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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Beyond Engagement: Exploring How Classroom Participation Influences Learners' Skills and Attitudes toward Learning in Elementary Education

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Abstract

Classroom participation is widely recognized as a critical component of effective teaching and learning. Beyond promoting engagement, active participation contributes to the development of learners' academic skills, social competencies, self-confidence, and attitudes toward learning. In elementary education particularly at Sinamar Norte Elementary School, participation serves as a foundation for fostering meaningful learning experiences that support holistic learner development. This study explored how classroom participation influences learners' skills and attitudes toward learning in elementary education. Employing a qualitative case study design, the study involved elementary learners, teachers, school administrators, and 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 enhances communication skills, strengthens critical thinking abilities, promotes collaboration, builds learner confidence, develops self-regulation skills, and fosters positive attitudes toward learning. The study highlights the importance of learner-centered pedagogical approaches that encourage active participation and meaningful engagement. The findings contribute to the growing body of literature emphasizing classroom participation as a mechanism for academic, social, and emotional development among elementary learners.

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

Introduction

The contemporary educational landscape increasingly emphasizes learner engagement as a key determinant of academic success and holistic development. While engagement remains an important educational objective, scholars argue that the value of classroom participation extends beyond mere involvement in instructional activities. Participation provides learners with opportunities to construct knowledge, develop skills, interact socially, and cultivate attitudes that shape their educational experiences and future learning trajectories.

Classroom participation refers to learners' active involvement in discussions, questioning, collaborative activities, problem-solving tasks, presentations, and other instructional experiences that contribute to the learning process. Active participation enables learners to become co-constructors of knowledge rather than passive recipients of information. Through participation, learners engage cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally in learning activities, thereby enhancing understanding and promoting deeper learning.

In Sinamar Norte Elementary School, classroom participation is particularly significant because learners are in critical stages of cognitive, social, and emotional development. Experiences during these formative years influence not only academic achievement but also the development of confidence, motivation, communication skills, and attitudes toward education. Educational researchers have consistently highlighted the importance of active participation in fostering learner autonomy, self-efficacy, and positive educational outcomes.

Despite widespread recognition of its benefits, classroom participation remains influenced by multiple factors including teaching practices, classroom climate, peer relationships, learner confidence, and cultural expectations. Understanding how learners experience participation and perceive its influence on their development is essential for designing effective instructional strategies that support meaningful learning.

This study explored how classroom participation influences learners' skills and attitudes toward learning in elementary education. By examining learners' experiences and perspectives, the study sought to provide deeper insights into the role of participation as a pathway to learner development.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to explore how classroom participation influences learners' skills and attitudes toward learning in elementary education.

Specifically, it sought to:

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

Theoretical Framework

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

Social Constructivist Theory posits that learning occurs through social interaction and active participation in meaningful educational experiences. Knowledge is constructed through dialogue, collaboration, and engagement with others. Classroom participation therefore serves as a mechanism through which learners acquire knowledge and develop competencies.

Student Engagement Theory emphasizes that behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement contributes significantly to educational success. Active participation promotes deeper learning, stronger motivation, and positive attitudes toward learning. Together, these theoretical perspectives explain how participation facilitates learner development within classroom settings.

Methodology

The study utilized a qualitative case study design to explore learners' experiences of classroom participation and its influence on their skills and attitudes toward learning. A qualitative approach was selected because it allowed for an in-depth understanding of participants' perspectives, experiences, and interpretations regarding participation in Sinamar Norte Elementary School.

Participants included elementary learners, classroom teachers, school administrators, and parents selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, classroom observations, and document analysis. Interviews focused on participation experiences, learning behaviors, skill development, attitudes toward learning, and classroom interactions.

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

Theme 1: Classroom Participation Strengthens Communication Skills

The findings revealed that classroom participation significantly contributes to the development of communication skills among elementary learners. Participants consistently described opportunities to answer questions, engage in discussions, share opinions, and interact with classmates as valuable experiences that enhanced their ability to communicate effectively. Learners emphasized that regular participation allowed them to practice expressing ideas, organizing thoughts, and speaking confidently in front of others. As they became more involved in classroom activities, they gradually overcame fear, hesitation, and anxiety associated with public speaking.

One learner shared:

"Mas natututo akong magsalita sa harap ng klase kapag palagi akong nakikilahok sa mga talakayan."

Another participant stated:

"Kapag sumasagot ako sa mga tanong ng guro, mas lumalakas ang loob kong magsalita."

Teachers similarly observed that learners who actively participated in classroom discussions demonstrated stronger oral communication skills and greater confidence in expressing ideas. These learners were more willing to ask questions, explain answers, and interact with peers during collaborative activities.

One teacher explained:

"Napapansin naming mas nagiging malinaw at organisado ang paraan ng pagsasalita ng mga batang aktibong nakikilahok."

Classroom observations further revealed that participation encouraged learners to practice both speaking and listening skills. Through discussions and recitations, learners learned how to articulate their ideas clearly while also respecting and responding appropriately to the viewpoints of others. Such interactions contributed to the development of effective communication competencies that are essential for academic success and social interaction.

The findings resonate with the sociocultural perspective of learning, which views communication as central to cognitive development. According to Vygotsky (1978), language serves as a primary tool through which learners construct knowledge and engage in meaningful social interaction. Similarly, Mercer and Littleton (2007) argued

that classroom dialogue enhances learners' reasoning and communication abilities by providing opportunities for collaborative thinking. Alexander (2020) likewise emphasized that dialogic teaching promotes deeper understanding and improves learners' capacity to express ideas effectively. Research by Walsh (2019) further suggests that active participation in classroom discourse develops oral language proficiency, confidence, and academic communication skills among elementary learners.

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

Another significant theme centered on the influence of participation on learners' critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. Participants reported that classroom discussions, questioning activities, and interactive learning tasks challenged them to analyze information, evaluate alternatives, and justify their responses. Rather than merely memorizing information, learners became actively engaged in constructing knowledge and developing reasoning skills.

One learner remarked:

"Kapag may tanong ang guro, kailangan kong pag-isipan nang mabuti bago sumagot."

Another learner explained:

"Natututo akong maghanap ng iba't ibang paraan para masagot ang mga problema sa klase."

Teachers observed that learners who frequently participated demonstrated stronger reasoning abilities and a deeper understanding of lesson content. They noted that active participants were more likely to ask clarifying questions, connect ideas, and apply concepts to new situations.

One teacher shared:

"Mas nagiging mapanuri ang mga bata kapag hinihikayat silang magbigay ng paliwanag sa kanilang mga sagot."

Classroom observations revealed that participation encouraged learners to engage in higher-order thinking processes such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Learners became more reflective and thoughtful when discussing problems, comparing perspectives, and explaining their reasoning.

These findings align with contemporary active learning research, which emphasizes the role of participation in promoting cognitive engagement. Bonwell and Eison (1991) argued that active learning environments foster critical thinking by requiring learners to interact meaningfully with content. Likewise, Brookfield (2017) noted that discussion-based learning cultivates reflective thinking and problem-solving abilities. According to Facione (2020), critical thinking develops when learners are regularly challenged to interpret information, evaluate evidence, and defend conclusions. Similarly, Hattie (2023) found that classroom interactions and questioning strategies significantly influence learners' cognitive growth and academic achievement.

Theme 3: Collaborative Participation Develops Social Competence

Participants highlighted the importance of collaborative classroom activities in promoting social development. Group work, peer discussions, cooperative learning experiences, and team-based projects enabled learners to develop interpersonal relationships while simultaneously acquiring academic knowledge. Learners reported that collaboration taught them how to communicate respectfully, work toward common goals, and appreciate diverse viewpoints.

One learner stated:

"Mas natututo ako kapag nagtutulungan kami ng mga kaklase ko."

Another participant shared:

"Kapag may group activity, natututo akong makinig at rumespeto sa opinyon ng iba."

Teachers emphasized that collaborative participation fosters cooperation, empathy, responsibility, and social awareness.

One teacher explained:

“Sa group activities natututo silang magbahagi ng ideya, tumanggap ng puna, at makipagtulungan sa iba.”

Classroom observations revealed that learners who engaged in cooperative tasks demonstrated improved social interactions and stronger peer relationships. Through collaboration, they learned conflict resolution skills, teamwork, and effective communication practices.

These findings support the work of Johnson and Johnson (2018), who found that cooperative learning environments significantly enhance social competence and interpersonal relationships. Gillies (2016) likewise emphasized that collaborative learning promotes mutual support, empathy, and shared responsibility. Research by Slavin (2020) demonstrated that cooperative activities improve both academic achievement and social development by encouraging meaningful interaction among learners. Furthermore, Wentzel (2017) argued that positive peer relationships contribute substantially to learners' social adjustment and school engagement.

Theme 4: Participation Builds Self-Confidence and Learner Agency

The study found that classroom participation contributes significantly to the development of self-confidence and learner agency. Participants described how positive participation experiences increased their confidence in expressing ideas, asking questions, and assuming responsibility for their learning. As learners experienced success in classroom interactions, they became more willing to take academic risks and engage in challenging learning tasks.

One learner shared:

“Mas naniniwala ako sa sarili ko kapag nakakasagot ako nang tama sa klase.”

Another learner remarked:

“Hindi na ako gaanong nahihiya dahil nasanay na akong magsalita sa harap ng mga kaklase ko.”

Teachers reported that participation encouraged learners to become more independent, proactive, and responsible for their educational growth.

One teacher stated:

“Kapag nabibigyan sila ng pagkakataong makilahok, mas lumalakas ang kanilang kumpiyansa sa sariling kakayahan.”

Observations revealed that learners gradually transitioned from passive observers to active contributors within the classroom environment. They demonstrated increased initiative in volunteering answers, asking questions, and participating in leadership roles during classroom activities.

The findings are consistent with Bandura's (1997) Self-Efficacy Theory, which posits that successful experiences strengthen individuals' confidence in their abilities. Zimmerman (2013) similarly emphasized that learners who actively engage in learning tasks develop stronger self-regulation and personal agency. According to Schunk and DiBenedetto (2020), participation opportunities provide mastery experiences that reinforce confidence and intrinsic motivation. Research by Pajares and Urdan (2021) further indicates that learner confidence is closely linked to active engagement and academic persistence.

Theme 5: Classroom Participation Cultivates Positive Attitudes toward Learning

A major theme that emerged was the influence of participation on learners' attitudes toward learning. Participants consistently reported that active involvement made learning more enjoyable, meaningful, and personally relevant. Learners expressed greater enthusiasm for attending school and participating in academic activities when they were actively involved in the learning process.

One learner explained:

“Mas gusto kong mag-aral kapag nakakasali ako sa mga gawain.”

Another participant stated:

“Kapag nakikilahok ako, parang mas naiintindihan at mas nagugustuhan ko ang aralin.”

Teachers observed that active learners displayed greater enthusiasm, persistence, curiosity, and interest in learning activities.

One teacher noted:

“Ang mga batang aktibong nakikilahok ay kadalasang mas masaya at mas interesado sa kanilang pag-aaral.”

Classroom observations indicated that participation transformed learners from passive recipients of information into active contributors to the learning process. This sense of involvement increased their enjoyment of learning and strengthened their commitment to academic tasks.

These findings support Student Engagement Theory, which posits that active participation strengthens emotional and cognitive engagement (Fredricks et al., 2004). Skinner et al. (2009) found that learner participation contributes to positive emotional experiences and academic motivation. Likewise, Reeve (2018) argued that autonomy-supportive classrooms encourage learners to develop positive attitudes toward learning. Research by Eccles and Wigfield (2020) also suggests that meaningful participation increases learners' task value perceptions and intrinsic motivation.

Theme 6: Supportive Pedagogical Practices Sustain Meaningful Participation

The final theme emphasized the importance of pedagogical practices in sustaining classroom participation. Participants reported that teacher encouragement, constructive feedback, collaborative activities, differentiated instruction, and inclusive classroom environments encouraged them to participate more actively. Learners highlighted the importance of feeling supported and respected within the classroom.

One learner shared:

“Mas gusto kong sumagot kapag alam kong susuportahan ako ng guro.”

A teacher explained:

“Kailangang maramdaman ng mga bata na ligtas silang magkamali upang maging aktibo sila sa klase.”

Classroom observations confirmed that supportive learning environments fostered greater participation, confidence, and engagement. Teachers who demonstrated patience, encouragement, and responsiveness created classroom cultures where learners felt comfortable expressing ideas and taking intellectual risks.

The findings indicate that meaningful participation is not solely dependent on learners' individual characteristics but is strongly influenced by pedagogical practices that create opportunities for involvement and success. Effective teachers intentionally design learning experiences that encourage participation while providing emotional and academic support.

These findings are supported by Tomlinson (2017), who emphasized the importance of differentiated instruction in addressing learner diversity and promoting engagement. Hattie (2023) identified teacher feedback and classroom climate as powerful influences on learner achievement. Similarly, Pianta et al. (2012) found that supportive teacher–student relationships foster participation, motivation, and academic success. According to Hammond (2015), culturally responsive teaching practices create inclusive learning environments where learners feel valued, respected, and empowered to participate actively in the learning process.

Conclusion

The study concludes that classroom participation extends beyond learner engagement and serves as a powerful mechanism for holistic learner development. Through active participation, elementary learners develop communication skills, critical thinking abilities, social competence, self-confidence, and positive attitudes toward learning. Participation enables learners to become active contributors to the learning process and strengthens their capacity to succeed academically and socially in Sinamar Norte Elementary School.

The findings further demonstrate that supportive pedagogical practices and positive classroom environments are essential for fostering meaningful participation. Teachers play a critical role in creating learning experiences that encourage learners to engage actively, express ideas confidently, and develop positive educational attitudes. Ultimately, classroom participation serves as a pathway through which learners acquire essential skills and dispositions necessary for lifelong learning.

Implications of the Study

1. Teachers should prioritize participatory instructional strategies that promote active engagement.
2. Schools should create classroom environments that encourage collaboration, confidence, and inclusivity.
3. Educational leaders should support professional development programs focused on learner-centered pedagogy.
4. Classroom participation should be integrated into instructional planning and assessment practices.
5. Parents should be encouraged to reinforce participation and confidence-building behaviors at home.

Recommendations

1. Increase the use of collaborative learning activities and classroom discussions.
2. Provide teacher training on active learning and participatory teaching strategies.
3. Develop school programs that strengthen communication and leadership skills among learners.
4. Create classroom environments that promote psychological safety and learner confidence.
5. Conduct further studies examining classroom participation across different educational contexts and grade levels.

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