

Analysis of the Determinants of Classroom Participation of Students': Perceptions of University Student

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Abstract: This study was aimed to analyze determinants of the classroom participation of students' at Hawassa University. In conducting the study, qualitative method with detailed description was used. To collect data in-depth interviews participating eighteen students from first year undergraduate educational planning and management department were used. The findings of the study disclosed that; there were different institutional and individual determinants affecting the classroom participation of the student's at Hawassa University. The institutional determinants from the university side includes; large class size and block teaching schedule; the individuals determinants from instructors side includes, improper allocation and utilization of course materials, lack of connecting classroom participation with performance evaluation of the students; poor teaching methods and absence of proper feedbacks. Likewise the individuals' determinant from student side includes poor English language proficiency; poor reading skill and lack of confidence were major determinants of affecting the classroom participation of students at Hawassa University. Based on findings it is suggested that university should give intensive speaking, listening and writing courses for student; avoid block teaching schedules; encourage students to read books, and provide detailed reading materials and assignments to students' before the class start, organize and apply different teaching methods that encourage students' participation in a class; connect classroom participation with evaluation; reduce number of students in a class, engage students with different self-learn activities and provide immediate feedback for their activities.

Key words: Analysis, Determinants, Classroom, Participation, Students

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I. INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, inquiry-based, reflective and collaborative learning at all level of education has been recognized. As literatures indicated, participation of students in a classroom has direct effect on instructional improvement and academic achievement of students. In the educational organizations where formal education is delivered, most of teaching and learning activities take place in a classroom. So that; classroom is an important place where both students and teachers interact to share information and achieve instructional objectives. In a classroom when the teaching-learning process carried out, students are expected to be actively involved to receive and search information and apply it in specific context and real life situations. In supporting these ideas, Rocca (2010) stated that, the more the student participate in a class, the more they engage in higher levels of thinking, analysis, and synthesis. Dancer & Kamvounias, (2005) also added that, students who participate in a classroom instruction show sustainable improvement in their communication skills.

The communication between student with student and student with teacher in a classroom will stimulate learning and makes both the teacher and students feel satisfied, which eventually leads to effective learning. According to Wade (1994), most students can obtain the benefits such as the enjoyment of sharing ideas with others and learn more if they are active to contribute in class discussion. One of the advantages of student to participation in a teaching-learning process is that it provides the opportunities to generate the variety of novel ideas on content of instruction and facilitate the students' learning in different dimensions which leads to attain instructional goals in optimal level. It is believed that, successful participation of students in a classroom provides an opportunity to explore ideas and share experience with other students and teachers. To this end, this study is aimed to analyze the determinants of classroom participation of undergraduate Educational Planning and Management department students at Hawassa University. This is because; since 2016 I have been taught different courses for undergraduate students and I have observed serious problems of classroom participation of students during the lessons.

In conducting this study, first I have reviewed relevant literatures to see the opinion of different scholars about the conceptual background and determinants of classroom participation of students from different perspectives. Then I outline and describe the materials and method used in conducting the current study. Subsequently, I have analyzed and presented data and draw the findings from different points of view.

Meanwhile, I discuss the results compared with different studies. Finally, depending on the finding of the study, I have summarized and drawn conclusion.

Conceptual Background

Participation of students in a classroom is most important aspect to achieve the objectives of instruction at all levels of educational institutions. Classroom participation has been defined in different ways by different scholars. For instance, Dancer and Kamvounias (2005) defined it as an overall student engagement in instructional process and divided this instructional process into five interrelated categories; such as, preparation, contribution to discussion, group skills, communication skills, and attendance. According to Marija Susak (2016) classroom participation has always been a critical factor in yielding positive learning outcomes for students and further developing their abilities. Classroom participation also allows students to build on their knowledge, demonstrate they have understood the curriculum, develop confidence, and apply theory.

As dozen of literatures indicated that, involving students in instructional process has diversified benefits for students. In line with this, Crone (1997) suggested that if students are engaged in an active learning environment, they have opportunity to become critical thinkers. Similarly, Garside (1996) added that, if the students have the opportunities to be involved in instructional process, they will probably be critical thinkers. According to Marija Susak (2016), critical thinking is an important ability that students' need to develop as it will carry them both through their education, no matter what the discipline and careers. The benefits of participation for students include less memorization, as they are able to learn through discussion and synthesize the information more effectively, they are more motivated, improve their ability to communicate orally (Smith, 1977, Junn, 1994, Dancer & Kamvounias, 2005).

Student participation is multi dimensional so; there is no single best method to engage students for learning in a classroom. According to Marija Susak (2016), students are different in their interest, personality and the way they choose to participate in classroom. This indicates that, there are different methods to be used by instructors to engage students in instructional processes. The selection of appropriate method to engage students on teaching and learning process may be determined by levels of education; types and characteristics of schools; socio economic background and demographic characteristics of students; beliefs and attitudes of both students and instructors; leadership styles and cultures structures of educational institutions; modalities of teaching and learning, and so on. However, different authors suggested different forms of participation. For instance, Weaver & Qi, (2005) are identified the compliment conventional methods of participation such as raising one's hand in class. Weaver and Qi (2005) also coined the term para-participation which is defined as an alternate form of communication that is initiated mainly by the student. Examples of para-participation include speaking with the professor informally after class with regards to the class lectures, and to gain feedback on their work. It includes when students sit in seats that make them visible to the professor within the classroom and show agreement and disagreement by facial expression and gestures even though they remain silent during the class. Para-participation is a way for the student to show interest in the subject matter without having their voice heard in the classroom due to fear of judgment from professors or peers or perhaps due to confidence issues. Weaver and Qi (2005) argued that para-participation is complimentary to conventional methods of participation and has a positive direct effect on participation.

Determinants of Classroom Participation

As literature indicated, there are too many determinants affecting classroom participation of students at educational institutions. Some of them are summarized as follows. Language of instruction plays more significant roles to determine the level of classroom participation of students. If students have problem to understand and communicate with the language of instruction, they are reluctant to participate in a classroom. The medium of instruction in all Ethiopian higher education institutions is English. But, many of students in Ethiopian higher education institutions have poor English communication skills; because, weakness of curriculum design, lack of commitment teachers, and lack of students' learning motivation (Eshetu Mandefro et. al, 2016). Students who are not native English speakers is less to participate in classroom because lack of confidence in their language abilities (Tatar, 2005).

One of the most important factors that determine the classroom participation of student in a classroom is self-confidence. According to Weaver & Qi, (2005) confidence is a key trait that students struggle with and has a direct effect on participation in a class. Students deal with fears of not being smart enough to address their class and therefore holdback on providing insight on subject matter due to intimidation (Karp & Yoels, 1976). Several studies also indicated that, there are numerous factors influenced the student's classroom participation in teaching and learning process. Personality is a primary factor that affects the students' participation in a class. Students with high self efficacy showed better academic achievement and participating more in the classroom (Pajares, 1996). Self-efficacy trait with displaying more of that curiosity and exploring urge would motivate students to become more active and positive reciprocity (Rahil, Habibah, et.al, 2006). In addition if they are self

confident they will show higher interest to learn more and search to know more, apply inquiry based learning, express their opinion and doughty freely, have willing to discuss on the topics in the classroom. In contrast to these ideas, students become passive in classroom due to the self-limitations, such as cannot focus during lecture or learning time, fear of offense (Siti Maziha, Nik Suryani & Melor, 2010). Low level of self-confidence, do not make preparations before class, fear of failing to show their intelligence, fear that their answers will be criticized by the lecturers and the feelings of confusion, thus becoming less engaged in classroom discussions (Fassinger, 1995). Research shows that some students reported to not be participating in classes if they did not prepare on the subject matter prior to coming to class, therefore did not feel comfortable engaging in discussion (Howard et al., 2002).

The variety of teaching techniques employed by instructors will encourage the students to be more active, motivated and accept responsibility to participate and contribute for their learning. Instructor plays an important role in engaging students in classroom. Given that professors are seen as the leaders of authority within the classroom, the way they build their relationships with students is critical in getting them to participate (Weaver & Qi, 2005). A study indicated that, to boost the students participation the effective ways to deal with this include, learning students' names, creating a climate of respect and openness, and allowing students to refer to them by first names (Nunn, 1996; Fassinger, 1995). Classes with higher participation levels perceive their professors to be approachable, inclusive, promoters of discussion, and supportive (Fassinger, 2000). Unlikely, if professors are constantly negative towards students, criticize and ignore them, students are less likely to participate within the classroom (Wade, 1994). In supporting this idea; Myers and Rocca (2000) stated that when professors challenge students verbally, students perceive this as looking down on them and in turn become defensive which hinders their willingness to participate.

As many studies have shown that number of students in a class is among critical determinants affecting the students' participation in a classroom. According to Weaver & Qi, (2005) classroom size has direct and indirect impact on participation. In small classroom, higher levels of participation have been recorded due to the student being more comfortable in an intimate classroom setting and therefore having less anxiety (Myers et al., 2009). Larger classrooms promote anonymity among students and raise the level of fear as they now have to contribute in front of a larger crowd which could result in a larger amount of disapproval from peers (Weaver & Qi, 2005). Auster and MacRone (1994) argued that classrooms with over 40 students had low participation rates. This is also supported by Weaver and Qi (2005) adding that classrooms with over 40 students did not have a sufficient amount of time allocated discussion due to lectures and therefore limited the extent to which a student could contribute to discussion.

Evaluation and grading is an effective method to improve the students' participation with in a classroom. As study suggested that, if classroom participation has direct relationship with student's grade, they are more likely to participate in classroom discussion (Fassinger, 2000). Similarly, Boniecki and Moore (2003) suggested that offering extra credit might be a better way to reward participation versus giving it a separate grade. In determining how often to assess a student's participation, Dancer and Kamvounias (2005) found that a mid-semester grade would be most effective in providing students with a concrete performance indicator in terms of their participation. This would allow them the opportunity to take action and improve for the rest of the semester.

Another important determinant that affects the students' participation in a classroom is the traits and skills of the instructors. Traits that have been shown by instructor, such as supportive, understanding, approachable, friendliness through positive nonverbal behavior, giving smiles and nodded for admitting the answers of students, affirmative and open-mindedness (Siti Maziha, Nik Suryani & Melor, 2010; Fassinger, 1995; 2000) are contributed positive impact to the students' participation in the classroom. Furthermore the skills of the instructor also affect the students' participation in a classroom. In this regards, Nurzatulshima, Lilia, Kamisah & T Subahan (2009) indicated that, the students' participation in class is high when the teacher divided the students into three to five in a group and delegating the work, patrolling and checking the students' progress during practical session, giving out positive rewards and friendly cooperation from assistant in monitoring students.

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when professors challenge students verbally, students perceive this as looking down on them and in turn become defensive which hinders their willingness to participate.

Another important factor that influences the students' participation in class is the attitudes of classmates. One important finding from the study by Siti Maziha, Nik Suryani & Melor (2010) found that, the traits shown by peers or classmates play an important role in providing incentives for students to participate in class discussions. Besides that, Cayanus & Martin (2004) found that students, who are open-mindedness, give a motivational effect on other students to actively participate in class.

II. MATERIALS AND METHOD

The research method I have used for this study is qualitative along with detail empirical evidence to collect, process, analyzes and presents the data collected from my respondents; because, as mentioned by Creswell, (2014) qualitative method is used to analyze variety of determinants affecting the active participation of students at classroom. Meanwhile, the study was used inductive narration of data analysis approach based up on the constructivist philosophical points of view. Because, inductive narration data analysis enabled me to gain in-depth understanding of how students perceive their classroom participation during a lesson. It also help me to analyze the results for common themes and ultimately have a detailed understanding of what types of determinants seriously affecting classroom participation of students at Hawassa University.

The populations of this study were 67 undergraduate students who are enrolled at Hawassa University, college of education department of Educational Planning and Management in 2018/19 academic year. Accordingly, 18students were selected using single-stage sampling technique as it was easy for researcher to obtain names from the student records and students were selected randomly based on their Identification Number (Creswell, 2014). Random sampling technique was chosen as it provides equal opportunity and chances for all students in the population to be the part of the study. The sample consisted of eighteen (18) students, and split according to their sex (between males and females).

The main instrument used to collect data was interview. Semi-structured interview items were prepared by reviewing different literatures and identifying different variables which might be assumed as determinants affecting the classroom participation of students' at Hawassa University. Interview items were also prepared to allow opportunities and flexibility for new ideas may be arising from participants. According to Creswell, (2014) with a semi-structured interview, consistency can be difficult to achieve; however, the interviewer attempted to mediate this by asking similar and related questions independent of the response in order to gather detailed information by using relevant examples. Accordingly, the researcher provided the interviewees with similar questions; so that, they could reflect on them. The interviews were conducted for three days at the end of second semester (18-20 May, 2019). Interviews were recorded using mobile phone for future transcription and analysis. Finally the information collected from participants was properly transcribed, interpreted, coded and used as direct citations in the result and discussion section.

Data analysis was made using the iterative process as outlined by Creswell (2014) and the data was reviewed by researcher again and again to ensure its consistency and properly understood for interpretation. The process includes listening records of audios in order to take notes that could recall from the interviews. Within three days of the interviews being carried out, researcher transcribed each interview audio to words and ensured all responses were correctly interpreted. Finally, researcher used the member checking methods which were identified by Creswell (2014) to check the accuracy of the information transcribed to words.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Participation of students in a classroom is indispensable factor for the attainment of the objectives of the instruction. It is obvious that, if the students are actively engaged on teaching-learning process in their class, they would probably build on their knowledge, understand more and achieve all the expectations of the curriculum, and so on. Despite of its benefits, classroom participation were not recognized by many students and instructors at higher education institutions. Recognizing the fact that, in this study working with students is tried to analyze some of the influential determinants affecting classroom participation of students at Hawassa University has been discussed hereunder.

Language of Instruction

Language of instruction plays more significant and critical roles to determine the level of classroom participation of students in education institutions. As discussed above in the literature, medium of instruction in all Ethiopian higher education is English. Selected students were asked about more serious determinants affecting their participation in a classroom; all of them noted that speaking English is a major problem that negatively affects their classroom participation. In this regard, all of eighteen students indicated that with English being their second language they did not always feel comfortable to express their feeling, opinion,

understanding and thoughts by English; this is because, they did not have sufficient skills and experience using English in classroom.

The background information of these students indicated that, they came to Hawassa University from different regions and different secondary schools. But, they have shown similar problems on English language proficiency. This phenomenon indicated that, at primary and secondary levels, students are not well cultivated and supported by their schools and teachers to be competent in using English for academic and communicative purposes. In supporting this idea, the study conducted by Eshetu Mandefro et al. (2016), disclosed that all primary and secondary schools included in their study didn't have structured and well designed strategies such as English Language Improvement Centers (ELIC), School Based English Language Mentors (SBELM), and so on to improve the English language proficiency of their students. Moreover, the school leadership allocated only limited resources for English language improvement activities. The same finding also revealed that; English Language teachers act poorly as role models in using English and letting the students use English language in different contexts.

All of eighteen students said that "all courses and every discussion in classroom at Hawassa University is conducted in English and most students in a class worried about their knowledge of English". Similarly, one student stated that "I am struggled with my English a lot and did not participate at all in my class. Because of this, it is better to me to know English language. Another three students said that "our English is a bit shaky when we have to think on the spot and don't want students making fun of us so we don't talk unless we are sure of what we saying". All of the participated students described that, it would take time to formulate their thoughts so that they would feel sufficiently comfortable to share their opinions in English as they were inclined to think in Amharic, Oromifa, or other their native languages. Finally as mechanisms to improve their English Language proficiency, all of them indicated that it was better to give for them on speaking, listening and writing intensive course of English language for at least half year when they were freshman.

Block Teaching Schedule

In the past in Ethiopia, undergraduate programmes offered at all universities and colleges in parallel teaching schedules were relatively strong and more preferred by instructors and students. This is because, it provides more opportunities for students to participate in classroom practices, where it has sufficient time frame to complete courses. Because of this there was close alignment between teaching – learning process and realization of the objectives of the courses. From the mid- 2013s, Hawassa University has been attempted to implement nationally harmonized modular curriculum in undergraduate programmes with the aim to shifts traditional method of instruction to inquiry based learning.

Although, in Ethiopian higher education institutions the modular approach of learning have been applied in undergraduate programmes; however, it has critical challenges especially for fresh man due to time limits on block schedules of the courses teaching and learning. In this approach parallel semester based teaching was changed to time-intensive modules delivered one at a time, for full days (four up to six hours per day); so that, a course could be completed over a three to five weeks. In this regards, all of eighteen participants interviewed noted that block teaching approach has been negatively affected their academic performance and classroom participation especially in first year. This is because; they didn't have foundation knowledge and understanding on the major courses offered by departments, which are totally new for them. In the same way, they are noted that, they didn't have skills in participating block teaching-learning approach, when they are at high school level.

The reasons they are raised during interview was that, in a block schedule if a student misses a class, he or she is actually missing nearly half or one chapter contents this may be covered two or three week schedule compared to the parallel class. According to them, many instructors can't cover all portions of the courses and curriculum. In block scheduling, a teacher gives fewer opportunities to students to participate on teaching – learning process. Because of the short period of teaching time to cover contents of the courses and poor performance of the students to understand the content of the lesson and too many slow learners found in a class. In this schedule, instructors didn't organize cooperative learning activities to enhance classroom participation of the students.

Even if, some instructors organized and provided activities to participate students in a classroom, many students are reluctant; this is due to poor understanding of the content of the lesson and poor communication skills. Many of the interviewed students noted that, block teaching schedule is negatively affect their classroom participation. This is because, as they said, they do not have enough time to do assignments or project works, case study, reading reference materials and so on. Supporting this ideas, the study conducted by Wondifraw Dejene (2019), indicated that instructors usually use lecture method predominantly and they rush to cover the contents than participating student in the process of knowledge construction. Most instructors' cover two three chapters in one session through power point presentation as the time allotted for the course is not adequate.

Moreover, instructors have confessed that the inadequacy of time coupled with the assessment policies in the universities is making instructors less committed and violating the professional ethics.

Course Materials Given to the Students

It is the responsibility of instructors to prepare, organize and provide relevant course materials such as outlines of the course, handout, reference books, journals etc. to students to achieve the objectives of the course. In this regard, all of the students interviewed critically noted that, many of the instructors did not provide reading materials such as handouts and selected books to diversify the understanding of the students. All of the students participated in interview indicated that, a few instructors provide handout for students. Majority of the instructors provides power point for the students. Hence, all of the students are dependent on power points taken from the instructors.

The interview conducted with students indicated that most of the instructors depend on power point presentations and they didn't organize different classroom activities to engage the students in teaching and learning process. Supporting this idea, Wondifraw Dejene (2019) indicated that instructors spent most of their time reading power-point slides and telling the students to take notes. They are not interested to participating students in a class. They usually give lengthy lectures for consecutive three and four hours. Most of them heard complaining about the shortage of time thus focus on covering the course within the given times. They took the whole instructional time giving uninterrupted lectures.

But the finding of the study conducted by Mohd. Yusof Abdullah et.al, (2012), suggested that, preferred teaching methods to encourage students to participate actively in classroom are provide notes before the class start, so that they can prepare before coming to the class, conducting activities in the classroom, and always inviting students to speak in a question and answer session

IV. CONNECT CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION WITH ASSESSMENT AND GRADING SYSTEM

All of eighteen students indicated that participation helps them study hard and improve their performance on the subject matter. In this regards, all eighteen participants interviewed noted that they were more likely to participate if the classroom participation is directly linked with their grade. Seven students in the interview said that "if there are points of mark is given for the classroom activities, then the students more probably to participate, if it is not then anybody are reluctant to engage on classroom participation". Similarly, twelve students indicated that "they could be participated in a class; if participation is the parts of grade points; so that, they do not want to lose any points and marks which may affect their grade. To sum up the finding of this study indicated that, if the students recognize classroom participation directly affect their grade, they were more likely to participate in classroom.

Class Size

Number of students in a class is one of the most important factors either positively or negatively affects participation of students in a classroom. In this regard, sixteen out of eighteen students noted that in their sections with more than 65 students, there was not a sufficient amount of time and space to have the opportunity to participate. As they said, due to large number of students, poor proficiency of communication skill in English; and shortage of time; most students didn't actively participate in their classroom.

All of eighteen students also noted that in their courses with larger number of students and block schedule, there was less time allocated for discussion and more lecturing occurred. Similarly, 13 students indicated that, "It is mostly, instructors talks majority of the lesson time, and then asks one or two questions in a period". Furthermore, students indicated that they participated more in smaller class size with less than forty students. One of the students during interview noted that "... I feel more comfortable when the number of students in my class to be around twenty up to thirty students. The reason she has raised for this was that, any student in a class can listen to everyone because the instructors have a chances to observe everyone".

Supporting this ideas, the finding of the study conducted by Marija Susak (2016), indicated that more intimate classroom sizes with less than thirty students showed a higher level of participation due to both opportunity and knowing the other students. Participation levels were identified to be higher in classroom environments that were smaller in size, provided students with support, respect, constructive feedback, and involved theory being related to real-life situations.

Teaching Methods

Teaching methods are the ways, means, procedures, situations and activities a teacher provides, uses and performs in order to impart a given subject matter to students and also to engage students in self-learn (independent learning) activities. As essential ways of sending and receiving instructional messages, teaching methods help students attain the intended set of instructional objectives. In line with this, instructors are

expected to use varieties of teaching methods to enhance the participation of the students in a class. In this regard, eleven out of eighteen students noted that majority of instructors use lecture method in their class, which negatively affect their classroom participation. Seven students pointed out that, a few instructors organize and provided different activities for students to participate in classroom. Students indicated that the manner in which the subject content was delivered affected the students' participation in the classroom. Ten out of eighteen students said that when the instructors would ask them to relate the theory into practices, they would actively participate in a class.

As the finding of this study indicated, almost all of the students were willing to participate for class activities, when they had the opportunity to apply their knowledge in the classroom and apply it to real-life examples. Supporting these ideas, the study found that positive traits of instructors and the method or style of teaching employed are important motivating factors to stimulate verbal engagements among students in the classroom (Mohd. Yusof Abdullah et.al, 2012)

Self Confidence of the Students

Self confidence was indicated by the students as a factor affecting their participation in a class. Thirteen students who are participated on the interview said that they would not participate in a class, because they feel that, they are incompetent in front of the other students and instructors. Three students said that "sometimes they feel anxious if they don't know the right answer, they don't want people to laugh on their ideas". One of the students said that "sometimes it can be stressful to participate because I can't quickly understand the activities and questions given by instructors; this is because I don't have confidence to express my ideas in English.

Supporting this ideas, the finding of the study conducted by Marija Susak (2016), indicated that, students would not want to participate in the class, if they felt that their peers or teachers would deem their answer as inaccurate and therefore would not want to be perceived as having inferior knowledge. Some students just like to express their opinion because they are outgoing and don't feel ashamed to do that. Others are shy and worry about consequences and what others will think of them so they are quiet all of the time. They just don't feel comfortable". Confidence reduced the level of anxiety related to being criticized for their opinion

Reading Skill and Practices of the Student

Students who come to class with additional information by readings and reviewing course material to be discussed in a classroom were more likely to participate in class. In this regards, eight students noted that they felt more comfortable providing answers and opinions if they had the opportunity to familiarize themselves with course content as they were more confident where they have information about the contents to be discussed a class. In this regards, one of students participated on interview said that "when I read the course materials to be presented by instructors in the next class schedules, I am motivated to participate in the class.

Similarly, all of eighteen students participated in interview noted that in reading books and course materials such as handout prepare them for classroom participation. Similarly, all of eighteen students noted that advanced class preparation not only give students more confidence to participate in a class, but also help them to retain information about the courses they are learn.

Feedback from Instructors

In their interviews, the majority of students noted that when their instructors would criticize and provides negative comments for their opinion, they would not participate in a class. All of the eighteen students indicated that, if their instructors provide supportive comments and feedbacks to their ideas, they are more probably motivated to participate in a class. In the same way, if instructors criticize them for their opinion, they feel bad and reduce their confidence to participate in a class.

The finding of this study indicated that, all students could be participated in classes; if they would get constructive feedback from their instructors. Supporting to this finding, Marija Susak (2016), stated that, people talk more and are not afraid to share their opinion because they will compliment good ideas or guide the student to the right answer by asking another question. Similarly, Mohd. Yus of Abdullah et.al, (2012) stated that, the instructor's traits that favored by students are friendly, know each student well, do not criticize the students, always show a good mood, and approachable. With these traits, students do not feel afraid and ashamed to speak up in class. Students also do not feel left out when everyone is given equal opportunity to participate.

V. DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to analyze the determinants of classroom participation of first year undergraduate students at Hawassa University focused on educational planning and management department. I have conducted in-depth interviews with selected students from first year (2018/19) entry. Data were recorded and transcribed the results for analysis, and reviewed the literature related to discuss the finding with others

studies having similar concepts. The findings of the study disclosed that determinants affecting classroom participation of the students includes; language of instruction, block teaching schedule, insufficient course materials, lack of aligning classroom activities with grading system, large class size, traditional lecture teaching methods, lose confidence and poor reading habits of the students and feedback from instructors are the major determinants affecting classroom participation of students at Hawassa University.

As the finding of this study indicated, language of instruction plays significant roles to determine classroom participation of students at Hawassa University. In this regard, all of students participated in this study indicated that with English being medium of instruction they did not always comfortable to express their feeling, opinion, understanding and thoughts; this is because, they did not have skills and experience of speaking English in classroom at secondary schools.

Another critical determinant affecting classroom participation of the students is, block teaching schedule. With the implementation of modular approach in undergraduate programmes; it has critical challenges especially for fresh man due to time limits, language constraints and poor academic potential of students.

An important thing contributed by this study is inappropriate allocation and utilization of course materials. As finding of this study indicated only few instructors provide handout for students. Majority of the instructors provides power point slides for the students as a reading material; so that, all of the students are dependent on power points. Therefore based on the findings of the study it is concluded that, instead of giving power point as reading material, instructors have to prepare, organize and provide relevant course materials such as course outlines, handout, reference books to students and they have also organize inquiry based learning for students to search additional information to diversify their understanding on the course. It is also concluded that, students mostly participate in a classroom activities; because, it has direct relationship with grade points.

Similarly, a critical determinant affecting classroom participation of students found in this study is large number of students in a class. As it was found that, due to large number of students, poor proficiency of communication skill in English; and shortage of time; most students didn't actively participate in a classroom. It is also concluded that, if students may be assigned in smaller class size with less than forty students per class, classroom participation of students to be higher.

Finally, another important issue this study has contributed is an approach to which the course content was delivered affected the students' participation in the classroom. In this regards, majority of students said that when the instructors would ask them to relate the theory into practices, they would actively participate in a class. Almost all of the students were willing to participate for class activities, when they have an opportunity to apply their knowledge in the classroom and relate it to real-life examples. Self confidence reading habits and constructive feedback from the instructors are also among major factor that affects the participation of students in the class.

Declaration of Interest Statement

I am declared that, this article is my original work and there is no any conflict of interests on this study.

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