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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Classroom Participation as a Pathway to Learner Development: Exploring Academic Skills and Learning Attitudes among Elementary Pupils

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Abstract

Classroom participation is widely recognized as a critical component of effective teaching and learning. Through active engagement in classroom activities, learners develop academic competencies, social skills, and positive attitudes that contribute to educational success. In elementary education, participation serves as a foundation for cognitive, emotional, and behavioral development, particularly among young learners who are in the formative stages of acquiring essential learning skills. This study explored how classroom participation contributes to learner development among Grade 3 pupils at Sinamar Norte Elementary School. Using a qualitative case study design, the study involved fifteen (15) Grade 3 learners, five (5) teachers, one (1) school administrator, and ten (10) parents selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, classroom observations, and document analysis. Findings revealed that classroom participation enhances communication skills, strengthens academic competencies, builds learner confidence, promotes collaborative learning, fosters positive attitudes toward learning, and encourages self-directed learning behaviors. The study highlights the importance of creating participatory classroom environments that support holistic learner development. Findings provide valuable insights for teachers, school leaders, and policymakers seeking to strengthen learner engagement and educational outcomes in rural elementary schools.

Keywords: *classroom participation, learner development, academic skills, learning attitudes, elementary education, learner engagement, qualitative research*

Introduction

Learner development is a central goal of elementary education. Beyond academic achievement, schools are expected to nurture learners who possess the skills, attitudes, and dispositions necessary for lifelong learning and meaningful participation in society. One important factor that contributes to learner development is classroom participation. Participation enables learners to become active contributors to the learning process rather than passive recipients of information.

Classroom participation encompasses a variety of activities including answering questions, engaging in discussions, collaborating with peers, presenting ideas, participating in group tasks, and interacting with teachers during instruction. Through these experiences, learners acquire communication skills, critical thinking abilities, social competencies, and positive attitudes toward learning. Educational scholars have consistently emphasized that active participation promotes deeper understanding, greater retention of knowledge, and stronger learner motivation.

In the Philippine educational context, learner-centered approaches are strongly encouraged through the Department of Education's curriculum reforms. These reforms emphasize active learning, collaboration, inquiry, and meaningful engagement. For Grade 3 learners, classroom participation is particularly important because this developmental stage marks the transition from basic literacy acquisition toward more complex learning tasks that require communication, reasoning, and independent thinking.

Sinamar Norte Elementary School serves learners from a rural community where educational opportunities are shaped by local social, economic, and cultural realities. Teachers at the school have observed that learners who actively participate in classroom activities often demonstrate stronger academic performance and more positive attitudes toward learning. However, there remains a need to understand how participation influences learner development from the perspectives of learners themselves.

This study explored how classroom participation contributes to the development of academic skills and learning attitudes among Grade 3 learners at Sinamar Norte Elementary School. By examining learners' experiences, the study contributes to the growing body of knowledge regarding learner engagement and effective pedagogical practices in elementary education.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to explore how classroom participation contributes to learner development among Grade 3 pupils at Sinamar Norte Elementary School.

Specifically, it sought to:

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

Theoretical Framework

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

Social Constructivist Theory posits that learning occurs through social interaction, collaboration, and participation in meaningful learning experiences. Knowledge is actively constructed through dialogue and engagement with others.

Student Engagement Theory emphasizes that behavioral, emotional, and cognitive participation in learning activities contributes to academic achievement and personal development. Learners who actively engage in

classroom experiences are more likely to develop positive attitudes, stronger skills, and higher levels of achievement.

Together, these theories explain how classroom participation serves as a pathway for academic, social, and attitudinal development among elementary learners.

Methodology

The study employed a qualitative case study design to explore the experiences of Grade 3 learners regarding classroom participation and learner development. A qualitative approach was selected because it allowed for an in-depth examination of participants' perspectives, experiences, and interpretations of classroom engagement. The case study design facilitated a detailed investigation of the phenomenon within its natural educational setting.

The study was conducted at Sinamar Norte Elementary School, a public elementary school serving a rural community. Participants included fifteen (15) Grade 3 learners, five (5) teachers, one (1) school administrator, and ten (10) parents selected through purposive sampling. Participants were chosen based on their direct involvement in classroom learning experiences.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, classroom observations, and document analysis. Interviews focused on learners' participation experiences, academic development, attitudes toward learning, and perceptions of classroom activities. Observations documented learner engagement, teacher practices, and participation behaviors during classroom instruction.

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, peer debriefing, and prolonged engagement. Ethical principles including informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation were strictly observed throughout the study.

Findings and Discussion

Theme 1: Classroom Participation Enhances Communication Skills

A dominant theme that emerged from the study was the significant role of classroom participation in strengthening learners' communication skills. Participants consistently reported that answering questions, participating in discussions, reading aloud, and sharing ideas in class helped them become more confident speakers and better listeners. Grade 3 learners emphasized that regular opportunities to interact with teachers and classmates enabled them to express themselves more clearly and confidently.

One learner shared:

"Dati po nahihiya akong magsalita sa harap ng klase, pero ngayon mas kaya ko na pong sumagot kapag tinatawag ako ng guro."

Another participant remarked:

"Mas natututo akong magsalita nang maayos kapag nakikilahok ako sa mga talakayan."

Teachers observed noticeable improvements in learners' oral communication abilities as a result of active participation.

One teacher explained:

"Kapag palaging nabibigyan ng pagkakataon ang mga bata na magsalita at magbahagi ng ideya, mas lumalakas ang kanilang loob at mas gumagaling sila sa pakikipag-usap."

Classroom observations revealed that learners who frequently participated demonstrated greater confidence in expressing opinions, asking questions, and engaging in classroom conversations.

The findings support the sociocultural perspective of learning advanced by Lev Vygotsky, which emphasizes the importance of social interaction in cognitive and language development. Research has consistently shown that classroom discourse enhances communication competence, self-expression, and language acquisition among young learners.

Theme 2: Active Participation Strengthens Academic Skills

Another important theme centered on the development of academic skills through active classroom participation. Learners reported that participation enabled them to understand lessons more deeply, improve reading and comprehension skills, and develop better problem-solving abilities.

One learner stated:

“Kapag sumasagot ako sa klase, mas natatandaan ko ang aralin.”

Another learner explained:

“Mas naiintindihan ko po ang Math kapag nakikilahok ako sa mga activities.”

Teachers noted that active participants often demonstrated stronger academic performance and greater understanding of lesson content.

One teacher shared:

“Nakikita namin na mas mabilis matuto ang mga batang aktibong nakikilahok sa klase dahil mas napoproseso nila ang impormasyon.”

Observations showed that learners who engaged in classroom discussions and activities demonstrated greater comprehension, critical thinking, and retention of concepts.

These findings align with active learning research suggesting that learner participation promotes cognitive engagement and academic achievement. According to educational scholars, active involvement allows learners to construct knowledge, connect concepts, and strengthen higher-order thinking skills.

Theme 3: Participation Builds Self-Confidence and Learner Motivation

A third theme highlighted the contribution of classroom participation to the development of self-confidence and motivation. Participants consistently described how participation experiences encouraged them to believe in their abilities and become more enthusiastic about learning.

One learner remarked:

“Mas nagkakaroon ako ng tiwala sa sarili kapag tama ang sagot ko sa klase.”

Another participant stated:

“Kapag pinupuri ako ng guro dahil sumali ako sa discussion, mas ginaganahan akong mag-aral.”

Teachers likewise observed that participation positively influenced learners’ confidence.

One teacher explained:

“Ang simpleng pagsagot sa klase ay nakatutulong upang mabuo ang kumpiyansa ng mga bata sa kanilang sarili.”

Classroom observations revealed that learners who initially displayed hesitation gradually became more active

participants after receiving encouragement and positive reinforcement.

The findings support Self-Efficacy Theory, which emphasizes that successful learning experiences strengthen individuals' beliefs in their capabilities. As learners gain confidence through participation, they become more motivated to engage in academic tasks and pursue learning opportunities.

Theme 4: Collaborative Participation Promotes Social Development

The study revealed that classroom participation contributes significantly to learners' social development. Participants highlighted the importance of group work, peer discussions, and cooperative activities in helping them build friendships, develop teamwork skills, and learn to respect diverse perspectives.

One learner shared:

"Masaya po kapag may group activity kasi natututo kaming magtulungan."

Another learner explained:

"Kapag may kasama akong gumawa ng project, natututo akong makinig sa opinyon ng iba."

Teachers emphasized that collaborative learning experiences foster social responsibility and interpersonal skills.

One teacher stated:

"Hindi lamang akademikong kaalaman ang natututuhan nila. Natututo rin silang makisama at makipagtulungan."

Observations showed that learners engaged in collaborative tasks demonstrated greater empathy, cooperation, and communication.

These findings align with social learning theories emphasizing that interaction with peers supports both cognitive and social development. Collaborative participation enables learners to develop essential interpersonal skills that contribute to lifelong success.

Theme 5: Positive Classroom Participation Fosters Favorable Attitudes toward Learning

Another major theme that emerged was the influence of classroom participation on learners' attitudes toward learning. Participants reported that active involvement in classroom activities made learning more enjoyable, meaningful, and interesting.

One learner explained:

"Mas gusto kong pumasok sa paaralan kapag may mga activity na pwede akong salihan."

Another participant remarked:

"Kapag nakakasagot ako sa klase, parang mas gusto ko pang matuto."

Teachers observed that active participants generally displayed more positive attitudes toward school and learning.

One teacher shared:

"Ang mga batang nakikilahok sa klase ay kadalasang mas interesado at mas positibo ang pananaw sa pag-aaral."

Observations indicated that learners who participated actively demonstrated enthusiasm, curiosity, and persistence in completing academic tasks.

The findings support Student Engagement Theory, which posits that active participation strengthens emotional and cognitive engagement. Positive classroom experiences contribute to favorable attitudes that encourage sustained learning and academic persistence.

Theme 6: Supportive Classroom Environments Encourage Sustained Participation

The final theme emphasized the importance of supportive classroom environments in sustaining learner participation. Participants consistently reported that teacher encouragement, peer support, and a positive classroom atmosphere motivated them to participate actively.

One learner stated:

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

Another learner shared:

“Kapag mabait ang guro at tinutulungan kami, mas gusto naming makilahok.”

Teachers emphasized the need to establish safe and inclusive learning spaces.

One teacher remarked:

“Kailangan maramdaman ng mga bata na ligtas silang magkamali at matuto.”

Classroom observations revealed that supportive environments reduced learner anxiety and increased willingness to participate in discussions and activities.

The findings reinforce research on school climate and classroom culture, which suggests that supportive environments promote learner engagement, confidence, and academic success. Positive classroom relationships encourage learners to take risks, express ideas, and become active participants in the learning process.

6. Conclusion

The study concludes that classroom participation serves as a significant pathway to learner development among Grade 3 pupils at Sinamar Norte Elementary School. Active participation contributes to the enhancement of communication skills, academic competencies, self-confidence, social development, and positive attitudes toward learning. Learners who engage actively in classroom discussions, collaborative activities, and instructional tasks demonstrate stronger academic performance and greater enthusiasm for learning.

The findings further reveal that supportive classroom environments and positive teacher–learner relationships play crucial roles in encouraging participation and fostering learner growth. Classroom participation extends beyond academic engagement and serves as a mechanism for holistic development, enabling learners to acquire both cognitive and socio-emotional competencies essential for lifelong learning.

Ultimately, the study highlights the value of learner-centered pedagogical practices that promote active engagement, collaboration, and meaningful participation. Such approaches are particularly important in elementary education, where foundational skills and attitudes are being formed.

Implications of the Study

1. Teachers should incorporate participatory learning strategies that encourage active learner engagement.
2. Schools should strengthen classroom practices that promote communication, collaboration, and learner confidence.
3. Educational leaders should support professional development initiatives focused on learner-centered instruction.

4. Positive classroom environments should be prioritized to enhance learner participation and motivation.
5. Parents should be encouraged to reinforce participation and confidence-building activities at home.
6. Classroom participation should be recognized as a key component of holistic learner development and educational quality.

Recommendations

1. Increase opportunities for classroom discussions, collaborative learning, and learner presentations.
2. Implement instructional strategies that encourage active participation among all learners.
3. Provide teacher training on effective learner engagement and classroom management practices.
4. Establish school programs that recognize and celebrate active learner participation.
5. Strengthen partnerships between schools and families to support learner confidence and motivation.
6. Conduct future studies involving larger samples and multiple schools to further explore the relationship between participation and learner development.

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