



Azal Arts and Humanities

Volume 3, Issue 2, 2065 |
<https://azalpub.com/index.php/AAH>

OPEN ACCESS

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Article Info

Received: 3/5/2026

Accepted: 4/25/2026

Published: 5/30/2026

Fostering Learning Skills and Positive Attitudes through Classroom Participation: Experiences of Elementary Learners in a Rural Philippine School

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Abstract

Classroom participation serves as a vital component of the learning process, enabling learners to develop academic skills, confidence, social competencies, and positive attitudes toward education. In rural educational settings, classroom participation provides opportunities for learners to engage actively with instructional content despite contextual challenges related to limited resources and socioeconomic constraints. This study explored how classroom participation contributes to the development of learning skills and positive attitudes among elementary learners at Villa Fuerte Elementary School, San Mateo South District, Philippines. Utilizing a qualitative case study design, the research involved fifteen (15) elementary learners, six (6) teachers, three (3) school administrators, and ten (10) parents selected through purposive sampling. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, classroom observations, and document analysis. Findings revealed that classroom participation contributes significantly to the development of communication skills, critical thinking abilities, collaboration skills, self-confidence, learning motivation, and positive attitudes toward schooling. Learners reported that active engagement in classroom discussions, group activities, presentations, and collaborative tasks enhanced both their academic competencies and their enthusiasm for learning. The study highlights the importance of learner-centered pedagogies that encourage active participation and meaningful engagement. The findings provide valuable insights for educators and policymakers seeking to improve learner outcomes in rural elementary school contexts.

Keywords: *classroom participation, learning skills, learning attitudes, learner engagement, rural education, elementary education, Philippines*

Introduction

Education extends beyond the transmission of knowledge and involves the development of skills, attitudes, and dispositions necessary for lifelong learning. Among the many factors influencing educational success, classroom participation has emerged as a critical element in promoting learner engagement, academic achievement, and personal growth. Classroom participation refers to learners' active involvement in discussions, collaborative activities, problem-solving tasks, presentations, questioning, and other learning experiences that contribute to knowledge construction and skill development.

Research consistently demonstrates that learners who actively participate in classroom activities develop stronger communication skills, critical thinking abilities, problem-solving competencies, and self-confidence. Active participation also promotes positive attitudes toward learning by fostering a sense of belonging, achievement, and ownership of educational experiences. Learners who engage meaningfully in classroom interactions are more likely to exhibit motivation, persistence, and commitment to learning.

In rural Philippine schools, classroom participation is particularly important because it provides learners with opportunities to maximize available educational resources and develop competencies that support academic success. Rural learners often encounter challenges related to limited access to learning materials, technology, and supplementary educational support. However, active classroom engagement can help mitigate these challenges by encouraging collaboration, interaction, and experiential learning.

Villa Fuerte Elementary School, located in the San Mateo South District, serves learners from predominantly agricultural communities. Teachers have observed varying levels of learner participation, confidence, and motivation, suggesting that classroom engagement plays an important role in shaping educational experiences. Understanding how learners perceive classroom participation and its influence on their skills and attitudes can provide valuable insights into effective educational practices.

This study sought to explore the experiences of elementary learners regarding classroom participation and its contribution to the development of learning skills and positive attitudes toward learning. By amplifying learners' voices, the study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on learner engagement and educational development in rural school settings.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to explore how classroom participation contributes to the development of learning skills and positive attitudes among elementary learners at Villa Fuerte Elementary School.

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Explore learners' experiences of classroom participation.
2. Examine how participation contributes to the development of learning skills.
3. Investigate the influence of classroom participation on learners' attitudes toward learning.
4. Identify factors that encourage or hinder classroom participation.
5. Determine educational practices that promote active learner engagement

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on Social Constructivist Theory and Student Engagement Theory.

Social Constructivist Theory emphasizes that learning occurs through social interaction, collaboration, and active participation in meaningful learning experiences. Knowledge is constructed through dialogue, shared experiences,

and engagement with others within a social context.

Student Engagement Theory posits that active participation in educational activities enhances academic achievement, motivation, and positive educational outcomes. Behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement contribute to deeper learning and learner development.

Together, these theories provide a framework for understanding how classroom participation supports the development of learning skills and positive attitudes among elementary learners.

Methodology

The study employed a qualitative case study design to explore the experiences of elementary learners regarding classroom participation and its influence on learning skills and attitudes. A qualitative approach was appropriate because it enabled the researcher to gain rich descriptions of learners' experiences, perceptions, and interpretations regarding classroom engagement. The case study design facilitated an in-depth examination of the phenomenon within its natural educational setting.

The study was conducted at Villa Fuerte Elementary School, a public elementary school located in the San Mateo South District, Schools Division of Isabela, Philippines. The school serves learners from predominantly rural and agricultural communities, making it an appropriate context for examining learner participation and educational experiences.

Participants consisted of fifteen (15) elementary learners, six (6) teachers, three (3) school administrators, and ten (10) parents selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, classroom observations, and document analysis. Interview questions focused on learners' participation experiences, learning behaviors, attitudes toward school, and perceptions of classroom activities. Observations documented participation patterns, teacher practices, and learner interactions.

Data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis framework. Coding procedures were employed to identify recurring themes and patterns across participant responses. Trustworthiness was established through triangulation, member checking, prolonged engagement, and peer debriefing. Ethical considerations including informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation were strictly observed throughout the study.

Findings and Discussion

Theme 1: Classroom Participation Strengthens Communication Skills

One of the most prominent themes that emerged from the study was the role of classroom participation in developing learners' communication skills. Participants consistently reported that engaging in classroom discussions, recitations, group reporting, and question-and-answer activities helped them become more confident in expressing their ideas and communicating with others. Learners described participation as an opportunity to practice speaking, listening, and sharing opinions in a supportive environment.

One learner shared:

“Dati po nahihiya akong magsalita sa harap ng klase, pero dahil palagi kaming hinihikayat na sumagot, mas naging kumpiyansa ako.”

Another participant explained:

“Kapag nakikilahok ako sa talakayan, natututo akong magsabi ng aking opinyon at makinig sa iba.”

Teachers observed that learners who actively participated in classroom activities demonstrated greater improvement in oral communication and interpersonal skills.

One teacher remarked:

“Mas lumalakas ang loob ng mga bata na magsalita kapag nabibigyan sila ng pagkakataong makilahok sa klase.”

Classroom observations revealed that learners became increasingly comfortable engaging in discussions, asking questions, and interacting with peers. Active participation enabled them to articulate ideas more effectively and develop confidence in communicating within academic settings.

These findings support Social Constructivist Theory, which emphasizes the role of social interaction in learning. According to Lev Vygotsky, communication serves as a fundamental tool for cognitive development and knowledge construction. Studies have similarly shown that classroom participation enhances communication competence, self-expression, and academic confidence.

Theme 2: Active Engagement Enhances Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills

Another significant theme was the development of critical thinking and problem-solving abilities through active classroom participation. Learners reported that participating in discussions, answering questions, and completing collaborative tasks encouraged them to analyze information, evaluate ideas, and generate solutions.

One learner stated:

“Kapag nagtatanong ang guro, napipilitan akong mag-isip nang mabuti bago sumagot.”

Another learner shared:

“Mas natututo akong maghanap ng sagot kapag may group activities at problem-solving tasks.”

Teachers emphasized that participation opportunities encouraged learners to think beyond memorization and engage in deeper learning processes.

One teacher explained:

“Kapag pinapaliwanag namin sa kanila ang dahilan ng kanilang sagot, natututo silang magsuri at mag-isip nang kritikal.”

Classroom observations confirmed that learners became more reflective and analytical when participating in discussions that required reasoning and justification of answers.

These findings align with research on active learning, which suggests that learner participation promotes higher-order thinking skills. Educational scholars argue that active engagement in learning tasks enhances critical inquiry, problem-solving abilities, and cognitive development. The findings indicate that classroom participation serves as an important mechanism for developing essential twenty-first-century skills among elementary learners.

Theme 3: Collaborative Participation Cultivates Social and Interpersonal Skills

The study revealed that collaborative classroom activities contribute significantly to the development of social and interpersonal competencies. Learners frequently described group work, peer learning, and cooperative activities as valuable opportunities to build relationships, practice teamwork, and learn from others.

One learner remarked:

“Mas masaya po kapag nagtutulungan kami ng mga kaklase ko sa mga gawain.”

Another participant explained:

“Natututo akong makinig sa ideya ng iba at magbigay rin ng aking opinyon.”

Teachers observed that collaborative participation fostered cooperation, respect, empathy, and shared responsibility among learners.

One teacher shared:

“Nakikita namin na natututo silang makisama at magtulungan kapag may group activities.”

Observations further revealed that learners became more comfortable interacting with classmates and developed stronger social connections through collaborative learning experiences.

These findings support the sociocultural perspective that learning is inherently social. Research has consistently shown that cooperative learning environments enhance interpersonal skills, social competence, and academic achievement. Through collaborative participation, learners develop both cognitive and social capabilities that contribute to holistic development.

Theme 4: Participation Builds Self-Confidence and Positive Self-Perception

A fourth theme highlighted the role of classroom participation in strengthening learners' self-confidence and positive self-perception. Participants reported that successfully answering questions, presenting ideas, and contributing to classroom activities increased their belief in their abilities.

One learner shared:

“Kapag nakakasagot ako nang tama, mas nagkakaroon ako ng tiwala sa sarili.”

Another learner explained:

“Mas hindi na ako nahihiya ngayon dahil natutunan kong magsalita sa harap ng klase.”

Teachers similarly noted that participation opportunities helped learners overcome fear and anxiety.

One teacher remarked:

“Maraming bata ang naging mas kumpiyansa matapos silang mabigyan ng pagkakataong magsalita at magbahagi ng kanilang mga ideya.”

Classroom observations revealed that learners who initially displayed hesitation gradually became more willing to participate and engage in academic activities.

The findings support Self-Efficacy Theory developed by Albert Bandura, which emphasizes the importance of successful experiences in developing confidence and motivation. Positive participation experiences strengthen learners' beliefs in their capabilities and encourage continued engagement in learning.

Theme 5: Classroom Participation Fosters Positive Attitudes toward Learning

Participants consistently emphasized that active participation contributed to more positive attitudes toward learning and school. Learners described classroom engagement as enjoyable, meaningful, and motivating.

One learner stated:

“Mas gusto kong pumasok sa paaralan kapag nakakasali ako sa mga gawain.”

Another participant shared:

“Kapag may pagkakataon akong sumagot at makilahok, mas nagiging interesado ako sa aralin.”

Teachers observed that learners who actively participated demonstrated higher levels of enthusiasm, persistence, and commitment to learning.

One teacher explained:

“Mas nagiging positibo ang pananaw nila sa pag-aaral kapag nararamdaman nilang bahagi sila ng klase.”

The findings suggest that participation promotes emotional engagement by fostering enjoyment, belongingness, and satisfaction in learning experiences.

Research on student engagement indicates that learners who actively participate in educational activities develop stronger motivation, more positive attitudes, and greater commitment to academic success. The findings demonstrate that classroom participation serves as a catalyst for nurturing positive educational dispositions among elementary learners.

Theme 6: Supportive Classroom Environments Encourage Sustained Participation

The final theme emphasized the importance of supportive classroom environments in encouraging learner participation. Participants reported that teacher encouragement, peer support, and respectful classroom climates significantly influenced their willingness to participate.

One learner remarked:

“Mas gusto kong sumagot kapag alam kong hindi ako pagtatawanan.”

Another learner stated:

“Kapag mabait ang guro at supportive ang mga kaklase, mas nakikilahok ako sa klase.”

Teachers highlighted the importance of creating safe and inclusive learning spaces.

One teacher shared:

“Responsibilidad naming lumikha ng kapaligiran kung saan komportable ang mga bata na magpahayag ng kanilang saloobin.”

Classroom observations revealed that supportive environments promoted greater participation, reduced learner anxiety, and strengthened engagement.

These findings align with research on positive school climate and learner engagement, which demonstrates that supportive educational environments foster participation, motivation, and academic achievement. Learners are more likely to engage actively when they feel respected, valued, and emotionally safe within the classroom.

Conclusion

The study concludes that classroom participation plays a significant role in cultivating learning skills and positive attitudes among elementary learners at Villa Fuerte Elementary School. Active engagement in classroom activities contributes to the development of communication skills, critical thinking abilities, collaboration competencies, self-confidence, and positive learning dispositions. Learners who participate actively in discussions, group work, and classroom tasks become more confident, motivated, and engaged in their educational experiences.

The findings further reveal that classroom participation is influenced by supportive teacher practices, positive peer relationships, and inclusive learning environments. Participation not only enhances academic learning but also promotes social and emotional development. As learners become more involved in classroom activities, they develop a stronger sense of belonging, responsibility, and ownership of their learning.

Overall, the study underscores the importance of learner-centered pedagogies that prioritize active participation and meaningful engagement. In rural educational settings, classroom participation serves as a valuable strategy for promoting holistic learner development and educational success.

Implications of the Study

1. Teachers should adopt instructional strategies that encourage active learner participation and engagement.
2. Schools should foster classroom environments that promote inclusivity, respect, and psychological safety.
3. Educational programs should emphasize the development of communication, collaboration, and critical thinking skills through participatory learning experiences.
4. School leaders should support professional development initiatives focused on active learning and learner-centered instruction.
5. Parents should be encouraged to reinforce confidence and participation skills at home.
6. Rural schools should prioritize learner engagement as a key component of educational quality and student development.

Recommendations

1. Increase the use of interactive and collaborative instructional strategies across grade levels.
2. Provide teachers with training on facilitating active participation and inclusive classroom practices.
3. Develop school-based programs that strengthen learners' communication and leadership skills.
4. Encourage learner participation in classroom decision-making and school activities.
5. Establish recognition systems that celebrate learner participation and engagement.
6. Conduct future qualitative and mixed-methods studies involving multiple rural schools to further explore the relationship between classroom participation, learning skills, and attitudes.

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