

The major barriers of learner-centered method on female students' classroom participation: Implication for secondary school, Addis Ababa Ethiopia

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KEY WORDS

Major barriers, learner-centered, female students, secondary schools, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

ABSTRACT

The subject of this article, the contribution of learner-centered method on students' classroom participation, is a burning issue nowadays in Ethiopia. Secondary schools around Ethiopia are going through a tight spot. Few aspects to mention, interests of the teachers to teach, the learners to learn and parents to support their children putting increasing pressure on the schools. The descriptive survey design was employed with quantitative and qualitative approaches. Twenty teachers from each school were approached and recruited for their participation. In regards to the student's community, 250 of them were drawn from grade 9 and 10 who were attending in 2120/2022 from the five sample schools to participate in the study. Using keywords analysis, themes were derived from participants' responses and the most illustrative excerpts were extracted. The findings of the study show that teachers in the sample secondary schools were less practiced in engaging themselves in a learner-centered approach. Further, teachers' experiences of interaction or connection with their students' parents were limited. In conclusion, the school management, teachers, students, and all stakeholders are expected to ensure learner-center approaches and equip schools with adequate learning resources. This study may strengthen secondary school management, teachers, students and parents to gain a thoughtful understanding of the contribution of learner-centered methods on female students' classroom participation.

Background

The quality of secondary schools' education is seen as a stepping stone for tertiary level education. A teacher at a learner-centered method on female students' classroom participation ought to be capable to put together, what ought to be, why to teach, and the how of learning and teaching.

Further, teachers are both sophists and implementers inducing no disagreement for this argument. As such they are accountable in the preparation, scrutiny, and apply for assumptions and presumptions underlying the learning-teaching process in the learner-centered environment. In this regard, Cannon, (2000) argued that the learning setting has student liability and shift at its spirit, indifference to the importance of mentor management and the treatment of scholastic content found in much usual, informative teaching.

The constructivist theory of learning suggests that students independently or collectively find out and change multifaceted information, ensure new practice alongside previous know-how and realize the new experiences when they are not in agreement with the existing mental structures (Burton, 2010:31). As per this outlook, learning takes place when learners employ their intellect to widen their own understanding and to become fundamentally involved in their own learning progress. Sadler (2012) conclude that these problems had more to do with the students; practices than with what occurs when they face up to a learner-centered approach.

In a learner center paradigm, the teachers scaffold learning and also distinguish learning tasks, as students in nearly all classrooms have a diverse commitment (Cervone & Cushman, (2013:31)

In the same vein, Bangert-Drowns & Pyke, (2001:215) contends that student's active commitment is briefed as the movement of cognitive, affective, and motivational approach for interpretive dealings with textbook Students' active involvement in their insight can be recognized as successful if only they consider accountability and initiation to judge and manage more than their own learning, Thus, assisting students as proprietor of their own learning comprise a feature of learning throughout self-governing, motivation, awareness, the way students attribute their accomplishment and failure and identity.

Strengthening these issues, Ginsburg (2010:64) wraps up that" ... many of the arguments for active learning and student-centered pedagogy are grounded more in Philosophy and educational theory that they are warranted by empirical evidence." Nonetheless, in order to actualize a learner-center approach classroom management is indispensable to generate a conducive and secure academic setting to educate and study even in enhancing meaningful instruction. Classroom performances also include students' cooperative activities, parents' support, and togetherness under the teacher's course of action.

In a classroom setting, female learners must be trained in the best possible way to sense readiness in all aspects to study with the same likelihood as other learners in the classroom. Thus, students' learning is mainly depending upon how effectively and efficiently the teacher addresses his pedagogical know-how in learning the teaching approach for a better learning outcome.

Statement of the problem

The learner-centered approach is in which the learner is making choices about his/her learning success, which helps them to involve in self-managing and agrees about features of their learning with the support of teachers and parents.

In regards to the learner-centered approach Kuhlthau, et.al, (2007:27) justify that, in a learner-centered approach, active learning methods of learning are continually interrelating with teachers, parents, peers, and others as a share of their close social milieu to develop their own academic of common evidence. This practice of learning through involvement within community settings relates to social constructivism.

Hence, very few efforts have been made so far in strengthening teachers, learners, and parents' active participation in the secondary school learning-teaching process. In spite of this, the learner-centered approach appears to be neglected and the role of the main actors like teachers, parents, and students have little perception or care on students learning and barely have participated in secondary schools. Hence, their influence and engagement either in supporting the learner inside schools or at home have remained very low. It is due to these reasons why this study is conducted and the extent of the major barriers of the learner-centered approach to the participation of female students in the classroom.

Hence, the researcher on this study would like to seek the major barriers of learner-centered method on female students' classroom participation based on the following research basic questions:

Basic research questions

What are the major barriers of learner -centered method on female student' classroom participation in the selected secondary schools in Addis Ababa?

Objectives

To examine the major barriers of learner -centered method on female student' classroom participation in the selected secondary schools in Addis Ababa?

Methodology

For this study, the researcher has employed a mixed research approach. The purpose of the mixed research approach is not to substitute one of the two methods nonetheless, relatively to deduce the strengths and lessen the weaknesses of both in a sole research study Onwuegbuzie and Johnson (2004:14-15). Hence, in order to comprehend the subjective, inter-subjects, and the objective reality of teachers, parents, and students' practices of the application of the learner-centered approach in secondary schools in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Practices were seen in an understandable way, so as to comprise their perceptions, opinions, beliefs in regards to the learner-centered approach.

The tools for primary data collection were questionnaires, focus group discussion, and semi-structured interviews. Furthermore, secondary sources incorporated; Journals learner-centered approach articles, and books. Data were scrutinized using descriptive statistics to see the mean and SD. In Addis Ababa city administration, there are ten sub-cities, out of these ten sub-cities five sub-cities were selected by using simple random sampling techniques, and out of five sub-cities five secondary schools were selected i.e., (Belay Zelke, Bethlehem, Yekatit 23, Adisketema and Akaki Kality)

A simple random sampling method was used to arrive at 120 teachers out of the sample population of 125 teachers (25 teachers from each sample school) and 142 students' respondent out of the sample population of 150 students, were selected from grades nine and ten.

Interview and FGD guide have been formulated to alert the insight of all discussants on the three items (teachers, students, and parents) focusing on the design process of learner-centered approach. The interview and FGD were administered by the researcher. Both the interview and FGD have been managed in the respondent's local language to make communication friendly. The transcribed materials were carefully translated from English into their local language.

Pilot study

As per (Cohen, et.al., 2011:129-132) validity is "It is the degree to which assessment instruments are relevant to and representative of the theoretical constructs" On the other hand, reliability according to Ary, et.al., 2010:238). Is concerned with "how consistently you are measuring whatever you are measuring" With this understanding pilot study was carried out in one non-sample secondary school.

The objectives of this pilot study were to examine the appropriateness of the substances in the questionnaire and to make the required adjustments based on the attained comment from respondents. However, the pilot test result did not show core imperfection on the established questionnaires. Therefore, only a few modifications were made to questionnaires before the final survey was administered. Moreover, reliability approximating total closed-ended items was computed using SPSS version 23, in order to know the internal consistency of the questionnaire. As a result, the reliability approximations for the total items using Cronbach alpha were found to be 0.751 for teachers and 0.797 for students' closed-ended items. According to Cohen, (2007:506) a reliability coefficient is greater than 0.90 considered to be very highly reliable, 0.80-0.90 highly reliable, 0.70-0.79 reliable, 0.60-0.69 minimally reliable, and less than 0.60 unacceptably low reliable. Hence, the reliability of the questionnaire was considered reliable

Ethical Consideration

The research followed the ethical standards of the American Psychology Association (APA). After permission was secured from the College of education, the department of curriculum and instruction and followed by a certificate of admission from the city government of Addis Ababa education bureau, to visit the respective sample secondary schools the data collection process was on track. While administering the questionnaires, verbal consent was obtained from each participant.

Thus, the purpose of the study was clarified to all of the participants in their local language, and the right to withdraw from the study at any time during the course of data collection through the questioners, interviews and FGDs were also communicated. Confidentiality of the information was also guaranteed and discretion of each respondent was maintained throughout the data collection process.

Results and Discussion

Five teachers out of 125 teachers and seven students out of 150 participants who agreed to fill the questionnaire in the study failed to complete their questionnaires; appropriately and thus were released from the investigation. The final sample well-thought-out in the study consists of 120 teachers and 142 students at a 95% response rate.

Interpretation Analysis and Discussions

The analysis and interpretation of data collection from the discussants are presented as follows. Furthermost, the data collected were interpreted, analyzed, and followed by discussions. The qualitative response of the school principal's interviews was combined to authenticate the data attained from teachers and students. However, the quantitative data gathered through questionnaires were considered, tallied, and tabulated.

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to show the mean and SD to offer well-thought results. The data found through semi-structured interview questions were convened into themes based on the basic research questions and were labeled into the subsequent discussion of quantitative data. Lastly, the qualitative data were examined using a narrative account.

Table 1
Major Barriers of Learner-Centered Method on Female Students' Classroom Participation (Students=142, Teachers=120)

Item	Students		Teachers	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
The teacher				
Teachers as reflective practitioners and their understanding of learner center approaches	3.77	0.42	3.93	0.79
The learner				
Learner responsibility and imitative for active – engagement	3.74	0.58	4.03	0.84
The parent				
The role of parents in preparing learners for active learning.	3.70	0.70	3.88	0.74

As can be observed in table 1 item number 1 teachers as reflective practitioners and their understanding of learner center approaches shows that students mean 3.7746 and SD .41929 while teachers 3.9333 and .78573. From this, result one can deduct that teachers and students agreed upon the learner-centered method's importance that it will enhance students' day-to-day classroom participation. Though, as part of professional development, reflective practices offer teachers as one an effective method of teaching and help them to look at their classroom performance and beliefs that the effect they have on students learning.

In support of the quantitative result, the principals' interviews summary denotes that " In a learner-centered classroom that active learning is an interactive sort of learning-teaching process. In which both teachers and students are learning each other. Students are coming up with new ideas for the classroom. The teacher will give them tasks for discussion based on the textbook. Thereafter, the teacher will obtain new insight when his students are discussing new tasks given and presenting to the whole class their discussion outcome. These will create a positive computation among the group. These again will prepare them for better improvement from day-to-day progress."

In the same vein, Teachers FGDs outcome concluded that "We are new to the term active learner-centered teaching method but we are using 1 to 5 grouping method. We know this method is addressed by the ministry of education. Without giving training as to how to manage this issue Mot of the time we are using our common sense we don't know whether we are right or wrong. They are simply told us to use the active learning method but how can you use it without specific training on the issue."

Whereas, student FGDs also have their say that," In the learner-centered classroom we are discussing freely with our group. We are learning from each other. However, our knowledge of that task is very much limited. If the

teacher is roaming around and visiting each group we are asking which we found difficult during our discussion and our participation will be very high. But this is not true for the whole subject. Some teachers were asking as to discuss in a group without helping as in this case our discussion will be limited.” In support of the above discussions, teachers as reflective practitioner, Jordan, et.al., (2008: 201) deals with reflection as a performance action by ways of one in which could scrutinize his/her own practices and views decisively with the purpose of ensuring his/her performance outcome.

To materialize learner-centered method first of all the teacher must be well versed in subject matter knowledge (SMK) and pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) mostly *related to the knowledge about their area of specialization together with the skills of presenting, explaining critically, and checking of students using the knowledge they already know about the subject they taught so that they are able to guide the learner-centered method as expected.*

In addition to these Sergiovanni (2005:101) contends that teachers who want to progress learners learning teaching advancement have to look for opportunities to collaborate and work together with the same subject teachers in their respective departments, so as to learn teaching skills from each other. In these regards, first of all, the teacher should be well versed in their subject matter knowledge (SMK) and *pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) mostly related to the knowledge about their area of specialization together with presenting, explaining critically, and checking skills of students using the knowledge they already know about the subject they taught.* Such an inbuilt supervision procedure will help them to assist female students’ participation in the learner-centered approach.

In table 1 item number 2 learner responsibilities and initiative for active – engagement indicates that students mean 3.7394 and SD .57966 While, teachers mean 4.0250 and SD .84478 respectively. In practical terms, this means teacher and student respondents agree as to the learner responsibility and initiative for active –engagement in enhancing their own learning outcomes

In line with this, the principal interviews sum up that, “students are accountable to come to the class with predetermined learning practices to be enthusiastically involved in classroom learning teaching outcome. Schools offer ideas and material resources to individual students to support them do their homework and reading at home. They have to read and solve the material before they are coming to the class. Cooperative learning cannot be achieved if the learners were not ready enough to predetermined knowledge, which would be enriched through individual learning and parents' support. In regards to the learner’s initiative, Janice & Janice, (2002:1) stressed that Parents or caretakers ought to assist their children to progress their learning

practices over active participation with the resource offered to them and aid them to get prepared for classroom active participation

In this line teachers' FGDs summary signifies that "the core part of the students in general and in particular female students in active learning was doing assignments delivered to them by their teachers and whenever there is a question from the students' side the teachers should be at their disposal. Students should advance their predetermined understanding in order to be vigorously engaged in the learning-teaching process"

In support of teachers' FGDs views, students FGDs contend that "virtually most of the students conveyed that learner's readiness or learners' predetermined practice or knowledge serves as a precondition fact for learners' lively involvement in their respective classroom participation."

In support of the above discussion, Chaille and Britain (2003:10) indicated that the student is enthusiastically engaged in building knowledge instead of inactively taking evidence. Students come to the classroom with many different practices, views, and strategies to learning and teaching ground. Students do not obtain information that is communicated to them, instead they build knowledge via their academic activity and comprehend it as their own.

In table 1 item number 3 depicts the role of parents in preparing learners for active learning. Accordingly, Students mean 3.6972 and SD.70449 Whereas, teachers mean 3.8750 and SD .73978. respectively. This mean value shows us that both the teacher and the student contend that parents play a big role in preparing learners for active learning

In agreement with the above results, the principals' interview summary claimed that "The parents or guardians should care their children about school time, at their residential settings such approach will definitely enrich the learner understanding. Home area support by the parents or guardians will enhance and support learners to participate in the classroom activities. Learning in the classroom and outside the school compound assist learners in many perspectives to be reflective student and prone to raise more queries. Apart from this, learning rooted in classroom and outside could help learners to interpret, connect and respond pedagogically to the challenges and barriers of their learning and help them to make classroom interaction stronger and understand their own learning."

In support of the above discussions teachers, FGDs stated that "The learner-centered approach is an activity left for the learners both inside the school and at home. Inactive classroom learning, learners are responsible and accountable for their own learning. This can be actualized only when learning activities are supported by their respective teachers and beloved parents or guardians. At the same time, learners appear to have become more enthusiastic to equality of handling and request to be given with equal learning and teaching prospects, to be measured fairly and get the education they deserve for the classroom active participation"

In agreement with the above discussion teachers, FGDs were suggesting about learners that, "learners do not want to be limited in the classroom lecture teaching methods the whole week in a confined classroom, instead it is healthier to enrich learners and engage in active learning strategies and help them to actively participate in the classroom among their classmates. Teachers were in a position to collaborate and work together with parents for more understanding of their children and defy parents their role in preparing their children for active learning participation and further to lay a ground for their future life."

On the other hand, learners FGD summary suggested that "we learners believe that individual learning was more exercised inside the classroom and outside the classroom, predominantly at home with the support of parents and guardians in facilitating their individual assignments, learners want to do activities independently with a little support that promote individual homework, reading assignments, and drill and practices are some of the independent learning strategies that promote active learning.

Further, students FGDs contend in regards to their parents or guardians share to their active learning preparation." Throughout the day we are taking one subject matter after the other inside a confined classroom with no or less interaction among classmates. Every teacher is giving as a task and home take assignments. All the assignments were being done at home and these strongly need our parents' or guardians' support. Unless otherwise, we got their strong support at home, we are not able to do our assignments and get ready for classroom participation."

Rafiq, et.al. (2013:210). In support of parental contribution in preparing learners for active learning, stated that Caretakers or guardians' support can encompass activities like assisting their children in reviewing and handling their subject matter, enriching their intellect to do their assignments self-sufficiently, and governing or monitoring their activities at home setting.

In short, students in general and in particular female students' lively involvement in the learning and teaching course of action desires a caring environment, such as inspired teachers with satisfactory subject matter knowledge (SMK) and pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). Tutors' relationship with parents and students' active participation in and outside schools with the support of teachers and parents is another factor that could contribute to the effective implementation of learner-centered approaches.

Conclusions

In order to safeguard the effective and efficient implementation of learner-centered approaches to help female students' active classroom participation, both the theoretical and the practical features of the application of the active learning method should be understood by teachers, students, and parents.

The implication is that teachers should realize practically the principle of learner-centered approaches by using a variety of teaching strategies such as

problem-solving, mind mapping and discovery learning, etc. Further, the level of teachers' opinions regarding their effectiveness and efficiency has a significant role in shaping their activities in the classroom (Michel, 2013). Their beliefs are connected with teachers' effectiveness and efficiency in learning -teaching progression and students' learning outcomes should be considered as part of the value system. Therefore, teachers' perceptions in supporting females' in classroom participation should be regarded at a high level in order to manage the learning-teaching process effectively.

Though, teachers, parents, and students' understanding about the implementation of the learner-centered approach will be materialized if they are well equipped with basic training on the cardinal principles of the active learning method. Consequently, teachers and parents should focus on supporting female students' active participation inside and outside the school.

By and large, it is indispensable that parents' connection in the school activity is of vital importance in supporting students' academic achievements. Most importantly, the effectiveness of the learning and teaching process cannot be safeguarded without the participation of teachers, students, and parents. Hence, parents or guardians have to take part in school activities for the sake of their children's prosperity and enlightenment.

Conclusions Based on the Findings in the Study

The quantitative and the qualitative parts of this study found that there were gaps between teachers' actual practice of active learning and their intentions to actively participate in learners centered approach in regards to the female students' classroom participation the findings show that:

1. The quantitative study revealed that the mean score of teachers 'actual practices was significantly correlated with students' intention that teachers as reflective practitioners and their understanding of learner center approach that will enhance female student's classroom participation.
2. The qualitative part of the study showed that secondary school teachers in the sample secondary school were less practiced in engaging themselves in a learner-centered approach to enhance female students' participation in the classroom.
3. Further, the qualitative part of the study of principals, teachers, and students interviews and FGDs revealed that unless or otherwise the parents or the guardians of students' participation in the school affairs and in supporting the female students at home settings were actualized it is not possible to attain the expected result.
4. Most of the teachers who engaged in the quantitative and qualitative part of the study conveyed that they had a strong belief in the use of a learner-centered approach together with the learners and the students'

parents or guardians to materialize the female students' classroom active participation

5. The result of the study found that teachers' experiences of interaction or connection with their students' parents were limited.

Recommendations

This part of the recommendations deals on the execution of learner centered approach was forwarded in the light of the literature review as well as the findings of the quantitative and qualitative stages of the study. Application of these references could assist in ensuring that active learning is implemented in an actual way in secondary schools in Addis Abba, Ethiopia.

1. Encourage and enable learner responsibility and initiate for active learner-centered engagement and shared decision making.
2. Building knowledge and understanding togetherness with the concerned stakeholders rather than doing a learner-centered approach passively. Therefore, it is suggested that shaping as well as being shaped by practice in order to bring common understanding about learner-centered approach together with teachers, students, and parents.
3. Learner-centered needs to be strengthened through the cooperation of teachers and the students' parents.
4. In order to enhance the participation of parents and teachers in a learner-centered approach to actively involve them in the application of novel performs of female students in the classroom an awareness short term training is needed to support teachers and parents to actively participate in the learner-centered approach so as to strengthen the learning of female students.

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Citation of this Article:

Assefa, M. (2021). The major barriers of learner-centered method on female students' classroom participation: Implication for secondary school, Addis Ababa Ethiopia. *Pakistan Journal of Educational Research and Evaluation*, 9(2), 61-73.