

Factors Affecting Classroom Participation: A Study of Secondary School Students in Pakistan

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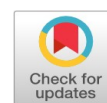
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Abstract: The present study was conducted to explore the factors affecting students' classroom participation at the secondary level. The objectives of the study were to identify the factors affecting students' classroom participation at the secondary level, to explore the students' perception about classroom participation, and to compare the male and female students' views about the factors affecting students' classroom participation. This study was descriptive in nature, and a survey method was used. A questionnaire was used as a tool to collect the data. Data was collected from 150 students (both male and female) of the secondary level. Data was analyzed through frequency and percentage and mean. Findings of the current study showed that the teachers' behavior, peers/classmates, curriculum, classroom environment physical/inclusive factor, and the domestic factors affect students' participation in class. Findings showed significant difference between the views of male and female students about the factors (teacher behavior, peers/classmates behavior, physical/inclusive factor, curriculum, classroom environment) affecting their classroom participation. The study has important implications for teachers, curriculum planners, and parents in Pakistan.

Keywords: Class room participation, Factors affecting, Secondary school students

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INTRODUCTION

Classroom participation is mostly used to characterize the willingness of students to take a part in daily class activities such as completion of assignments at time, following teachers' instructions and regularity in class. It is considered a component of engagement. Participation in the classroom has been described in several ways (Weaver & Qi, 2005). Students' active engagement process includes their participation in class discussions, preparation, communication skills, group skills, and attendance (Rocca, 2010). Fassinger (2000) defined it as "any statements or questions raised by students in class" (p. 39). Dallimore, Hertenstein, and Platt (2004) defined classroom engagement as, "the number of unsolicited responses volunteered" (p. 290). On the other hand, Dancer and Kamvounias (2005) defined it as an overall engagement process in which learners prepare, build group, participate in conversations and communication skills.

Dancer and Kamvounias (2005) described the complex nature of students' classroom participation comprehensively. Participation of students in classroom activities is a multi-faceted and complex process that encompasses a wide range of community practices such as feeling, thinking, talking, doing, and belonging (Floding & Swier, 2012). Similarly, Susak (2016) stated that classroom participation creates an environment where all students learn, comment, actively participate, and listen to the ideas and questions of their peers and other faculty members. The instructor or the students can initiate classroom participation, and it can take in the form of direct questions or comments from the students.

According to Susak (2016), factors that affect students' classroom participation can be divided into two categories: internal factors and external factors. Students' abilities, interest and motivation, inclination, prior

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knowledge, physical and learning disabilities are examples of internal factors. In contrast, teachers' and parents' behavior, support, students' age, relationship with peers, classroom environment, curriculum, social and economic status of parents, and other factors are examples of external factors.

Various researches have been conducted on factors affecting students' classroom participation based on gender and other related topics (Aziz, Quraisi, & Kazi, 2018). Participation is a process of active involvement that can be broken down into five steps: planning, participation in discussion, communication skills, collaborative abilities, and presence (Dancer & Kamvounias, 2005). In a similar vein, research studies exploring the concept of active classroom participation adequately from students' perspectives are insufficient. There is a need to explore the concept of students' participation in a more comprehensive manner (Tatar, 2005). A more in-depth understanding of the factors that contribute to and hinder students participation in class is required to increase the chance of assisting teachers in developing more effective strategies, addressing the factors that discourage students from participating, and promoting a more non-threatening and supportive learning environment is needed.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Researchers examined the factors that impact participation and the relationship between classroom participation and academic achievement (Chandran, 2015). The researchers examined several courses and student-related factors influencing their participation, including course schedule, course level, student major, and gender of students. They also revealed that students' participation directly correlates with their academic achievement.

In the literature, there is a growing need for students' classroom involvement, as learners' participation in the class contributes to their understanding of their learning (Abdullah, Bakar, & Mahbob, 2012; Farooq et al., 2010; Jam et al., 2010). Furthermore, much of the literature has established that student active engagement is critical since it aids the learner's development in many ways. Moreover, learning outcomes for those students who actively take part in in-class learning opportunities increased their academic achievement (Weaver & Qi, 2005), improved critical thinking skills (Jones, 2008), a more satisfying learning process (Majid, Yang, Lei, & Haoran, 2014), and increased language proficiency (Liu, Liu, Lee, & Magjuka, 2010). Despite a lot of benefits of student participation in learning activities, participation in classroom continues to be a significant problem, with the majority of students not willingly to participate and a minority of students tending to do so repeatedly and dominate the discussion (Abdullah et al., 2012; Savaşç, 2014; Jam, Donia, Raja, & Ling, 2017; Khan et al., 2012).

In this respect, participation is complicated, as evidenced by the fact that the majority of research studies that have attempted to determine why students participate or do not participate have discovered that a wide range of factors has an impact on students' participation in class. Generally studies focused on various socio-cultural, affective, cognitive, and other elements that influence student engagement. The research indicated that student's willingness to participate actively in classrooms was highly influenced by socio-cultural factors such as gender, age, culture, teacher characteristics, and classroom environment, among others (Mustapha et al., 2010). The affective elements were also identified as anxiety, low self-esteem, shyness, fear of making mistakes, and a lack of willingness to participate (Effiong, 2016; Savaşç, 2014; Jam, Mehmood, & Ahmad, 2013), among other things. In terms of cognitive elements, it has been noted that students' inability to formulate and organize their thoughts has a negative impact on their engagement in oral activities. Classroom participation can be affected by several factors, including the size of the class, a lack of proficiency and experience in English speaking (Loftin, Davis, & Hartin, 2010), language competence (Kay-Aydar, 2015), and the topics covered in the classroom (Sixsmith, Dyson, & Nataatmadja, 2006; Jam et al., 2014).

When students take active part in classroom activities, assignment and group projects, they learn more effectively than when they do not. At its most basic level, active participation includes everything from simply listening and taking notes to offering unsolicited responses and contributions to discussions in classroom. At its most advanced level, it may include actions beyond verbal communication. Many different methods can be used to encourage classroom participation, including expecting unprompted responses to questions posed and problems reviewed in class, cold calling students by their first and last names, encouraging in-class group work, and creating an welcoming and supportive environment (Chandran, 2015). Additionally, integrating class participation is a necessary component of the final test score. It increases students' participation in the class and prepares them for class sessions (Handelsman et al., 2005).

Elements of classroom participation are developed and summarized by Fritschner (2000), who identifies six

distinct participations levels: (1) remaining awake and breathing; (2) to attend a class and taking notes; (3) writing reflective and thoughtful papers; (4) making comments, asking questions in classroom and providing input for discussions in classroom; (5) to come in class with additional questions and doing additional kinds of research; and (6) according to condition and situation giving oral presentations when calls for it. There is much literature about students' reluctance and shyness to interact and talk in the classroom. They may repeatedly encourage to participate in the class to become more involved and active participants in the class (Abebe & Deneke, 2015), but "the nature of their silence in the classroom is complex with different students possessing distinct social norms, beliefs, and cultural backgrounds" (Tsou, 2005, p. 76)

Objective of this Study

1. To identify the factors affecting students' classroom participation at the secondary level in district Mansehra.
2. To explore the students' perception about the factors affecting students' classroom participation.
3. To compare the male and female views about the factors affecting students' classroom participation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive design to investigate students' views about factors affecting classroom participation at the secondary level. The current study population comprised of all secondary school students (both male and female), of District Mansehra, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan. Sample selected for this study comprised of 150 students studying in secondary school. These students were randomly selected through simple random sampling techniques.

A questionnaire was developed to explore the factors affecting students' classroom participation. The questionnaire was based on six factors (teacher's behavior, peers/classmates factor, the curriculum factor, classroom factor, physical/inclusive factor, and the domestic factor). There were 37 close-ended questions in the questionnaire that elicit responses from the respondents. The questionnaire was validated through experts; after getting their feedback few questions were reworded for more clarity. The reliability of the questionnaire was 0.87.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Data analysis systematically applies statistical or logical techniques to illustrate and evaluate data. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS 16 (statistical package for social sciences). Frequencies, percentages, and Mean were used to achieve the first two objectives for comparison *t*-test was applied to examine the comparison in the views of male and female students about their classroom participation.

Table 1 shows the students' perceptions about the factors affecting their participation in the class. The table indicates that 94% of students agreed that "they feel confident when they participated in class," while 3.4% of students disagreed with the statement. 81.3% of students agreed that "they have supportive environment in their class" while 10.6% of students disagreed with the statement. 79.4% of students agreed that the "environment of their class is non-threatening" while 10% disagreed with the statement. 73.4% of students agreed with the statement that they "don't hesitate in asking questions." In comparison, 13.3% of students disagreed with the statement. 80.6% of students agreed that "they get good grades when they participated in class discussion" while 6.6% of students disagreed with the statement. 74% of students agreed that "they get good grades when they asked questions" while 12% disagreed with the statement. 72.7% of students agreed with the statement that "they study in advance to make their classroom participation easy for their self" while 22% of students disagreed with the statement. 69.3% of students agreed that "they express their ideas well in writing" while 11.3% disagreed with the statement. 69.3% of students agreed with the statement that "their class is not overcrowded; in comparison, 24% of students disagreed with the statement. 83.4% of students agreed with the statement that "classroom participation helps them to prepare for exams" while 4.7% students disagreed with the statement. 88.7% students agreed with the statement that "they like the class in which there is an opportunity to express their ideas and opinions" while 4% students disagreed with the statement. 84% of students agreed with the statement that their oral communication is improved through class participation while 8% of students disagreed with the statement, and the sum of mean score (3.65) also supported the respondent's views about factors affecting classroom participation.

Table 1: Students' perception about the factors that affect their classroom participation

S.NO.	Statement		SA	A	UD	DA	SDA	Mean
1	I feel confident when I participate in class.	f	85	56	4	4	1	4.47
		%	56.7	37.3	2.7	2.7	.7	
2	There is a supportive environment in my class.	f	56	66	12	11	5	4.05
		%	37.3	44.0	8	7.3	3.3	
3	The environment of my class is not non-threatening.	f	52	67	16	8	7	3.99
		%	34.7	44.7	10.7	5.3	4.7	
4	I don't hesitate to ask questions.	f	37	73	20	15	5	3.81
		%	24.7	48.7	13.3	10	3.3	
5	I get good grades when I participate in class discussions.	f	50	71	19	8	2	4.06
		%	33.3	47.3	12.7	5.3	1.3	
6	I get good grades when I ask questions.	f	42	69	21	15	3	3.88
		%	28	46	14	10	2	
7	I study in advance to make classroom participation easy for myself.	f	43	66	8	21	12	3.71
		%	28.7	44	5.3	14	8	
8	I express my ideas well in writing.	f	42	62	29	12	5	3.83
		%	28	41.3	19.3	8	3.3	
9	My classroom is not overcrowded.	f	30	74	10	10	26	3.48
		%	20	49.3	6.7	6.7	17.3	
10	Classroom participation helps me to prepare for exams.	f	64	61	18	3	4	4.19
		%	42.7	40.7	12.7	2	2.7	
11	I like the class where there is an opportunity to express my ideas and opinions.	f	75	58	11	3	3	4.33
		%	50	38.7	7.3	2	2	
12	My oral communication is improved through class participation.	f	61	66	11	8	4	4.15
		%	40	44	7.3	5.3	2.7	

Table 2: Students' perception about teachers' behavior factors that affect classroom participation

S.NO.	Statement		SA	A	UD	DA	SDA	Mean Score
1	The teacher provides me a chance to express my thoughts freely.	f	65	54	14	8	9	4.05
		%	43.3	36	9.3	5.3	6	
2	The teacher appreciates me when I ask questions.	f	69	57	13	7	4	4.21
		%	46	38	8.7	4.7	2.7	
3	The teacher appreciates me when I participate in classroom activities.	f	57	67	9	6	9	4.06
		%	38	46	6	4	6	
4	Teacher allocates time for classroom discussion.	f	29	72	27	12	10	3.65
		%	19.3	48	18	8	6.7	
5	Teacher reinforces me for participation.	f	51	73	12	6	8	4.02
		%	34	48.7	8	4	5.3	
6	The teacher calls me on the whiteboard.	f	40	79	12	16	3	3.91
		%	26.7	52.7	8	10.7	2	
7	When the teacher gives me homework, it makes it easier to participate in class the next day.	f	50	65	16	10	9	3.91
		%	33.3	43.3	10.7	6.7	6	
8	The teacher asks me to assess my own participation.	f	57	67	13	5	8	4.07
		%	38	44.7	8.7	3.3	5.3	
9	Teacher uses different techniques for participation.	f	46	73	10	8	13	3.87
		%	30.7	48.7	6.7	5.3	8.7	
10	The teacher allows students to teach other students.	f	56	72	12	3	7	4.11
		%	37.3	48	8	2	4.7	
11	Teacher is supportive and encouraging.	f	72	66	6	3	3	4.34
		%	48	44	4	2	2	

Table 2 shows the students' perception about teacher's behavior that affects their participation in class. Table indicates that 79.3% agreed with the statement that their teacher provides them a chance to express their thoughts freely while 11.3% students disagreed with the statement. 84% students agreed with the statement that teacher appreciates them when they ask questions while 7.4% students disagreed with the statement. 84% students agreed with the statement that teacher appreciates them when they participate in classroom activities while 10% of students disagreed with the statement. 67.3% of students agreed with the statement that the teacher allocates time for

classroom discussion while 14.7% of students disagreed with the statement. 82.7% of students agreed with the statement that teacher reinforces them for participation while 9.3% students disagreed with the statement. 79.4% of students agreed that the teacher calls me on the whiteboard while 12.7% disagreed with the statement. 76.6% of students strongly agreed that when the teacher gives them homework, it makes it easier for them to participate in class the next day, while 12.7% disagreed with the statement. 82.7% of students agreed that the teacher asked them to assess their own participation while 8.6% of students disagreed with the statement. 79.4% of students agreed that teachers use different techniques for participation while 14% of students disagreed with the statement. 85.3% agreed that teachers allow students to teach other students while 6.7% disagreed with the statement. 92% of students agreed that the teacher is supportive and encouraging while 4% of students disagreed with the statement. Cumulative means score (4.01) also supports the respondents' views about teachers' behavior factors that affect classroom participation.

Table 3: Students' perceptions about their peers/classmates factors affecting their classroom participation

S.NO.	Statement		SA	A	UD	DA	SDA	Mean Score
1	My classmates/peers respect my ideas.	f	52	55	17	8	18	3.77
		%	34.7	36.7	11.3	5.3	12	
2	I have good interactions with my classmates/peers.	F	63	70	6	5	6	4.19
		%	42	46.7	4	3.3	4	
3	I feel more comfortable and open when I participate in group discussions.	F	74	61	6	3	6	4.29
		%	49.3	40.7	4	2	4	

Table 3 shows the students' perception about peers/classmates factors that affect their class participation. The table indicates that 71.4% of students agreed that their classmates/peers respect their ideas, while 17.3% disagreed with the statement. 88.7% of students agreed that they have good interaction with their classmates/peers while 7.3% disagreed with the statement. 90% of students agreed that they feel more comfortable and open when they participate in group discussion while 6% of students disagreed with the statement. Cumulative mean score (4.08) also supports the respondents' views about the peers/classmates' factors that affect student classroom participation.

Table 4: Students' perception about the curriculum factor that affects student classroom participation

S.NO.	Statement		SA	A	UD	DA	SDA	Mean Score
1	Curriculum encourages class participation.	F	39	64	13	11	23	3.57
		%	26	42.7	8.7	7.3	15.3	
2	Course burden doesn't allow me to participate in class.	f	30	52	9	27	32	3.14
		%	20	34.7	6	18	21.3	

Table 4 shows the student's perception about the curriculum factor that affects their participation in the class. The table indicates that 68.7% of students agreed that the curriculum encourages class participation, while 22.6% disagreed with the statement. 54.7% of students agreed that course burden doesn't allow them to participate in class while 39.3% of students disagreed with the statement. Cumulative mean score (3.35) also supports the respondents' views about the curriculum factor that affects student classroom participation.

Table 5: Students' perception about the classroom factor that affects student classroom participation

S.NO.	Statement		SA	A	UD	DA	SDA	Mean Score
1	Classroom size is enough for different activities.	F	31	71	10	13	25	3.47
		%	20.7	47.3	6.7	8.7	16.7	
2	My class is equipped with audiovisual aids related to course content.	F	17	45	22	26	40	2.82
		%	11.3	30	14.7	17.3	26.7	
3	The seating arrangement of our class is appropriate for class participation.	F	35	62	11	12	30	3.40
		%	23.3	41.3	7.3	8	20	

Table 5 shows the student's perception about the classroom factor that affects their class participation. The table indicates that 68% of students agreed that classroom size is enough for different activities, while 25.4% disagreed

with the statement. 41.3% of students agreed that their class is equipped with audio visual aids related to course content while 17.3% of students strongly disagreed with the statement. 64.6% of students agreed that the seating arrangement of their class is appropriate for class participation, while 28% of students disagreed with the statement, and cumulative mean score (3.23) also supports the respondents' views about the classroom factor that affects student classroom participation.

Table 6: Students' perception about the physical/inclusive factor that affect student classroom participation

S.NO.	Statement		SA	A	UD	DA	SDA	Mean Score
1	I have a hearing problem, that's why I don't participate in class.	F	30	45	5	25	45	2.93
		%	20	30	3.3	16.7	30	
2	I have an eyesight problem, that's why I don't participate in class.	f	25	44	12	26	43	2.88
		%	16.7	29.3	8	17.3	28.7	
3	The difference between mother tongue and institutional language is the cause of my less participation in class.	f	27	46	10	28	39	2.96
		%	18	30.7	6.7	18.7	26	

Table 6 shows the student's perception about the physical/inclusive factor that affects their class participation. The table reveals that 50% of students agreed that they have hearing problems, which is why they don't participate in class, while 46.7% disagreed with the statement. 46% of students agreed that they have eye sight problems, which is why they don't participate in class while 46% of students disagreed with the statement. 48.7% of students agreed with the statement that the difference between mother tongue and institutional language is the cause of their less participation in class while 44.7% of students disagreed with the statement. Cumulative mean score (2.92) also supports the respondents' views about the physical/inclusive factor that affects student classroom participation.

Table 7: Students' perception about the domestic factor that affects student classroom participation

S.NO.	Statement		SA	A	UD	DA	SDA	Mean Score
1	My parents encouraged me to talk in front of people.	F	59	73	9	5	4	4.19
		%	39.3	48.7	6	3.3	2.7	
2	My siblings encourage me to participate in-class activities.	f	51	64	34	4	-	4.08
		%	34	42.7	20.7	2.7	-	
3	I have financial problems and do not buy material related to class participation.	f	19	48	28	15	40	2.94
		%	12.7	32	18.7	10	26.7	

Table 7 shows the student's perception about the domestic factor that affects their class participation. The table depicts that 88% of students agreed that their parents encourage them to talk in front of people while 6% of students disagreed with the statement. 76.6% of students agreed that their siblings encourage them to participate in class activities while 2.7% disagreed with the statement. 44.7% of students agreed that they have financial problems and do not buy material related to class participation. In comparison, 36.7% of students strongly disagreed with the statement. Cumulative mean score (3.73) also supports the respondents' views about the domestic factor that affect student classroom participation.

Table 8: Comparative views of male and female students about factors affecting their classroom participation

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	p-value
Factors affecting classroom participation	Male	52	44.69	8.21	-4.31	0.000
	Female	98	49.66	5.77		

Table 8 shows the comparative views of male and female students about the factors affecting their participation in the classroom. The table shows a significant difference ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$) between the male and female views about their classroom participation factors. Mean values also support this difference. Female students' classroom participation is higher in all factors than male students.

Table 9: Comparative views of male and female students about factors affecting their classroom participation

Variable	Gender	<i>N</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i> -value
Teachers' behavior	Male	52	40.31	6.30	-6.56	0.000
	Female	98	46.28	4.68		
Peers/Classmates factor	Male	52	11.33	2.54	-3.63	0.000
	Female	98	12.74	2.11		
Curriculum factor	Male	52	6.60	2.46	-.410	0.682
	Female	98	6.77	2.37		
Classroom factor	Male	52	9.50	3.83	-.498	0.619
	Female	98	9.79	3.05		
Physical/Inclusive factor	Male	52	10.98	2.46	5.56	0.000
	Female	98	7.60	3.98		
Domestic factor	Male	52	11.13	2.06	-.327	.744
	Female	98	11.24	1.91		

The table shows the comparative views of male and female students about the factors (teacher's behavior, peers/classmates factor, the curriculum factor, classroom factor, physical/inclusive factor, and the domestic factor) affecting their class participation. The table shows that a significant difference was found between the male and female views in factors (teacher's behavior $p = 0.000 < 0.05$, peers/classmates factor $p = 0.000 < 0.05$, and physical/inclusive factor $p = 0.00 < 0.05$. While the curriculum factor $p = 0.682 > 0.05$, classroom factor, $p = 0.619 > 0.05$, domestic factor $p = 0.744 > 0.05$ shows no significant difference between the male and female views about these factors. The mean score in the table also shows that female students were of the view that teacher's behavior, peers/classmates factor; physical/inclusive factor affects their classroom participation as compare to their male counterparts.

DISCUSSION

Classroom participation is a key factor of students learning when students speak and participate in class, and they can enhance their understanding of the topic. Classroom participation allows students to construct knowledge, enhance confidence and think critically about their learning. Classroom participation of students is important for the educational process and preparing students for their careers. Students' participation in class helps to develop their higher-order thinking skills and demonstrates their understanding of their curriculum. The objectives of study are to identify, to explore the students' perception and compare the male and female views about the factors affecting students' classroom participation.

This study outlined the six factors affecting the classroom participation of students. These factors are classroom environment, teacher behavior, physical factors, domestic factors, peer relationships, and curriculum factors. No doubt that class participation has countless advantages for students. Still, different factors negatively affect students' classroom participation, for example, classroom size, teacher behavior, student confidence, preparation of student's class activities, and student physical problems (Weaver and Qi, 2005).

The current study showed that teachers' behavior, peers/classmates factor, the curriculum factor, classroom factor, physical/inclusive factor, and the domestic factor affect their class participation. The current study results are aligned with the previous study conducted by Rana, Malik, & Hussain, (2016), concluded that physical/inclusive factors, domestic factors affect the classroom participation of students, if they are facing economic problems, they don't buy material related to activities, and that's why they don't participate in class. The current study results are also supported by Susak (2016). He found that the students' classroom and curriculum factors affect students' classroom participation. He concluded that when the class environment is friendly and learner-centered, students feel confident and participate in the classroom activities.

The study of Crone (1997) and Fassinger (2000) is also aligned with the current study. They observed that participation of student is an important aspect of their learning, since an active learning environment enhances students' ability to think in a non-threatening and helpful atmosphere of participation in the classroom. The study found that classroom size, audiovisual aids, and proper seating arrangement of class affect the participation of students in class. The findings of both Fassinger (2000) and Rocca (2010) are aligned with the current study.

They discovered that the size of the classroom has an impact on students' willingness to participate, with smaller sections of less than thirty students providing a more personal environment conducive to discussion. Teachers with larger sections might choose to use discussion time to break the students up into smaller groups, allowing for more intimate conversation and acting as a facilitator rather than lecturing.

It was found that when students have good interaction with their classmates/peers, they feel more comfortable and open, they participate in group discussion, and their classmates/peers respect their ideas. The result of the current study is also supported by a previous study that concluded that class fellows' behavior (Gilbert et al., 2014), student confidence, and peers/classmates factors affect students' classroom participation. According to Fassinger (2000) and Rocca (2010) peer relationships were found to be an essential element in determining the level of participation in the classroom. Students were more likely to participate in class when they felt supported, appreciated, and not criticized by their peers.

The study found that the curriculum encourages class participation, and the course burden doesn't allow students to participate in class. The current study results are also supported by Fritschner's (2000) study. He indicated that course burden also affects the classroom participation of students. They participate more in class because their parents and siblings encourage them to talk in front of people. This finding is supported by the studies of Auster & MacRone (1994) and Crombie, Pyke, Silverthorn, Jones, & Piccinin (2003) they reported that students participate more in class when their family called them by name, give them the confidence to ask probing questions and engage in positive nonverbal behaviors such as smiling and nodding to acknowledge their answers.

The behavior of the teacher has a significant impact on the level of students' participation in the classroom. The study found that teachers allow students to express their thoughts freely and appreciate when they participate in class activities or when they ask questions. The teacher allocates time for classroom discussion and reinforces them for participation. When the teacher gives homework, it makes it easier for students to participate in class the next day, and the teacher asks them to assess their participation. Rocca (2010) indicated that when teachers make negative comments towards students, this can lower participation levels. Teachers' class management skills influence the quality of classroom participation; teachers' questioning strategy and their behavior. Students participate more when teachers engage them in different activities and give them an encouraging and supportive environment (Dallimore, Hertenstein, & Platt, 2004; Fassinger, 2000). Fassinger (2000) indicated that students were more inclined to participate if the teacher is approachable. Lack of confidence was also identified as a big factor affecting students' classroom participation.

FINDINGS

The study findings showed that majority of the students 79 % indicated that teachers' behavior, 71 % peers/classmates factor, 50 % physical/inclusive factor, 69 % curriculum factor, 68 % classroom factor, and 88 % domestic factor affects their class participation. The cumulative mean score (4.05) also supports the respondents' views.

A significant difference was found ($p < 0.05$) between the views of male and female students about factors (teacher behavior, peers/classmates behavior, physical/inclusive factor, curriculum, classroom environment) affecting their classroom participation. The mean score in the table also shows that female students ($M = 4.66$) were of the view that teacher's behavior, peers/classmates factor, physical/inclusive factor, curriculum factor, and classroom factor affect their classroom participation compared to their male ($M = 4.49$) counterparts. But no significant difference was found ($p > 0.05$) between the views of male and female students about their domestic factor. The mean score in the table also shows that female students were of the view that domestic factors affect their classroom participation compared to their male counterparts.

CONCLUSION

Based on findings, it is concluded that when the environment of the class is supportive and non-threatening, students feel confident in class to participate, they don't hesitate in asking questions, they get good grades, they study in advance, they express their ideas well in writing, class participation helps them to prepare for exam and their oral communication is also improved through class participation.

Teachers allow students to express their thoughts freely and appreciate when they participate in class activities or when they ask questions. Teacher allocates time for classroom discussion and reinforces them for participation. When teacher gives homework, it makes it easier for students to participate in the class next day. The teacher

asks them to assess their own participation. When students interact with their classmates/peers, they feel more comfortable and open when participating in group discussions, and their classmates/peers respect their ideas. The curriculum encourages class participation, and the course burden doesn't allow students to participate in class.

Students participate well when the classroom size is enough for different classroom activities, and the class is equipped with audiovisual aids related to course content. The seating arrangement of the class is appropriate for class participation. Students' become more participants in class because their parents and siblings encourage them to talk in front of people and participate. Some students face financial problems, which is one of the main reasons for less participation. Female students participate in different activities in the classroom more than male students.

Difference between the views of male and female students was found about factors (teacher behavior, peers/classmates behavior, physical/inclusive factor, curriculum, classroom environment) affecting their classroom participation, but no significant difference was found between the views of male and female students about their domestic factor. Female students' classroom participation is better as compare to their male students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It was found that teachers' behavior, peers/classmates factor, the curriculum factor, classroom factor, physical/inclusive factor, the domestic factor affects their class participation. Therefore it is recommended that teachers build a supportive relationship with all students to enhance their classroom participation. Teachers may arrange group discussions and a friendly environment in the class Teachers may use creative teaching techniques and equip classrooms with facilities to increase students' participation in the classroom. The sitting arrangement of the classroom is according to the class activity, and students may have no difficulty seeing the whiteboard and can participate in all classroom activities. Curriculum designers may focus on the activities that increase students' classroom participation. Teachers may also identify students in their classroom who have financial problems and give them concession in buying material related to different classroom activities.

A significant difference was found between the views of male and female students about factors (teacher behavior, peers/classmates behavior, physical/inclusive factor, curriculum, classroom environment) affecting their classroom participation. Female students participate more than male students in different classroom activities, so teacher pay focuses on male students and provides them a chance and encourages them to participate in classroom activities.

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