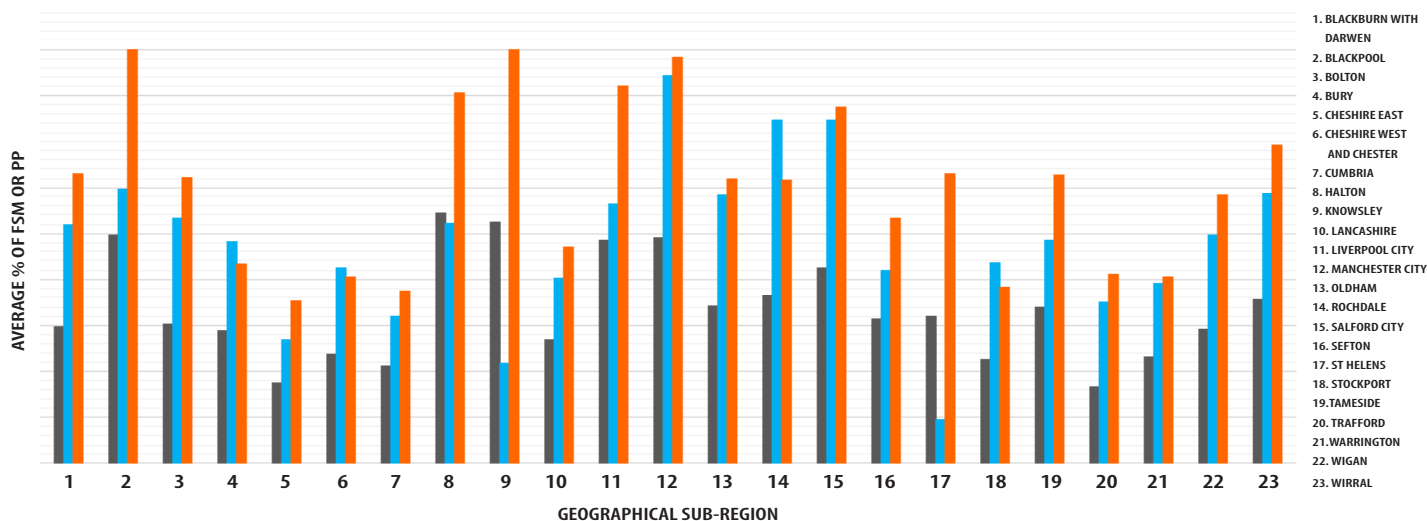
For the analysis itself, comparisons were ran between the above mentioned variables – if the mean percentage of Pupil Premium pupils in schools engaging with Curious Minds was greater than the FSM percentage for that region as presented by the Department for Education, the data showed the educational institutions engaging with Curious Minds to be classed as disadvantaged.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

After the data analysis it was determined that there is a correlation between engagement and disadvantage as seen in Curious Minds collected data, however this is only entirely true to schools already engaging. When looking at the schools not engaging with Curious Minds, although the majority follows the trend and solidify this correlation, there are exceptions. Therefore, this must be interpreted with caution.

Furthermore, I believe this analysis must be repeated with a more secure data set, as like mentioned the used data consisted of some blanks and the information may have been outdated. This could be a reason to why not all not engaging with Curious Minds schools follow the trend that suggests the correlation between disadvantage and engagement.

FIGURE 1: BAR GRAPH SHOWING THE AVERAGE PERCENTAGES OF (IN THIS ORDER) FSM PUPILS PER GEOGRAPHICAL SUB-REGION AS REPORTED BY DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION, AND THE AVERAGE PERCENTAGES OF PUPIL PREMIUM FOR BOTH NON-ENGAGING AND ENGAGING SCHOOLS WITH CURIOUS MINDS, PER GEOGRAPHICAL SUB-REGION.



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