# Classroom Participation Patterns: A Case Study of Malaysian Undergraduate Students

## Siti Maziha Mustapha & Nik Suryani Nik Abd Rahman

**ABSTRACT:** This study aims to document undergraduate students' patterns of participation in Malaysian classrooms. Interviews and observations were carried out. Around 85 students from two communication classes were observed over the period of two semesters (28 weeks). Most of the participants fell between the age of 18-19 years old (65.8%) and 66.7% of the participants were female, while 33.3% were male. Around 24 students from the two classes were interviewed. Four basic patterns of participation emerged from the data: (1) active participation, (2) selective participation, (3) minimal participation, and (4) passive participation. It was also found that students' individual participation pattern could be influenced a myriad of factors, thus making their participation patterns flexible. This research demonstrated that the participatory roles students took in class could move along the participation continuum; from the most active to the least active. Recommendations are offered to promote students' participation in the context of higher learning. Educators need to strive towards providing a more supportive, non-threatening, and open learning environment where students would feel comfortable in letting their voice be heard while knowing when to be quiet so they can reap benefits from both behaviours.

**KEY WORDS:** Classroom participation, participation patterns, undergraduate students, open learning environment, and participative behaviours.

## Introduction

The benefits of participation have been researched quite extensively over the past years. Active classroom participation played an important role in the success of education and students' personal development in the future (Tatar, 2005). Students who are actively involved, reported higher satisfaction and higher persistence rates (Astin, 1993). Only 28.9% of the studies involved higher education. Thus, there is a lacking in the literature that searched for evidence in university classrooms and from the perspective of students themselves.

S. Tatar (2005) commented that only few studies have investigated classroom participation from the perspective of students or attempted to discover the reasons why some students don't participate even when participation is encouraged. Many previous studies have taken the instructor's perspective rather than college-

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aged students. Exploring classroom participation from students' perspective is important because it provides a firsthand account and insight into their feelings and perceptions. Thus, the students' perception presents their own realities in experiencing classroom participation.

To account for the role of classroom interaction in the form of participation, the theoretical work of L.S. Vygotsky (1978) could be utilized to explain students' learning through classroom participation. L.S. Vygotsky emphasized that students learn through social interactions and their culture (in Woolfolk, 2004). Thus, classroom functions as social, historical, and cultural contexts in which students interact and learn via their participation in class activities. Cultural tools and symbols like language are shared by students and used to structure their thinking. This theory explains that teacher-student and student-student interactions have become a medium of knowledge sharing and acquisition of understanding.

L.S. Vygotsky's theory furnishes a way to explain how discourses and instructional tools utilized by teachers and students in a classroom create possibilities for students to participate in class. However, the theory is not able to account for the differences in participation patterns among students in the same social context with the same cultural tools. Thus, a study that investigates why the differences in participation patterns occur in a social context where the same cultural tools are available to all students is crucial to provide further understanding to the participatory roles students take up in class.

## **Previous Researches**

Behaviours comprising participation vary greatly, ranging from breathing, and staying awake in class to giving oral presentations (Fritschner, 2000). In L.M. Fritschner's study, "*quiet students defined participation as including [...] attendance, active listening [...] and being prepared for class*" (Fritschner, 2000:342-343). P.A. Fassinger (1995) described student participation as any comments or questions that students offer or raise in class. Further, C. Wambach and T. Brothen (1997) defined participation in terms of specific behaviours, such as asking and answering questions, participating in class discussion, and refraining from negative behaviours. The definitions of classroom participation have been varied indicating differences in students' patterns of classroom participation.

The meaning of student participation in a college classroom was studied by D.A. Karp and W.C. Yoels in 1976. The study they carried out was one of the first studies that was done in a college classroom. Questionnaires were used to find the factors that have effects on students' participation or non-participation. Many students were found to view their role in class as being respectful to instructors by listening attentively and taking notes. This dominant pattern of participation is referred to as the "consolidation of responsibility" by D.A. Karp and W.C. Yoels (1976).

With the consolidation of responsibility, a few students assume the responsibility of being active participants in the classroom, while the rest of the class paid "civil

attention". The majority of the students paid sufficient attention so they know when to respond by nodding, or laughing while being attentive. Conversely, some students expressed annoyance over students who dominate or talk too much (Karp & Yoels, 1976).

In an ethnographic study, L. Morgenstern (1992) observed and interviewed four undergraduate students from a technological university. She found that regardless of the many opportunities for students to participate, only certain students seemed to take those opportunities. Only a small proportion of students, four to six students accounted for seventy to eighty percent of all student speech throughout the fifteen week semester. She discovered that some students never uttered a single word in class for the whole semester. The data from the interviews suggested that there were rules for students to follow during class participation: (1) do not ask stupid questions; (2) do not waste teacher's time; (3) do not waste class time; and (4) try to find the answers before asking the teacher. These unwritten rules may account for the students' reticence in the classroom.

J. Liu (2001) carried out a multi-case ethnographic study involving 172 Asian students to investigate issues pertinent to understanding Asian students' classroom communication patterns in a large Midwest research university in the U.S. Liu identified four classroom participation patterns: total integration, conditional participation, marginal interaction, and silent observation. Students, who exhibit total integration pattern, are spontaneous and active participants in class discussions. They showed a high level of acculturation and adapted to the ways they were supposed to participate in the American culture. Their total integration implies that these Asian students have "high motivation to achieve adaptive culture" (Liu, 2001:72).

Conditional participation refers to students whose participation is constrained by socio-cultural, cognitive, affective, linguistics or environmental factors. They may exhibit a high motivation, but their participation is inhibited due to language difficulties and fear of showing their weaknesses. They are unsure of what constitutes appropriate classroom behaviour.

Marginal interaction means that the Asian students hardly speak up in class. They mainly listen, take note, and have group discussions after class. Some students feel that participation is disruptive and disrespectful. When they speak up in class, they appear to be confident because they have put in a lot of thoughts and practice into it.

Silent observation is the most typical pattern showed by Asian students. They used compensation strategies to help them understand the lessons. They are receptive and accept whatever that is discussed in class unconditionally. J. Liu (2001) stresses that Asian student' participation modes gradually changed over time and the patterns could move from most active to the least active. This indicates the complexities of their communication patterns. Liu's study showed strengths as it presented the complicated interactions of various factors that come into play in shaping the Asian students' participative behaviours.

C. Lam (1994), who looked at the turn-taking behaviour of eight ESL (English as Second Language) Taiwanese students in graduate classes at a university in the U.S., found three patterns of participation: active, passive verbal, and silent. C. Lam concluded that students' interaction in the classroom is heavily influenced by their native culture.

D.L. Cunningham (2004), in her Doctoral research, found six major classifications of role behaviour patterns demonstrated by students in regular classroom settings. They were: (1) *Watchers*: Characterized by watching others participate but not participating themselves; (2) *Whisperers in the dark*: Those students who whisper to their neighbours during the discussion but don't speak up; (3) *Cave dwellers*: Students who balance conversation with listening and participating but don't dominate the discussion; (4) *Powerful story tellers of the cave*: Students who speak up a great deal and dominate the conversation; (5) *Occult cave artists*: Those who draw on paper while the discussion is going on; and (6) *Cave sleepers*: Students who doze off during the discussion.

D.L. Cunningham (2004) concluded that the roles students play would affect both their own participation and other students' participation in the class and the roles may change. Students take up roles that make them feel comfortable and ease the boredom they may be feeling in that educational environment.

Studies on classroom participation in Malaysia have been scant. Hui Choo Liew (2009) investigated factors affecting second language learners' classroom participation. The study focuses mainly on the second language learning. Zainal Abidin Sayadi (2007) carried out an investigation into Malaysian students' oral classroom participation with the participants being 146 first year Engineering students. The study found that students who were more proficient in the English language showed more tendencies to dominate the discussions. Five factors were found to influence students' classroom participation: linguistic, pedagogical, cognitive, affective, and socio-cultural factors. These factors were inter-related. This study was limited due to a short duration of observation period (two weeks), a small number of interviewees, and only two groups were observed. Therefore, the present study aims at discovering the undergraduate students' patterns of participation.

## Methodol ogy: Participants, Data Col Lection, and Data Analysis

The study was conducted at a medium-sized private university in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Participants of the study were recruited from undergraduate classes in the School of Communication. The participants were students taking communication courses. The courses were selected because it requires a high level of student participation and focuses more on oral communication activities rather than writing skills. Two intact classes of 84 students were selected to provide a heterogeneous population for the class observations which took place over the period of two semesters. Twenty five of the students, 10 male and 15 female, were selected for the interview, using maximum variation sampling. The participants were all Malaysian students with similar education backgrounds and expressed agreement to take part in the study.

During the first stage of the study, in-depth interviews were carried out with open-ended questions and as few prompts as possible to elicit rich descriptions of experiences. They were asked about their personal experiences in classroom participation and the ways they participate in class. For example, participants were asked, "*Can you tell me about some of your experiences of participating in classroom activities?*" and "*In what ways do you participate?*". Each interview lasted for approximately 20 minutes.

In the second stage, the observations were conducted by observing all potentially relevant occurrences of participation behaviours of students. The non-participant observation was appropriate because the observer remained inconspicuous so that the behaviour of the participants was not affected. Field-note-taking and video tape recordings were also allowed during the observations in the two classes. One hundred and twenty minutes from each session were recorded on video.

Data from the interview were transcribed verbatim and data from the observation were coded. The data were analysed to identify patterns inherent in phenomenon. Recurring patterns and themes of patterns of participation exhibited by the students in the classroom activities were identified through reading and re-reading the data and listening to the taped sessions. The final categories were derived from the identification of similarities or characteristics of the data within a category. Descriptive statistics was also used to analyze the data.

## **Results**

Analysis of the results revealed four emerging participation patterns. Table 1 shows the characteristics of each pattern of participation.

Patterns	Characteristics
Active Participation: 17.9%	Initiated interaction whenever appropriate.
	Natural desire to participate.
	Spontaneous.
	Enjoy contributing to class discussions.
	Not afraid to challenge others' ideas.
	Able to defend own ideas.
	Elaborate answers.
	Show confidence.
	Exhibit focus.
	Exhibit consistency.

 Table 1

 Characteristics of Each Participation Pattern

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Selective Participation: 32.1%	Have the ability to participate.
	Know the value of participation.
	Participate when they want to.
	Affected by influencing factors.
	Give sufficient attention.
	Exhibit inconsistency.
	High interaction with classmates.
	Tend to participate to help classmates out.
	Tend to mentally rehearse on what to say.
	Focus on the content rather than on the language.
Minimal Participation: 46.4%	Participate when directly asked by lecturer:
(a) Students with minimal oral responses:	Keep a low profile.
	Quietly pay attention.
	Wait for others to answer first.
	Chimed in with one-word answers.
	Use short answers to create a good impression.
	Not confident.
	Interact with lecturer or peers when they need help.
	Fear making mistakes.
	Use nonverbal gestures to respond.
(b) Students with only non-verbal	Quietly pay attention.
responses:	Answer only when directly asked by lecturer.
	Not confident to speak out.
	Interact with lecturer or peers when they need help.
	Fear making mistakes.
Passive Participation: 3.6%	Rarely participate.
	Inactive.
	No initiative to participate.
	View participation as being present in class.
(a) Positively Passive:	Keep quiet in order to concentrate on the lesson and
	show respect to the lecturer.
	Learn more when they are silent.
(b) Negatively Passive:	View participation as being present in class.
	Not concerned about class activities.
	Not interested in the lessons.
	In their own world.

## Pattern 1: Active Participation

It was observed that a small number of students, 17.9% fit into this category. These students participated 3 or more times in a one hour class. They initiated interaction with the lecturer and other classmates whenever appropriate. They took any opportunity presented to them to ask questions, answer questions, voice their opinion or share their ideas or stories. One of the students interviewed described her feelings about participating in class as:

Exciting, I really like to participate. I feel bored when I am not active in class. I don't like to just sit in class and listen. I want to be able to ask questions, you know [...] interact with the lecturers and my friends! (Interviewee 8).

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For this active student, participating in class activities comes naturally to her. Students who were active participants of class activities also exhibited joy and ease in carrying out activities in class. Their questions or feedback seemed spontaneous and they looked happy when they were contributing their ideas and talking to the class. One student explained:

I think being present physically and mentally in class shows that I am fully committed [...] so I am actively participating and I enjoy every minute of it! (Interviewee 11).

This active student did seem to find classroom participation a daunting task, instead she revelled in it and along the way enjoyed herself and learned from her active involvement.

In a class discussion, the active students showed their ability to be critical by challenging ideas given by their classmates. They were polite when they wanted to challenge the answers given by their classmates. For instance, one student was observed to have said as follows:

I'm sorry [...] but I think your answer is not quite relevant to the theory [...]. I can't agree with your opinion because I think we can also see it from another perspective [...].

Their choice of words indicated that they tried not to ridicule or put down their classmates even though they had to challenge their classmates' answers.

There were occasions where the active students' ideas were challenged by the lecturer and other classmates. They defended their ideas by explaining the logic behind their ideas and shared with the class their thought processes. They did not display any aggression though the discussion became animated. There was only one occasion when one of the active students challenged the lecturer's opinion. He said as follows:

Sorry! I don't think it is accurate to say that [...] when there are studies which proved that [...] I think it would be better to say that [...].

The student disagreed with the lecturer's opinion but phrased the disagreement to sound like a suggestion rather than a challenge.

These active students also showed the ability to elaborate or explain their answers when needed. They seemed comfortable when explaining their answers and maintained eye-contact their lecturer and other classmates while doing so. They did not hesitate or rush to finish answering the question. This showed confidence and poise.

The confidence exhibited by these students came from their beliefs that they have the abilities to be active in class. Their classroom participation seemed also to be less affected by encouraging or discouraging factors. When asked whether there was anything that would make them less participative, one of them answered as follows: Um [...] No. I don't think it is enough for me to just sit there [...]. I must listen, process the knowledge, apply and give feedback [...] I know how to participate and I do believe that I have the abilities [...] so I just carry on [...] nothing can stop me from participating (Interviewee 1).

Students who exhibited active participation exhibited focus and consistency in their contribution to the class activities throughout the semester. They appeared to have positive emotions and low anxiety. They perceived classroom participation as positive and their involvement in class activities would be academically rewarding.

## Pattern 2: Sel ective Participation

Selective participation is characterized by students' decision to be participative or less participative based on a variety of factors. This means that the students in this category were capable of participating but chose when to participate depending on factors personal to them. Around 32.1% of the students fall into this category where they participated twice in a one hour class.

Students in this category displayed caution when participating and their participation depended on factors like:

It depends on many things; if I like my lecturer, I will make a point to participate! Sometimes I help my friend to answer the question; sometimes I keep quiet [...] especially if the topic is difficult. But, I do know the value of participating (Interviewee 24).

In his explanation, this student selected the occasion when to participate and when not to participate. It was a conscious decision as he knew the value of participation.

The class content was one of the influencing factors. Many of the students chose to become more participative when the topic discussed by lecturer was interesting and relevant to them. They were observed to be very responsive when topics like organizing events or product branding because they said that they had knowledge about the topics. Some of them said that they could relate to the topics as they had some experience regarding the topics. Therefore, students who selected when to participate were influenced by the class content.

Student appeared to give sufficient attention to the lecturer, especially during the first hour of class. The attention given became lesser as the class progressed. However, if there was anything they found interesting in the class discussion, they would quickly revert to what was going on in class. This was explained by one student, as follows:

I try to participate in class! There would be times when I drift off but when my friends say something interesting or my lecturer makes a joke, I quickly join in (Interviewee 13).

Another behaviour exhibited by students who selected when to participate was helping their classmates out. There were many occasions that these students

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were quietly attentive but became talkative when their classmates were not able to answer questions posed by the lecturer. They were willing to step in. In an effort to explain this behaviour, one student said as follows:

I participate when I feel like participating. Most of the time, I pay attention to what's going on in class. When my friend does know how to answer, I will help out by giving my answer. There are times that I don't say much as my English [...] my vocabulary is not good enough to explain what I want to say (Interviewee 19).

Besides choosing to participate to help out classmates who couldn't answer the question, students also mentioned linguistic limitation as an influencing factor. Further, these students were influenced by their lecturer and classmates. One student stated as follows:

I try to participate [...] coz I know as a communication student, I must practice to speak well. So, I force myself to speak more [...] I am not that confident of myself. I worry about what people say. I only participate when I feel that my lecturer and classmates would support me and they won't criticize (Interviewee 14).

Students exhibited hesitation when they were worried about others' response to their feedback so they selected to participate when they felt that their feedback would be well-received by the others in class. They reported that they had a tendency to mentally rehearse what to say in class and focus on the content. They were not so concerned about their grammatical mistakes.

Students who were selective participants exhibited inconsistency in their participation in the class activities throughout the semester because of their dependence on encouraging and discouraging factors.

### Pattern 3: Minimal Participation

The biggest proportion of the students exhibited minimal participation. Around 46.4% of the students participated only once in one hour class. The student who participated minimally could be classified into 2 groups:

*First*, **Students with minimal oral responses**. They were observed to keep a low profile. They did not do anything to draw the lecturer's attention to them. They appeared to be quietly paying attention. When the lecturer posed a question to the class, these students were prone to observe others first. When others started to answer, they quickly chimed in. "One-word" answers were also their favourite way of participating. They felt more comfortable when they did not have to explain their answers.

This is explained by one student when he talked about his way of participating. He said as follows:

Not really [...] I get nervous sometimes [...] my English is not that good! So, I only participated when my lecturer asks me a direct question [...] or when I can answer "yes" or "no" [laughs] and "I agree" or "I disagree". I am ok with short answers. I also answer when the others are

answering at the same time  $[\ldots]$  the lecturer won't hear my answer, but will see that I open my mouth! (Interviewee 10).

The student wanted to create a good impression by appearing to answer a question but without drawing too much attention to himself.

Sometimes when the lecturer asked them to elaborate their answers, they began saying something but left it hanging. Then they quickly turned to their classmates and made gestures to indicate to their classmates that they needed help. There was always another student who was ready to help respond to the lecturer's question.

Second, **Students with only non-verbal responses**. There were also students who participated by responding non-verbally only. They used their hands, head or facial expression to show agreement or disagreement with what was being discussed in class. They laughed and rolled their eyes whenever the lecturer or other classmates said something funny or told a joke. They also clapped their hands to show support to their classmates.

These students nodded or shook their heads and smiled at the lecturer during lecture. They did not exchange any words with the lecturer openly. However, they would answer the question if it was directly asked. These students appeared to be involved in the class activities but they showed this by being very animated nonverbally and devoid of verbal interactions. These students perceived participation as being both verbal and non-verbal responses. To them, non-verbal responses showed that they were concentrating and responding to the lecturer and it was an important part of their classroom interaction.

The only interaction students who minimally participated had with their lecturer was when the lecturer directly asked them a question or when these students needed help from the lecturer because they did not know how to carry out a certain task that needed to be finished within the class hours. They sought their lecturer's attention when they knew that they had to submit their work and none of their classmates could help them. At other times, students appeared to be more interested to discretely discuss what they couldn't understand with classmates seated adjacent to them.

#### Pattern 4: Passive Participation

The students who were passive in class accounted for 3.6% of the total student number. The low percentage signifies a positive sign that only very few students in university classrooms are totally inactive.

The few students who were the least active in class were those who perceived classroom participation as being physically present in class. One of them said as follows:

I think students can also participate by being present in class [...] it is good enough [...] at least I am in class not elsewhere! (Interviewee 20).

These students believed that being present showed that they were part of the class. There were two types of passive students:

*First*, **Positively passive**. Positively passive students were those who chose to be quiet throughout the class because they felt that they learnt more by concentrating on what was going on in class. There was no need for them to spend time thinking about how to respond to their lecturer or classmates as one student stated as follows:

I don't mind participating but I prefer to keep quiet so I can concentrate. I don't want to be busy thinking about what I want to say to the class [...] I just want to listen (Interviewee 20).

Another student expressed his nervousness about communicating in class and explained that:

I am a bit nervous about participating [...] I don't like to communicate with others [...] It has nothing to do with my English [...] I just prefer to listen [...] I learn more [...] when I keep quiet and listen to others! (Interviewee 16).

This student believed that he would gain more knowledge by listening rather not by being participative. When the lecturer asked them a question, they attempted to answer

*Second*, **Negatively passive**. Negatively passive students were those who were very quiet because they were not concerned about their studies and were not interested in what went on in class. These were the isolated few who were observed to be in their own world. They looked outside the window, had a glazed look on their face, stared at the book, and appeared to be disconnected from the rest of the class.

These students answered, "I don't know" when the lecturer prompted them to answer the question or give feedback. They also did not engage in any conversation with the classmates seated next to them. Their chosen isolation stemmed out of their need to be disconnected mentally but still be present in class to fulfil college's attendance requirement.

The patterns of participation that emerged from the observation and interviews showed that there were four basic patterns which ranged from active to passive participation. What was most significant to note was that it was observed that the students' individual participation pattern was not confined to only one pattern; it was flexible for many of the students. In other words, it was possible for the students to move along the participation patterns continuum; meaning one student can be a selective participant in one class but be a minimum participant in another.

Students reported several factors that were influential in pushing them towards being more or less active in class. This finding supports the research carried out by J. Liu (2001) who found that Asian students' classroom communication patterns were not static as students may be active in one class but less active in another. However, it is also important to note that the few students who were active participants perceived themselves to be good at participating and exhibited fewer tendencies to be influenced by encouraging and discouraging factors. They were consistently active in all class sessions.

The observation data showed that students' expressed feelings towards participation coincided with how they participated in class, for instance: students who reported feeling happy about participation exhibited relaxed and open demeanours while participating in class. They were also active in class. Those who expressed mixed feelings were sometimes active, sometimes less active. Those who feared participation were spectators and refrained from participating.

How student perceived classroom participation also affects their participative behaviour. Students who saw classroom participation as contributing non-verbally to what went class, assigned importance to their non-verbal responses, thus displayed the behaviour in class.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

The multitude of views on classroom participation signifies the unseen complexity of how students perceive classroom participation could directly or indirectly influence their classroom participation patterns.

Four basic patterns active participation, selective participation, minimal participation, and passive participation emerged from the data. Students who showed active participation pattern believed that they had the skills to participate in class activities. They showed confidence, eagerness, and took every opportunity to participate.

Students who showed selective participation pattern were moderately participative in class activities. However, their participation was observed to be inconsistent although they reported that they tried to be as active as they can. They showed more tendencies to be influenced by the encouraging and discouraging factors. They participated when they felt encouraged but remained silent when they were cautious or apprehensive. They consciously gauge whether the outcome of their participation would be positive.

Combining the two groups of students who are fully and selectively participative, the study found that 50% or half of the students observed did take part in class activities. The level of students' involvement in class activities for this study was much higher in comparison C.E. Nunn's study where he found that approximately 25% of the college students took part in class discussions (Nunn, 1996). This could be explained by the statements made by many of the participants during interviews. They said that they participated because they were communication students and therefore, they were supposed to be good at communicating with others in or outside the classroom. Their lecturers also expected them to be more participative so they put in efforts to be participative in class. This confirms the study done by F. Pawan (1995) where it was found that the professors' expectations of the students have a way of influencing students' behaviour in class.

Minimal participation patterns were exhibited by students who participated just enough times to create what they perceived as a positive impression. They did so by responding using short answers or non-verbal cues. When called by the lecturer, they would attempt a short answer.

Passive participation pattern was exhibited by two groups of students: (1) Students who preferred to be silent because they felt that they learn better that way; and (2) Students who were silent due to their desire to be disconnected from the learning environment. This group of negatively passive students could be likened to D.L. Cunningham's occult cave artists who draw on paper while the discussion is going on and cave sleepers who doze off during the discussion (Cunningham, 2004). Only 3.6% of the students rarely or never participated. This finding proves that the Malaysian students are more participative in class compared to students investigated by A. Caspi and his colleagues (2006). They reported that 55% of the students never or rarely participated in class.

It was found that students' individual participation pattern could be influenced by encouraging or discouraging factors that made their participation pattern flexible. In other words, given the encouraging factors, students could move along the participation continuum from being a passive participant to a selective participant or vice versa.

However, one significant finding was the few students who were active participants perceived themselves as being good at participating and they exhibited less tendency to be influenced by encouraging and discouraging factors. They showed consistency in the frequency and length of their participation in all class sessions. They were also dependable in a sense that the lecturer and classmates could count on them to be actively contributing to class activities. This finding is consistent with the findings from the studies done by D.A. Karp and W.C. Yoels (1976) and C.G. Krupnick (1985) that discovered a few students assumed the role of talkers as the beginning of the semester and consistently participate dominantly throughout the course.

In summary, results of the current study suggest that the level of participation among Malaysian undergraduate students is surprisingly encouraging. The participatory roles students took up in class were the result of complex interactions between many factors. Findings indicate that students' participation patterns can be flexible, thus devising appropriate interventions or pedagogical strategies may very well be motivators for students to achieve consistency in their participation pattern. Educators need to strive towards providing a more supportive, non-threatening, and open learning environment where students would feel comfortable in letting their voice be heard while knowing when to be quiet so they can reap benefits from both behaviours.

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