



Full Length Research Paper

An Assessment of the Current Status of using the Learner-Centered Approach in first year Students at Madda Walabu University

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Abstract

The student-centered approach is a method of teaching in which the focus of instruction is shifted from the teacher to the students. This approach is not practiced as expected at the university level. The purpose of this study was to investigate the current status of using the learner-centered approach in First Year students at Madda Walabu University. A descriptive survey re-search method was employed. A total of 206 samples including 149 students, 44 teachers, 12 department heads, and one Higher Diploma leader were intercepted for data collection. Questionnaires, focus group discussions, and observation checklists were employed for collecting relevant data. Quantitative data that were obtained through questionnaires were analyzed using statistical tools like frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and an independent sample t-test; whereas qualitative data gathered through focus group discussion and observation checklist were analyzed thematically. The major findings revealed that the lecture was not working for the success of the current status of the learner-centred approach. Besides, large numbers of students in the classroom, and lack of administrative support were the major bottle-necks in implementing the learner-cantered approach. Therefore, to alleviate these problems, the college education giving adequate in-service training on the implementation of learner-centre methods, the university should prepare short-term training on the implementation of learner-centre methods.



1. Introduction

Education is an essential condition for multi-dimensional development (Kumsa, 2019). Such developmental aspect within a nation is highly conditioned by proper organization and management as well as a successful implementation of the educational program at all levels. There are two broad methods of instruction used as a framework of instruction in various educational levels (i.e. elementary, secondary, and tertiary level). These are a teacher-centred method and a learner-centred approach. One major advantage of learner-centered classroom activities is that they generate student questions and reveal areas of ignorance and misunderstanding (Wiederman, 2015).

In the teacher-centred method, the primary sources of knowledge are teachers. The student-centred method, on the other hand, enables students to put all their focus on their knowledge (Moges, 2019). The student-centred method also known as learner-centred is a method of teaching in which the focus of instruction is shifted from the teacher to the students (Keiler, 2018). Further the authors added that, in original usage, student-centred learning aims to develop learner autonomy and independence by putting responsibility for the learning path in the hands of students.

Student-Centred Learning (SCL) is a term commonly used by educators and education policy-makers, which is based on the philosophy that the learner or the student is at the centre of the learning process (Tadesse, 2020). Student-centred instruction is different than teacher-centred instruction because it focuses on learners (Solaiman, 2016). The learners construct the knowledge by active participation and synthesis of knowledge through skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and communication. However,

in the old traditional methods of teaching, a teacher is the focus of attention. The benefits of SCL are not restricted to the student. Of course, it also benefits the teacher, to the institution as well as to the society at large for the main reason that it fosters a life-long learning culture (Attrad, 2013). The implementation of SCL has several advantages, and the superiority of SCL as a pedagogical approach becomes more relevant in the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) (International Centre for Dispute Resolution, 2015). It is the most effective approach, which involves active participation of learners, allows enthusiasm or motivation, interaction, creativity, and reflective thinking. Besides, it develops participation and higher-order thinking (Worku, Teka, & Mathivana, 2018).

The challenge of SCL has been with the transition and the paradigm shift required moving from the traditional teacher-centred approach to SCL, and this challenge has been more pronounced in the educational systems of most developing countries (Sablonniere, 2009). In many research studies, for instance, Aschalew (2012) study on “teachers’ perceptions and practices of active learning”, and Asrat (2016) on “the utilization of active learning the case of Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-city” findings show that though the learner-centred approach is acknowledged for being the right approach for the present time, yet in practice, teacher-centred is still implementing in different Universities, including Madda Walabu University. One of the study by Ahmad (2016) indicates that instructors whether they are of language or content subjects still use traditional, teacher-centred, and styles in university settings.

For instance, in Nigeria and in most Sub-Saharan African countries, the challenge of making SCL practical in HEIs include a low-

quality educational system, low level of pedagogical understanding among educators, large class sizes, demands of the curriculum, assessment challenges, and challenges related to infrastructure, electricity, and internet connectivity (Anyanwu & Iwuamadi, 2015).

In Ethiopia, an examination of the relevant literature shows that within the classroom, practical implementation of SCL approach can include student-centred active learning methods which involves internships and the use of the web-conferencing environment to enhance student discourse and interaction in distance education. However, practically it is insignificant (MoE, 2019). For example, according to Jony (2016), if a teacher could encourage students as a part of the lecture and presentation, they have the opportunity to learn from each other and it will be more effective compare to the traditional method in which they mostly remain inactive.

In addition, the misconception on the part of teachers and students' who assume it requires no direction is another challenge identified by Olana and Amante (2017). As a result, a lot of negligence or miss utilization of learner-centred techniques have noticeably been demanded. Students generally seem to be less attracted to learn through direct involvement or interaction while listening to the long teacher talk and reading home-taken notes appears quite easier for them as a deeply engrained bad habit of learning. According to Shakouri (2012) and Olamo et al. (2019), some teachers react negatively to the concept because they feel that, implicit in the notion, is a devaluing of their professional roles.

If the problems are not solved on time, as Chauhan (2002) noted, it would be more difficult to create a good citizen without a

learner-centred approach. Worku et al. (2018) notes that teachers who have assumed a non-traditional role have produced quite impressive results probably for reasons to be specified or investigated. According to Barnes (2018), although teachers are expected to assume a "less direct, more supportive and most facilitative role", much conventionally teacher-centred instruction still prevails in favor of a stable classroom. Besides, as Idris (2016) added, challenges of implementing a learner-centered approach could be as hidden as such assumptions of the teachers and the students of the university under investigation. Furthermore, Asrat (2016) concludes that lack of necessary skills and knowledge, disbelief, mobilization of teachers, and inadequate time was some commonly perceived problems to implement learner-centred approaches.

Firstly, there are educational aspects since it could be helpful to know whether the learner-centred approach can have an impact on what instructors who are familiar with traditional teaching methods plan and do in their lessons when attempting to use it. Secondly, the use of the learner-centred approach in Ethiopian higher education is considered to be still in their infancy (Aschalew, 2012). Thirdly, still many of the teachers and students have less aware of the SCI concept as they are lacking proper training and experience (Moges, 2019). The study conducted by Jony (2016) did not cover all teacher and student population; rather it includes and assesses the perceptions of selected participants. Moreover, Student-centred instruction is not much practiced in higher institution. Therefore, research is needed to provide basic information on the implementation of student-centred instructions for both interactive and effective learning. With aiming to bridge these gaps, this study, therefore, was conducted.

There are still many problems on the current status of using the learner-centered approach. For instance, Jony (2016), in his article summarized that, in secondary school most of the students did not understand the concept of student-centered instruction and have miss information about their roles and responsibilities. Teachers have no training programs that can orient them to student-centered instruction and enhance their willingness and creativity toward SCI. There is no teacher motivation and encouragement to share their experiences in order to manage their time and the workload. Administrations are not consider and revising the workload of the teachers. Curriculum objectives are not revised to accommodate student centered instruction in it. Proper resources for student centered instruction are not ensured by doing a need base analysis of the resources. In addition, despite the forceful reform of shifting the paradigm from teacher-centered to learner-centered approach study show that, there are bigger challenges in forms of resistance from educators accompanied by economic and political crises during the Soviet era (Sablonniere, 2009; Okenyi, 2015).

Therefore, the researchers were motivated to investigate the problem encountered in implementing the learner-centered approach at Madda Walabu University on enhancing students' learning as the basis upon which this investigation is conducted because of two main reasons. First, the researchers observed that the learner-centered approach is not practiced as expected at the university level. Second, the use of a learner-centered approach in higher education is considered to be still in its infancy. For instance, Mas-souleh and Jooneghani (2012) conducted a study on 48 psychology students in the University of Plymouth on students' attitudes to student-centered learning. They found that, despite a University student-centered policy,

60% of the students had not heard of the term. Mulatu and Bezabih (2018) further described that, student-centered learning is a western approach to learning and may not necessarily transfer to the developing countries such as Ethiopia where there are limited resources and different learning cultures. It can be equally hard at times to see how the approach can be economical in the large classes associated with many Universities, especially in undergraduate courses. Therefore, these gaps and other related issues initiated the researchers to conduct this study and to address the following objectives:

1. To identify activities which are important for learner-cantered approach before starting the lesson.
2. To identify the problem encounter on the current states of learner-cantered approach in 1st-year classroom students.
3. To find out possible solutions to the challenges faced in using a learner-centered approach in Madda Walabu University.

2. Methods

With regards to the study area, Madda Walabu University is one of the public universities in Ethiopia, which was established in 2006 (1999 Ethiopian Calendar) and has nine colleges in three campuses such as Robe, Goba, and Shashamene town (Madda-Walabu University, 2019). Methodologically, a concurrent triangulation approach was employed, where both quantitative and qualitative data were concurrently collected side by side and then compared the two data sets to determine if there are convergence, differences, or some combination (Creswell, 2013). Accordingly, data were collected using questionnaires, FGD, and observation

checklist. In the discussion section, the results obtained from questionnaires were provided followed by FGD quotes that support or disconfirm the quantitative results (Selinger & Shohamy, 1989).

In this study, both primary and secondary data sources were employed. Primary data was collected from lectures, students, department heads, and one HDP leader. Whereas, the secondary sources of data were the schools' document records of supervision, course outlines of the department for colleges, and reports of the quality assurance directorate. Regarding samples, out of three (Robe, Goba, and Shashemene) campuses, the Robe campus of MWU was selected purposively because of budget and time constraints. Using simple random sampling technique, of the total 32 departments, 12 departments namely, Afan Oromo and literature, Accounting and Financing, Biology, Civic and Ethical study, Computer science, Civil Engineering, Chemistry, Eco-tourism, Forestry, Law department, Mechanical Engineering, and Psychology departments were selected. Representativeness of samples needs to be ensured in relation to the different variables that may affect the result of the study (Creswell, 2013). The researchers believed that

12 departments are enough to represent because of heterogeneity in their study fields and teaching methodology.

A total of 520 first-year students in 12 departments were the target population where the final samples were drawn. Hence, 156 samples were determined using the formula of Cohen (2013), i.e., $n=N \times 30\%$, where n = sample, and N = target population. The researchers believed that 30% of the population is adequate in a limited time and budget. Both instructors and students are from different backgrounds and different fields of studies were intercepted and they are believed to be representative. Because there are different departments in the population, a stratified sampling technique was employed to intercept respondents from each department (Creswell, 1998). Regarding teacher participants, out of 80 lecturers of first-year students, 50 were selected by using simple random sampling technique. Besides, by employing availability sampling technique, 12 department heads and one HDP leader were selected. Therefore, a total of 219 samples including 156 students, 50 lecturers, 12 department heads, and one HDP head were intercepted to collect the intended data for the study. Moreover, Table 1 below summarizes the target population, sample, and sampling techniques employed in the study.

Table1: Summary of population, sample, and sampling techniques

No.	Departments	Target population			Sample			Department Head		Lecturers		HDP	
		M	F	T	M	F	T	Pop.	Sample	Pop.	Sample	Pop.	Sample
1	Afan Oromo and literature	30	20	50	9	6	15	1	1	10	7		
2	Accounting and Financing	27	23	50	8	7	15	1	1	10	7		
3	Biology	34	13	47	10	4	14	1	1	7	4		
4	Civic and Ethical study	27	20	47	8	6	14	1	1	5	3		
5	Computer science	23	20	43	7	6	13	1	1	7	4		
6	Civil Engineering	30	3	33	9	1	10	1	1	6	4		
7	Chemistry	37	10	47	11	3	14	1	1	6	4		
8	Eco-tourism	26	17	43	8	5	13	1	1	5	3		

9	Forestry	36	7	43	11	2	13	1	1	4	2	1	1
10	Law department	26	7	33	8	2	10	1	1	7	4		
11	Mechanical Engineering	30	17	47	9	5	14	1	1	6	4		
12	Psychology	24	13	37	7	4	11	1	1	7	4		
	Total	350	170	520	105	51	156	12	12	80	50	1	1

Source: Madda Walabu University, 2019

The questionnaire consisted of a combination of open and closed-ended questions using exhaustive response categories, numerical rating scales, and checklists (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). In addition, an observation checklist and focus group discussions were used to collect qualitative data. Before administering the final questionnaires to the respondents, the validity of content and consistency of the instruments as well as reliability of instruments were maintained (Troch, 2003). To test the validity, tools were administered to three experienced teachers, and therefore, based on their comments on contents, clarity, and language usage, the questionnaire was revised.

To test the reliability of the questionnaires, the stability (Test-retest) technique was employed. To do this, the tool was administered to 25 first-year students who left by chance during sampling from the respondents. Since they are found in the same university and the

same departments with the sample participants and thereby share something in common. Finally, the reliability of the instrument was calculated by SPSS version 25 and the value was measured by using a Cronbach alpha and the result was 0.792 which is reliable. In addition, based on the analysis of the pilot study, some vague and confusing items were modified to make the questionnaire clear and understandable (Kothari, 2004).

Data that were obtained from the questionnaire, focus group discussions, and observation checklists were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 23, and specifically statistical tools such as percentage, frequency, mean and independent t-test were employed. Thematically, data collected through observation and FGD were analyzed using narrative and quotation approaches and substantiated with the quantitative analysis

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Respondents' backgrounds

Table 2: Respondents' characteristics

N	Variables	Participants								Total		
		Teachers		Students		Department heads		HDP head		F	%	
o		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
1	Sex	Male	37	84.1	86	57.7	11	91.7	1	100	135	65.5
		Female	7	15.9	63	42.3	1	8.5	0	0	71	34.5
		Total	44	100	149	100	12	100	1	100	206	100
2	Qualification	HDP certificate	19	43.2	0	0	8	66.7	1	100	28	49.1
		BA/BSc/BED	6	13.6	0	0	-	-	-	-	6	2.9
		MA/MSc/MED	3	81.8	0	0	11	91.7	1	100	48	23.3
		PhD	2	2	0	0	1	8.3	-	-	3	1.5
		Total	4	100	149	100	12	100	1	100	206	100

As indicated in the Table above, the majority, 123(63.7%) of students were males; and 70(36.3%) were females. Whereas 11(91.7%) in the department, heads were males, and the head of HDP was also male. In addition, 84.1% of teachers were male. This shows that most of the participants were males. Concerning the HDP certificate, only 19(43.2%) of teacher respondents were certified. Whereas, 8(66.7%) of the department heads and 1(100%) of HDP coordinators were certified. These revealed that most lecturers have no HDP training. This may cause problems in student center learning. This result supports the previous findings by MoE (2011) and that HDP training prepares and makes instructors more confident in the active learning process. The findings of Solaiman (2016) also revealed that lack of teachers' experience and qualifications along

with the perceptions regarding the traditional approach is the biggest concern for teachers to apply student-centered instruction in the learning-teaching process. In addition, teachers' willingness to apply and practice the SCI approach is also critically associated with their training. Concerning the educational background, the majority of the sampled 36(81.8%) have second degree. In addition, 11(91.7%) of department heads were completed second-degree. This shows most of the respondents' teachers have good educational preparation to support the implementation of student center methods which helps to achieve better academic performance of students of the ultimate educational goal.

3.2 The Current Status of Learner-Centered Approach

Table 3: Responses on the current status of learner-centered approach

No	Activities that important for learner centered approach before starting the lesson	Respondents				GM	SD	p-value
		Teachers		Students				
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
1	The teacher use energizer before starting the lesson	2.02	0.698	1.99	0.702	2.00	0.699	0.807
2	Clarify the learning objective	2.18	0.842	2.16	0.780	2.16	0.792	0.879
3	Mixing fast, medium and slow learners to help with each other	1.90	0.640	2.06	0.720	2.27	0.732	0.117
4	Encouraging students to become actively participate in the classroom	2.43	0.759	2.23	0.720	2.27	0.732	0.117
5	Give chance to students to reflect on their idea.	2.31	0.707	2.08	0.725	2.13	0.726	0.064
6	Give constructive feedback for students	2.77	0.858	2.04	0.705	2.20	0.802	0.000
	Aggregated mean	2.23	0.776	2.127	0.717	2.17	0.741	

The mean difference is significant at the 0.05level

Key: GM= Grand Mean, SD=Standard Deviation M=mean, Sig= 0.05, Level of Agreement: 1.0- 2.33 as "low", 2.34-3.66 as "moderate", and 3.67-5.0 as "high"

As it is seen from Table 3, item 1, the average mean of teachers and students was found to be 2.02 (SD=0.698) and 1.99(SD=0.702) respectively. This shows that, low level of agreement on its implementation of energizer activities

before starting lessons to relax, to make students active in the learning process. The result indicates that the majority of teachers did not use energizer activities before starting lessons to relax, to make students more active in learn-

ing, and to attract the attention of students. According to Table 3 items 2, how much teachers clarify the learning objective, as it is responded, teachers and students rated as low with the mean values 2.18 (SD=0.842) and 2.16(SD=0.780) respectively. The average mean was 2.16 (SD=0.792) which is a low level of agreement on its implementation. The variation in responses was also confirmed by the *t*-test (p -value > 0.05) shows that there is no statistical mean difference between the samples. Therefore, the result implies that the majority of teachers have not clarified the learning objectives before they started the lesson.

On the same Table of item 3 above, the degree of mixing fast, medium, and slow learners to help with each other for the teacher and students were found to be 1.90 (SD=0.640) and 2.06(SD=0.722) respectively. The average mean was 2.03(SD=0.706) which shows a low level of agreement on its implementation. The variation in responses was also confirmed by the *t*-test, (P -value > 0.05) shows that there is no statistical mean difference between the samples. This reveals that trends of mixing fast, medium, and slow learners to help with each other in Madda Walabu University were found to be at a low level, which needs improvement.

Regarding item 4 in Table 3, the mean scores of teachers and students were 2.43 (SD=0.759) and 2.23(SD=0.720) respectively. This shows that the effort of teachers to encourage students to become actively participate in the classroom is critically low. The average mean score was 2.27(SD=0.732). As indicated in the *t*-test result (p -value > 0.05), there is no statistical mean difference between the samples. This result was further supported by one of teacher participant during FGD regarding the implementation of student center methods as follows:

Even though encouraging students to

become actively participate in the classroom is a good way for student-centered learning, we don't have time to help. Besides, students are not interested in reflecting on their work rather they buried. (FGD, 16/08/2019).

This shows that most teachers did not encourage students to become actively participate in the classroom.

Table 3 item 5 shows that the extent to which teachers giving chance to students to reflect their idea. Teachers and students rated as low, with the mean scores 2.31 (SD=0.707) and 2.08(SD=0.725) respectively. The average mean score was 2.13(SD=0.963) that is a low level of agreement on its practice. The variation in responses was also confirmed by the *t*-test, (P -value > 0.05) shows statistically, there is no significant mean difference between the respondents. This revealed that most teachers did not invite students to reflect their idea on the daily lesson and on the learning process.

According to Table 3 item 6, regarding the extent to which teachers give constructive feedback for students, the result reveals that teachers and students rated as medium and low, with the mean scores of 2.77 (SD=0.858) and 2.04(SD=0.705) respectively. The average mean score was 2.20(SD=0.802) which is a low level of performance to giving constructive feedback for students. The variation in responses was also confirmed by the *t*-test; result (p -value < 0.05) shows there is a statistically significant mean difference between the respondents. Therefore, the result indicates that it is critical to justify that teachers did not give constructive feedback for students to the needed standard since it was rated at a low level of agreement.

3.3 Problem encounter on the implementation of learner-centered approach

Table 1: Responses on Problem encounter on the current states of learner-centered approach

No	Problem encounter on the current states of learner centered approach in 1 st -year classroom students	Respondents				GM	SD	p-value
		Teachers		Students				
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
1	There is a lack of time to actively involve students in my class	3.84	0.745	4.02	0.845	3.86	0.825	0.190
2	It is difficult to cover the prescribed work if students ask many questions	2.65	0.887	2.81	1.185	2.78	1.124	0.409
3	Active learning will create problems in classroom management	4.18	0.755	3.95	0.907	4.01	0.877	0.141
4	It is impractical to implement student center methods in large classes	3.84	0.913	3.95	0.880	3.92	0.886	0.463

Key: GM= Grand Mean, SD=Standard Deviation M=mean, Sig= 0.05, Level of Agreement: 1.0- 2.33 as "low", 2.34-3.66 as "moderate", and 3.67-5.0 as "high" (Kothari, 1990)

In Table 4 item 1, respondents were asked whether lack of time to actively involve students in the classroom affects the implementation of student center methods or not, and the result shows that the mean scores were 3.84 (SD= 0.745) for teachers and 4.02(SD=0.845) for students. Their response shows a high rate of effect on the implementation of student center methods. The average mean was 3.98 (SD=0.825) which shows a high level of agreement. This revealed that lack of time to actively involve students in the classroom affects the practice. The result also indicates that there is no significant mean difference between the samples ($p\text{-value} > 0.05$). The result obtained from FGD participants also revealed that the portion was not covered on time. Because time was consumed by meeting and students did not come on time. As a result, most teachers are forced on finishing the content. Thus, the findings unfold that lack of time to actively involve students in classroom teaching is one of the critical problems that affect the implementation of the student-centered approach.

In Table 4, item 2 is concerning the difficulty of covering the course as a result of asking many questions by students for implementation of learner- center methods. Accordingly, the mean scores were 2.65(SD=0.887) and

2.81(SD=1.185) by teachers and students respectively. The average mean score was 2.78(SD= 1.124) which demonstrates a high effect on the implementation of student center methods. The independent sampled t-test was computed to see the respondents' significant differences. The result shows that there is no relevant mean differences between respondents ($p\text{-value} > 0.05$) since the mean of both groups were not found in different levels of agreement. This revealed that student center method was moderately affected if learners ask their teacher many questions.

In Table 4 item 3, asks whether student center methods will create problems in classroom management or not. As a result, the mean scores were 4.18(SD= 0.755) for teachers and 3.95(SD=0.907) for students. It indicates that classroom management affects the implementation of student center methods. The average mean was 4.01(SD=0.877) which shows a high level of agreement. This revealed that how much student center methods will create problems in the classroom management which affects the practice critically. The computed t-test shows that there is no significant mean difference between the samples ($p\text{-value} > 0.05$). Hence, the findings unfold that a student center

method was creating a problem in classroom management.

In Table 4, item 4 is concerning the impracticality of implementing student center methods in large classes. Accordingly, the mean scores were 3.84(SD=0.913) and 3.95(SD=0.880) by teachers and students respectively. The average mean score was 3.92(SD= 0.886) which is a high negative effect on the large class implementing student center methods. The independent sampled t-test was computed to see the respondents' significant differences. The result

shows that there is no significant mean difference among respondents ($p\text{-value}>0.05$) because the mean scores of both groups are found in the same level of agreement. This revealed that both teachers and students agreed that, in Madda Walabu University, it is impractical to implement student center methods in large classes. For instance, in biology and economics departments, student-centered approaches were found to be impractical because of the large size.

3.4 Strategies need to be Implemented Student Centre Methods

Table 2: Responses on for Implementation of Student Center Methods of Teaching

No	Strategies for implementation of student-center methods of teaching	Respondents				GM	SD	P-Value
		Teachers		Students				
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
1	Preparing in-service training on implementing student-center methods	3.86	0.823	4.10	0.87	4.04	0.867	0.112
2	Providing resources to the implementation of student center methods	3.95	0.938	3.83	0.93	3.86	0.931	0.471
3	Reducing the number of students per group with the maximum of five	4.11	0.945	4.09	0.93	4.09	0.932	0.903

Key: GM= Grand Mean, SD=Standard Deviation M=mean, Sig= 0.05, Level of Agreement: 1.0- 2.33 as "low", 2.34-3.66 as "moderate", and 3.67-5.0 as "high" (Kothari, (1990)

In Table 5, item 1 is concerning in-service training on the implementation of student center methods. The mean scores were 3.86(SD=0.823) and 4.10(SD=0.875) by teachers and students respectively. The average mean score was 4.04(SD= 0.867) which highly contributes to the implementation of student center methods. The t-test result also shows that there is no statistically significant mean difference among the groups ($p\text{-value}>0.05$). This is because the mean scores of both groups is found in the same level of agreement. This result revealed that both teachers and students agreed that, giving adequate in-service training by the respective college was highly contributed to the implementation of student center methods. In line with this, Olamo et al. (2019) emphasize new pre-service training packages which are strongly practice-oriented at all lev-

els of training, so that graduating teachers attain the necessary skills and a positive attitude in the application of a variety of methods. In general, even though, the policy advocates active learning, there is a gap between theory and practice (Barnes et al., 2018). Thus, teacher education needs to model classroom teaching skills and methods that reflect and go in line with the Education and Training Policy.

On Table 5 item 2, respondents asked whether resources are provided for the implementation of student center methods or not, and the result shows that the mean scores were 3.95(SD= 0.938) for teachers and 3.83(SD=0.930) for students. The average mean score also shows 3.86(SD=0.931) which is a high level of agreement. This result revealed that every college should provide resources to the implementation of active learning to contribute to the practice at a high rate.

The independent t-test result shows that there is no significant mean difference between the responses of respondents ($p\text{-value} > 0.05$). Thus, the result indicates that in Madda Walabu University, providing resources to the implementation of active learning is important for the learner-centered methods.

In Table 5 item 3, teachers and students are asked whether reducing the number of students per group with the maximum of five affects the implementation of student center methods or not. The mean scores were 4.11 (SD=0.945) for teachers and 4.09 (SD=0.932) for students. Their response shows a high positive effect on the implementation of student center methods. The average mean was 4.09 (SD=0.932) which shows a high level of agreement. This result revealed that reducing the number of students per group with a maximum of five highly contributes to the practice of student center methods of teaching. The computed t-test shows that there is no significant mean difference between the samples ($p\text{-value} > 0.05$). This result indicates that in Madda Walabu University, reducing the number of students per group with a maximum of five affects positively the implementation of student center methods. This result is supported by Bonwell and Elison (2003). The authors were further stated the major characteristics of active learning strategies including:

1. Students are involved in more than passive listening;
2. Students are engaged in activities such as reading, discussing, and writing;
3. There is less emphasis placed on information transmission and greater emphasis placed on developing student skills;
4. There is greater emphasis placed on the exploration of attitudes and values ;

5. Student motivation is increased, especially for adult learners;
6. Students can receive immediate feedback from their teachers; and
7. Students are involved in higher-order thinking (i.e., analysis, synthesis, evaluation).

Bonwell and Elison (2003)

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to explore the challenges of learners centered approach in first-year classroom students at Madda Walabu University and to suggest possible solutions for the problem based upon the above specific objectives, and this study was expected to find the answer to the following questions.

1. What are the activities that important for the learner cantered approach before starting the lesson?
2. What are the problems encounters on the current states of learner cantered approach in 1st-year classroom students?
3. What is the possible solution to the challenges faced in using a learner-centered approach at MaddaWalabu University?

The background information result summarized that most lecturers have no HDP training. This may cause problems in student center learning. The study concludes that lack of teachers' experience and qualifications along with the perceptions regarding the traditional approach is the biggest concern for teachers to apply student-centered instruction in the teaching-learning process at Madda Walabu University. The findings unfold that teachers did not use energizer activities before starting lessons to relax, to make students more active in the learning-teaching process.

Besides, the result unfolds that teachers are not clarified the learning objectives to the needed standard. The study indicates that trends of mixing fast, medium, and slow learners to help with each other in Madda Walabu University were found to be at a low level, which needs improvement. The findings show that most teachers did not encourage students to become actively participate in the classroom. Most importantly, as indicated in the results, the majority of teachers did not encourage students to reflect on their idea during the teaching-learning process. As indicated in the study, it is concluded that teachers are not providing constructive feedback on how to improve their learning performance. Further, the study result in the university indicates that a critical challenge encountered by teachers to implement student-centered approaches is the shortage of time. Due to inadequate time, in view of applying learner-centered methods, the lessons are not covered on time. Learner-centered methods often criticized because it wastes much time. This is mainly associated with students with poor punctuality. As a result, most teachers are forced to use the lecture method, at least to complete the course content. In University, the student-centre method is moderately affected by learners themselves by asking many questions for teachers, and in turn, it takes much of learning time.

The study, on the other hand, revealed that giving adequate in-service training by the respective college is critically contributed to the implementation of student centre methods in the University. In addition, as the findings noted, every college needs to provide sufficient resources to the implementation of active learning. Therefore, the result concludes that in MaddaWalabu University, providing adequate

teaching resources is critical to the implementation of active learning in the classroom. Based on the conclusions drawn, the following possible recommendations are forwarded.

- As findings noted, most lecturers have not been given HDP training; therefore, colleges and universities should prepare on-the-job training for teachers. On the other hand, students should be energized before starting the lesson to relax, to make students more active in the learning process.
- In line with the learning standard and needs of the students, the learning objective should be clarified clearly. Students should be invited to reflect their idea on the daily lesson and on the learning process. More importantly, problems such as lack of time, problems of classroom management, and the problem of large class size should be solved to facilitate learner center methods at large.
- It needs to provide adequate in-service training by the respective college in the University to contribute for the implementation of student center methods. In addition, Madda Walabu University with its respective colleges should provide resources for the implementation of learner-centered methods. .
- The number of students should be reduced per group with a maximum of five in all departments and colleges to implement learner-centered more effectively.
- Teachers shall improve the relationship with their students and contact positively and give immediate feedback for the success of the current status of the learner-centered approach.

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