academicJournals

Vol. 12(14), pp. 695-703, 23 July, 2017
DOI: 10.5897/ERR2017.3258
Article Number: 6D2C41365248
ISSN 1990-3839

http://www.academicjournals.org/ERR

Educational Research and Reviews

Full Length Research Paper

Students' conception of learning environment and their approach to learning and its implication on quality education

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Received 27 April, 2017; Accepted 26 May, 2017

Quality of education in higher institutions can be affected by different factors. It partly rests on the learning environment created by teachers and the learning approach students are employing during their learning. The main purpose of this study is to examine the learning environment at Mizan Tepi University from students' perspective and their approach to learning, and evaluate its implication on quality education. The study is descriptive survey in its nature of quantitative approach. The Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) and Approaches and Study Skills Inventory for Students (ASSIST) are employed to measure the learning environment and approach to learning respectively. The study was targeted at six colleges of Mizan-Tepi University and randomly selected 382 students participated in the study. The following conclusions were derived from analysis made using correlation, cluster analysis, ANOVA and independent t-test. The learning environment/context as redefined in this study represents the teaching activities conducted in the classroom only. The whole picture of the response shows that the learning environment is conducive for students learning. However, the ANOVA result confirmed the existence of statistically significant difference among the six colleges on this variable. Gender is not a function to perceive the learning environment differently. A statistically significant and positive relationship was found between learning environment, deep approach and students' performance. It was confirmed that those students who perceived their learning context as conducive for their learning, adopted deep approach and have better achievement. But, those who conceived the learning environment as less conducive; adopted surface approach and have lower score. Finally, the result from cluster analysis shows 54% (n=207) of students in the sample perceived their learning environment as supportive of their learning and adopted a desirable (high quality) learning approach while 46% (n=175) perceived their learning environment as less conducive and adopted a low quality learning approach. Hence, it can be inferred that the teaching learning practice in this university is promising in the journey of ensuring quality education but it needs a great effort at all levels to make it to the standard.

Key words: Learning approach, learning environment, quality education, students learning.

INTRODUCTION

Education promotes the culture of productivity by enabling individuals to discover the creative potentials in them and apply same the improvement of the existing skill and technique of performing specific tasks, thereby increasing the efficiency of their personal societal efforts (Orji, 2012).

Higher education is becoming a major driver of economic competitiveness in an increasingly knowledge

driven global economy (OECD, 2009). This shows that education and development has a strong relationship. Ethiopia is also investing a very huge capital on expansion of education ranging from primary schools to higher education institutions. Currently, it is bringing a visible change in countries development, in supplying man powers for different sectors.

According to Daniel (2004), higher education institutions are expected to produce graduates capable of bringing about changes and improvement in the society. Due to this, like the rest of the world, Ethiopia also gave a due attention to the expansion of higher education across the country. More than anything, graduates of these institutions are expected to be well equipped with knowledge, skills, understanding and attitude in order to serve the society effectively.

The quality of education captures the central idea in all educational institutions including higher education in today's Ethiopia. Despite the lack of consensus over the concept of quality, formal quality assurance has now become one of the central components of reform and policy instruments to adapt higher education institutions to the increasing expectations from both internal and external stakeholders all over the world (Nega, 2012).

The concept of quality education by its nature is very broad, and it is too difficult to measure from few perspectives and to define precisely. However, there are many indicators, by which effective accomplishment of them can lead to infer the quality of education. The increasing concern for quality in many Sub-Saharan African countries comes at a time from growing recognition of the potentially powerful role of higher education for growth and its rapid expansion since the new millennium (Materu, 2007).

The Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency (HERQA, 2006) in Ethiopian have designed different criteria to ensure the quality of education in higher institutions. It has also proposed many focus areas through which the quality of education can be ensured; some of these include governance and management system, infrastructure and learning resources, program relevance and curriculum, teaching learning process, research and outreach activities and the like.

The imperative for countries to improve employment skills calls for quality teaching within the educational institutions (Hartley 2005). This is to mean that, more than the others, the teaching learning process is very determinant in ensuring quality education. According to the organization for economic cooperation and development (OECD) report of 2009, "quality education might stem from the internal quality assurance systems that regard teaching as one of the pillars of quality along with research and management." Nega (2012) also stated that quality of education and its assurance come at the forefront of all crucial issues in the context of increasing recognition of the role of higher education for national development.

Though the fact is there are no adequate researches conducted with specific to quality education in higher education. The study conducted by Nega (2012), mainly focuses on the systems established to assure quality education in a broader perspective. Tadesse et al. (2013) research also focuses on the general view of quality education from the focus areas proposed by HERQA so it has generalist view. However, this study particularly focuses on the teaching learning practices at the classroom instruction level.

Since the teaching learning process plays a paramount role in ensuring quality of education, it should be given a due attention for its effectiveness. There may not be single definition for what effective teaching is, but scholars agree on the idea of active engagement of students in the teaching learning process and teachers' effort to promote their learning leads to effective teaching. Effective teaching is about bringing effective and meaningful students learning (Hativa, 2000).

Similarly, Ramdsen (1992) viewed good teaching as "striving continually to learn about students understanding and the effect of teaching on it". Therefore, teaching should stimulate students' curiosity and active learning, encouraging students' analytical, logical and creative thinking, and increase both their desire and capacity for future learning.

The teaching learning process in higher education needs to encourage the students to actively participate in the process. Many scholars have forwarded their view towards students' involvement in their learning. These views lie on the assumption that students will learn more, when they are actively engaged in the teaching learning process and when they have given guidance and feedback by their teachers.

HERQA also proposed many criteria through which quality education will be assured. Of these, one is the teaching learning aspect. These criteria highly focus on the active engagement of students in the process and teachers emphasis to employ different techniques during teaching and assessing students learning. Beside this, the approach students adopt in their learning contributes a lot for their performance in the school and in their world of work. With this regard, teachers' reflection on quality teaching in Ethiopia higher education by Daniel (2004) raised students learning approach as one problem for quality education.

The role teachers' play in the teaching learning process is very crucial. They are the one who closely monitor students' progress and adopt different mechanisms to

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enhance their learning. They are also agents who expose children's with new world and guide them how to deal with it. No matter how the good the curriculum may be and how well it is organized, and whether or not teaching materials are available, ultimately the quality of education rests mainly on the methodology of instruction employed by the teachers (Yalew, 2004).

Teachers are also responsible to link assessment with the teaching and learning, which is a key for the improvement of the practice. The view teachers have for the purpose of assessment weather "assessment of learning" or "assessment for learning" highly influences the teaching practice and students learning. According to Richard (2002), for teaching staff, recognizing the potent effects of assessment requirements on student study habits and capitalizing on the capacity of assessment for creating preferred patterns of study is a powerful means of reconceptualising the use of assessment.

According to Educational Testing System (ETS) 2003, what teachers assess, how they assess and how they communicate the results send a clear message to students about what worth learning , how it should be learned and how well expect them to perform.

Similarly, the way we teach our students clearly influences them with regard to their style of learning, level of understanding and finally their performance.

According to Wilkonsin in Walker 2006, "how we teach reflects our respect for the students, our commitment to the academic community and our responsibility for the world… our commitment to our community entails inculcating in the students an enjoyment of the pursuit of difficulty so that they reach the highest intellectual level of which they are capable". Therefore, teachers must play a pervasive role in linking or reinforcing teaching, learning and assessment. This helps them to improve the teaching practice and enhance students learning.

Students on the other side contribute a lot for the betterment of the teaching learning process. The effort they put and the approach they follow in their learning is highly related to their achievement. As Pace in Hativa (2000) suggested, "the largest contributor to students learning gains at the post-secondary level is the effort they put in to their work". Beside this, the approach adopted by students in their learning influences their achievement.

According to Daniel (2004), "students gain understanding when they have the motive to adopt a deep approach to learning". On the other hand, students who adopt a surface approach are primarily interested in meeting the demands of getting good grades. Since students are expected to solve the societies' problem under different context, they need to have an understanding of the nature of that particular issue, rather than mere knowledge of facts or principles.

According to Walker (2006), "Understanding is more significant than to know what". Therefore, to learn how to explain things or events is to be able to grasp the principles which underlie and make sense of their working, and thus to enable us to recognize their occurrence on some future occasion even though the surface characteristics appear to be different.

All the aforementioned key issues show that, teachers and students are very important in determining the effectiveness of the teaching learning process by creating conducive learning environment and adopting good approach in their learning respectively. Therefore, Students' perceptions of their educational environment are a useful basis for modifying and improving the quality of education.

Ethiopia needs graduates capable of solving real life problems in the society. This becomes true when higher education institutions prepare manpower, which are well equipped with knowledge, skill, understanding and attitude. Mere knowledge of facts and principles in their learning does not enable them to perform their activities as intended. Different scholars in the area underlined on the assumption that students of higher education should be encouraged to focus on "understanding in their learning" and they have to have the ability to apply it in different contexts at their work place.

To affirm this, the role teachers play in creating conducive environment for students learning, integrating the teaching learning process, promoting students learning etc. are the desired practice. Beside this, students must devote their time on their learning and use learning approach which enables them to understand what they have learnt. Even though, scholars recommend these key issues for effective teaching learning process in higher education, instructors and students are not giving attention to implement it in their practices.

Nowadays in Ethiopia, there are criticisms raised by politicians and society through media on the actual performance of graduates at their work place, which is directly linked to the quality of teaching learning process in the university. In the teaching learning process, the environment in which students learn and the approach students adopt create a great impact on the quality of graduates. The researcher experience at Mizan-Tepi University as a lecturer and professional trainer, teachers strive to cover the course content within the given time while students focus on getting high scores in the exams regardless of their learning. This kind of teaching and learning approach contributes little for quality education with regard to modern pedagogue. This calls the higher education community (teachers' and researchers) to evaluate the context in which students are learning and their approach to learning.

Therefore, examining how students' perceive their learning environment and the approach employed in their learning and finally looking its implication on quality education is the concern of this study. To this end, the following research questions were raised:

(1) How students are conceiving the environment

(particularly of their department) in which they are learning?
(2) What approaches students are using in their learning? What are the factors for their choice of the particular approach?
(4) Is there a relationship between conception of learning environment and students approach to learning?
(5) What is the implication of the learning environment and students learning approach in enhancing quality education in the university?

By addressing all these questions, the study fills the gap observed in policy making with regard to capacity building of faculties. In addition, the study will also add insights on the relation between teaching practice and students learning quality.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Population and samples of the study

Population

Students of Mizan-Tepi University are the population of the study. The University has a total of 4693 students under six colleges of which 3095 are males while the rest 1598 are females. The study particularly focused on 2nd and 3rd year students of the university. These students can give adequate and reliable information on teaching practice in their department than the new entrants.

Sample, sampling technique and procedures

The study includes samples from all colleges of the university. From the whole population of the study, 414 students were taken as a sample of the study of which 382 samples returned their response for final analysis. The corresponding sample size taken from each college is: Social Science and Humanities (n= 72 students), Natural and Computational Science (n= 85 students), College of Business and Economics (n = 40 students), College of Agriculture (n= 51), College of Health Science (n=48) and College of Engineering (n=86). These colleges were included purposively with the intention of looking the whole situation of the university. Simple random sampling (lottery method) was employed to represent departments from each college and proportional stratified random sampling was used in selecting individual students from each department. The diversity of samples from different departments is considered in order to know the whole picture of the issue at the university level.

Data gathering tools and procedures

Scale was the tool employed in collecting data for this study. To measure students' conception of their learning environment, the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) was adapted. It consists of 37 items which measures the learning environment of departments on five different elements. The reliability of the scale in this study is α=.94

Approaches and Study Skills Inventory for Students (ASSIST) was used to measure students learning approach. The scale used here, considers the three approaches to learning by testing student responses on 52 items each belonging to 13 identified sub-scales (Deep Approach: seeking meaning, relating ideas, use of evidence, and interest in ideas.

Surface-apathetic approach: Lack of purpose, unrelated memorizing, syllabus-boundness, and fear of failure. Strategic

Approach: Organized study, time management, alertness to assessment demands, achieving, and monitoring effectiveness).For each question, students were instructed to give their agreement or disagreement using a five-ordered response scale. The reliability of the instrument in this study is α=0.91

Methods and tools of data analysis

The responses obtained from the participants of the study were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Pearson product moment correlation, Independent t-test, one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and cluster analysis are the statistical tests employed in analyzing the data. The level of significance at all level is set at α=0.05.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A scale was administered for 414 students and response rate of 92.27% was obtained. These numbers of complete response were taken as good enough to know the whole picture of the university on the issue under investigation. Therefore, the finding is the response of 382 students who were included as a sample.

Students learning environment

To know the status of the learning context in facilitating quality learning, students' conception of the learning environment at college level was analyzed. The general picture of the response of the samples taken from the university population shows as the learning environment is conducive for their learning. This is good news for the university community because students perceived the teaching practice as if it is suitable for their learning. The descriptive statistics of the six colleges on the variable learning environment which is a result of 37 items having five alternatives of likert type is presented hereunder (Table 1).

The result shows that the total average mean of the six colleges on the variable learning environment is above the expected mean ($\bar{x}$ = 122.94, S=27.83). Even though, the result is admirable at the university level, there is a difference among the six college students in perceiving the context of learning. As shown on Table 1, colleges of Agriculture, Business and Economics, Social Science and Humanities and college of Natural Science have the highest mean while the rest two colleges (Health science and Engineering) have low scores on the variable learning environment. The mean of the six colleges on the variable learning environment was compared using

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of learning environment at college level

Strata	n	$\bar{x}$	S
College of Engineering	86	108.74	23.47
College of Agriculture	51	131.78	18.79
College of Health Science	48	102.98	22.96
College of Business and Economics	40	135.05	22.87
College of Social Science and Humanities	72	137.50	28.68
College of Natural Science	85	125.24	27.84
Total	**382**	**122.94**	**27.83**

ANOVA. The result shows there is significant difference among the students of the six colleges at $F(5.376) =20.003$, $P<0.001$ in conceiving their learning environment.

The post hoc test using the LSD was made to confirm where the difference lies or to identify which colleges are most importantly conducive for students learning. The result shows as colleges of Social Science Humanities (with a $\bar{x}$ = 137.5 and S=28.68), college of Business and Economics ($\bar{x}$ = 135.05, S= 22.87), Agriculture ($\bar{x}$ = 131.78, S= 18.80) and Natural science ($\bar{x}$ = 125.25, S=27.84) are perceived as supportive of students learning while colleges of Health science ($\bar{x}$ = 102.98, S=22.96) and Engineering ($\bar{x}$ = 108.74, S=23.47) are perceived as less supportive. The first four colleges are known for their experienced staff profile.

To make colleges conducive for students learning, there has to be good teaching practice, students are communicated the clear goals and standards set, focuses on generic skills, appropriate assessment is conducted, there is appropriate workload, and the teaching learning process emphasizes on independent learning.

Good teaching practice comprises, teachers activity related to motivating students to do their best, giving prompt feedback on students work, understanding students problem and find solutions. In addition to these, teachers' ability in communicating/explaining the contents of the course, making the subject thought so interesting so that students will be attracted to learn, giving students a chance to involve in the teaching process and make them to benefit from it.

The learning environment has clear goals and standards when, it is designed in all domain and level of educational outcome, teachers communicate the students what they are expected to do and to achieve in advance. Then it becomes easy for students what they are expected and how to deal with it.

The other important component of learning environment is the generic skill students developed. This is related to problem solving skills, sharpening one's analytic and communication skills, developing the ability to work as a team member, the ability to tackle unfamiliar problems and the ability to plan one's own work. These points describe weather the environment in which students are learning is suitable for students to develop generic skills.

Appropriate Assessment and workload are the other elements which constitute the learning environment. They become encouraging of learning when the assessment demands higher order thinking on the side of the learners, there is continues feedback on student's progress, and when students are given enough time to understand the tasks they are expected to learn. Besides, the activities given for students should not be taken as a high workload.

In addition to the aforementioned elements of learning environment, an opportunity for independent learning is the other crucial components in learning. The learning environment invites for independent learning when students have a great deal of choice over how they are going to learn in this course and they are given a lot of choice in the work they have to do. Besides, there should be discussion with their teachers or tutors how they are going to learn in this course.

The access to educational resources also play very significant role in encouraging independent learning. Gojeh and Worku (2015) also stressed in their research that library collections should be on open access for all library users' consultation through browsing and usage so that it will improve the quality of teaching, learning and research for quality education in the University

Conversely, when these elements of learning environment are not well practiced in the classroom, it makes the learning context not to be conducive for students learning.

To look weather there is a difference on the perception of the learning environment between the two sex groups; independent t-test was computed. The result shows there is no significant difference between male (n=259, $\bar{x}$ =121.71, S=27.43) and females (n=123, $\bar{x}$=125.54,

Table 2. Correlation between components of learning environment and learning approach.

Variable	LE-	CGS	GS	IL	GT	AWl	AAs	DA	StA	SA
Learning environment (LE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Clear goals and stand.(CGS)	0.579**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Generic Skills (GS	0.602**	0.564**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Independent learning (IL)	0.639**	0.657**	0.699**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Good teaching (GT)	0.619**	0.667**	0.681**	0.784**	-	-	-	-	-	-
App. workload (AWs)	0.536**	0.531**	0.508**	0.524**	-	-	-	-	-	-
App. Assessment (AA)	0.641**	0.640**	0.530**	0.598**	0.580**	0.547**	-	-	-	-
Deep approach (DA).412**	290**	0.272**	0.302**	0.359**	0.276**	0.294**	-	-	-	-
Strategic approach (StA)	0.341**.	0.486**	0.356**	0.492**	0.481**	0.319**	0.421**	0.472**	-	-
Surface approach (SA)	0.305**	0.404**	0.373**	0.427**-.	0.427**	322**-.	0.433**	-0.378**	0.651**	-
CGPA	0.195**	0.141**	0.144**	0.152**	0.184**	132**	0.188**	0.105**	0.098	0.160**

**P < 0.01 (2-tailed); *P < 0.05 (2-tailed).

S=28.60) in perceiving their learning environment at *t* (380) = 1.256, *p*> 0.05.

This shows that, all students of Mizan-Tepi University perceived their learning environment similarly regardless of their sex. So, we can conclude that the classroom are gender responsive.

Relationship among learning environment, learning approach and academic performance

To know the relationship that exists among the three variables stated earlier, Pearson moment correlation have been computed. The result shows, those students who perceived the learning environment as supportive of their learning adopt more of deep and strategic approach and they are better in their academic performance. Conversely, those students who perceived their learning context as less supportive, adopted surface approach and have less academic score (Table 2).

Among the components of learning environment as presented on the table 2, clear goals and standard (r=0.579), generic skills (r= 0.602), Independent learning (r= 0.639), good teaching (r=0.619), appropriate workload (r= 0.536), appropriate assessment (r= 0.641), and the learning approaches that is deep approach (r=0.412) and strategic approach(r= 0.341) are positively correlated with learning environment at p< 0.01.

On the other hand, surface approach is correlated significantly and negatively with the learning environment (r= -0.485) clear goals and standards (r= -0.404), generic skills (r= -0.373), Independent learning (r= -0.427), good teaching (r= -0.427), appropriate workload (r= -0.322), appropriate assessment (r= -0.433), deep approach (r= -0.378) and strategic approach(r= -0.651) at p<0.01.

The relationship between components of learning environment and learning approaches is meaningful and as was anticipated in the theory. As indicated in Table 2, the approach adopted by students is the reaction they have for the learning environment. Those students who perceive the components accounted in the learning environment as less suitable for their learning are more likely to adopt surface approach and aim to score grades through simple strategy. Conversely, those students whose learning environment is supportive of their learning adopt deep approach to benefit more from their learning.

Learning environment and approach preference

To know how individual students perceived their learning environment and approach their learning at the university level a cluster analysis was conducted aimed at identifying subgroups of classes with similar scores on these key variables. The analysis was made at the level of component variables for learning environment and approach to learning.

Standardized scores on these key variables were used in hierarchical cluster analysis using the Wards method in identifying an appropriate number of clusters (based up on the increasing value of the squared Euclidean distance between clusters). The analysis indicated that the two clusters solution was the most acceptable. Accordingly, the result of all students in the two groups on key variables of the study is presented in its standardized form as shown in Table 3.

The score of students identified in the cluster analysis show consistent, but different sets of relations between variables. The first group composed of 207 students who, on average, have perceived their learning environment as

Table 3. Mean (and standard deviation) cluster scales Z-score for learning environment, components of learning environment an approach to learning.

Cluster 1; Cluster 2	N (207) students	N (175) students	P
Learning environment	0.45(0.65)	- 0.53(1.07)	0.000
Good teaching	0.62(0.67)	- 0.73(0.82)	0.000
Clear goals and standards	0.63(0.58)	- 0.74(0.88)	0.000
Appropriate assessment	0.54(0.76)	-0.63(0.88)	0.000
Appropriate workload	0.45(1.0)	- 0.53(0.69)	0.000
Generic skills	0.540.83)	-0.63(0.79)	0.000
Independent learning	0.60(0.65)	- 0.71(0.86)	0.000
Deep approach	0.36(0.98)	-0.43(0.84)	0.000
Strategic Approach	0.66(0.85)	-0.78(0.45)	0.000
Surface approach	-0.47(1.09)	0.56(0.45)	0.000

supportive of their learning. They perceived the environment as conducive for their learning; adopt more of deep approach and less of surface approach than their mates in cluster 2. Therefore, 54% of the participants of this study reported as the learning environment is suitable for their learning and are adopting deep and strategic approach. While the remaining 46% of students in the sample perceived their learning environment as less supportive of learning and they have adopted more of surface approach.

Students in cluster 2 (n= 175), perceived the context of their department as if it does not allow them to learn in a better way. They are not satisfied with the activities done in the classroom by teachers because it does not encourage them to engage in the teaching learning process. Not only this, but also the way they learn is also different from that of their mates in cluster one. They are employing the learning approach which is not desirable in higher education. This contributes a great impact in hindering quality teaching and learning which can in turn results graduates not capable of solving society's problem.

It is possible to look at the disjunction between the formal requirements of academic environments (thought, creativity, competence, independent thinking, critical thinking) and the actual requirements as perceived by 175 students (memorization, fact-gathering, conformity, rote learning). Then it becomes very interesting to compare this disparity with regard to making students capable of solving societal problem.

A "deep" approach involves concentration on the meaning of the article and active attempts to relate what it said to previous knowledge and the student's personal life. In contrast, students using a "surface" approach anxiously try to memorize parts of the text and treat it as a phenomenon isolated from them (Ramdsen, 2003). Many findings show that deep level processing is more likely to lead to a full understanding of a text than surface level processing (Kember, 1996, Entwistle, 1991, Richardson, 2010). The notion of deep level processing shows a remarkable similarity to what scholars in many disciplines have described as a desirable goal of higher education - the development of "critical thinking" (Marton and Saljo, 1976).

It is true that students should rely on deep approach which is compatible with the normal goals of higher education which stress the development of critical thinking, problem solving skills and the ability to tackle ill-defined issues. If the courses were achieving these aims, deep approach scores would be expected to rise markedly during a degree program as these higher order learning goals can only be achieved if students are aiming to understand course material. Unfortunately nearly half of the samples included in this study employed surface approach to address their learning. This needs a great attention in order to achieve the ultimate goal of the university which is quality education.

Implication on quality education

Obviously, it is known that the term quality education cannot be defined sufficiently from few angles. It is the amalgamation of different aspect of education that brings quality education. From these, the teaching learning process can be seen as one of the elements. Scholars in the area have suggested that, the teaching learning process is the pillar of all other components/focus areas of quality education. Because, this is the point where students mind operates and capture what we intend them to be. Therefore, examining how students perceive their learning environment and the approach they use in their learning becomes important.

The result shows that almost half of the samples in the study perceived the context in which they are attending their lessons is supportive of their learning and relied on desirable learning approach. This implies that, these students are satisfied with the subject matter knowledge and pedagogical skill of their lecturers. It can also be inferred that, these students are learning through

understanding, critical and analytical thinking which highly enable them to become problem solvers in different situation. If this is so, these students are in a position to meet the needs of the country; that is being graduates who are capable of solving society's problem.

On the reverse, there are still many students who perceived the learning environment not supportive of learning and relying on surface approach which is not desirable in higher education. Nega (2012) also confirmed that, there is a quality gap between the intended and actual quality assurance practices, and quality of education, particularly student learning is constrained by a multitude of interrelated problems from both the internal and external environment of the universities. Tadesse et al. (2013) found that, most of the colleges have the position that teaching learning has to be student centered and active as well; but, still many of them are applying teacher-centered approach of teaching.

Literatures and experience of different countries evidenced that graduates who learned through this approach faces difficulty in applying their knowledge in different situations of their lives. This will become practically true for these students. If this is so, these students are not passing through quality learning which will seriously affect their work lives. As a result of this, the country will not benefit from these graduates as intended. Therefore, there should be an intervention on how the learning environment will become conducive for these students and change their learning style.

Above all, the culture of constructing knowledge by the students themselves through independent learning should be developed. To do this, students should be able to access different learning materials in the university. Gojeh and Worku (2015) also found that, the extent students are using library resources is not optimum. So, there has to be an environment which encourages students to engage knowledge construction in their own effort.

The study also gives us insights regarding teacher's role in creating the environment which encourages students to learn in a constructive way. So, the there has to be an effort in building teachers pedagogical skills. Nega (2012) found the educational inputs and processes for quality student learning are constrained by many problems. These problems include inadequate preparation of incoming students; poor qualification and competence of teaching staff; poor quality of teaching, learning and assessment; inadequacy and poor quality and utilization of facilities and support services. These problems will have their own effect on quality of education in general and student learning in particular.

Tadesse et al. (2013) also found that high teaching load, large class size and in adequate insight of teachers regarding continuous assessment and student centered instruction are major factors affecting the implementation of student-centered instruction and continuous assessment. Therefore, the government should give due emphasis in improving teachers knowledge and skill of teaching.

Conclusions

The result of this study clearly indicates that, there is directional and strong relationship between the environment in which students are learning and the approach they employ. All the learning activities students engage in are related with the requirements that instructors have created in their teaching. From this it can be concluded that, the approach students are employing in their learning is a reaction they have towards the context created. The context that instructors create in the classroom should focus on facilitating and enhancing students learning. In order to engage students in their learning in a desirable fashion, the classroom situation instructors create should be supportive of learning for understanding.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost the author would like to thank Mizan-Tepi University for providing fund for this research. His appreciation also goes to all participants in this study for providing authentic data and support.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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