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## COLLABORATIVE LEARNING PREFERENCES AND SOCIAL SKILLS OF GRADE 5 LEARNERS

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### ABSTRACT

The study explored the relationship between collaborative learning preferences and social skills among Grade 5 learners in Kibawe West District, Kibawe, Bukidnon, during the school year 2025-2026. Specifically, it sought to describe the preferred collaborative learning strategies of Grade 5 learners, identify their level of social skills, and examine the significant relationship between collaborative learning preferences and their social skills. The study involved 240 Grade 5 learners selected through simple random sampling. A descriptive-correlational research design was employed, and the questionnaire adapted from Fernandez-Rio et al. (2017) and Mota (2011) was utilized to measure collaborative learning preferences and social skills of grade 5 learners: data analysis involved using mean, standard deviation, and Pearson product-moment correlation. The data gathered indicated that group discussions, peer teaching, jigsaw technique, and collaborative projects were highly favored among Grade 5 learners. Meanwhile, the think-pair-share was also highly preferred, albeit slightly less, still considered high. Grade 5 learners exhibited high levels of social skills. Such a foundation in social skills enriches their learning experience and prepares them for future collaborative endeavors within and beyond the classroom. A significant relationship existed between collaborative learning preferences and social skills among Grade 5 learners. Hence, teachers must implement diverse collaborative learning strategies such as group discussions, peer teaching, and collaborative projects to enhance social skills and subject comprehension among Grade 5 learners.

**KEYWORDS:** Collaborative learning preferences, Social Skills.

## ***INTRODUCTION***

Issues and problems concerning social skills among learners are multifaceted and may affect their personal and academic development. One common issue is the prevalence of social anxiety, which can hinder learners' ability to initiate and sustain interactions with peers or teachers, leading to feelings of isolation and low self-esteem (Anwar, 2022).

Additionally, the increasing reliance on digital communication platforms has raised concerns about learners' face-to-face social skills, with some struggling to maintain eye contact, listen actively, or interpret nonverbal cues. According to McKay 2024, conflict resolution is another challenge, as learners lack the skills to navigate disagreements constructively. These issues affect learners' social lives, impede their ability to collaborate effectively in group projects, and hinder their overall success in school and beyond.

Collaborative learning preferences significantly impact learners' social skills, fostering essential attributes through regular peer interaction and collaboration (Johnson & Johnson, 2018). Participation in collaborative learning activities promotes the acquisition of essential social skills, including proficient communication, attentive listening, empathy, and conflict resolution. Learners develop the capacity to collaborate, exchange ideas, and synchronize their actions towards shared objectives, fostering a supportive classroom atmosphere that promotes open expression of thoughts. Collaborative learning cultivates prosocial behaviors, including support, shared responsibilities, and aiding others, fostering a sense of belonging and community (LAUSS, 2024). As learners advance in collaborative learning, they gain valuable skills for navigating social interactions beyond the classroom, contributing significantly to their personal and professional development.

In De Leon and Bucayu's (2021) study, quantitative data revealed a positive attitude toward collaborative learning (CL), with public school learners showing slightly higher positivity. However, qualitative data highlighted reservations among learners, identifying four themes that underscore the importance of structured learning, individual learning through group work, active learner involvement, and cooperation between teachers and learners. De Leon and Bucayu (2021) further said that the research gap lies in the limited exploration of the effectiveness and impacts of collaborative learning on learners' social skills.

Therefore, further research should comprehensively examine how collaborative learning influences social skill outcomes, addressing potential challenges and providing insights for teachers to effectively enhance their collaborative learning implementation. This gap suggests an opportunity for a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics involved in applying collaborative learning in the classrooms.

In an era where remote and digital learning environments are becoming more prevalent, understanding the interplay between collaborative learning preferences and social skills in various learning contexts becomes increasingly urgent for Grade five learners at Kibawe West District, Kibawe, Bukidnon. Such insights would inform instructional practices and contribute to the holistic development of learners as socially competent individuals prepared for an evolving job market and society. Therefore, bridging this research gap is essential to provide evidence-based guidance to educators and policymakers in fostering academic and social growth among learners.

### ***Framework of the Study***

The study on collaborative learning preferences and social skills is grounded in Johnson and Johnson's (2004) Social Interdependence Theory. According to this theory, social interdependence occurs when the actions of persons with shared goals contribute to the overall outcome. This theory highlights the pivotal role of interdependence, which can manifest as positive (collaborative) or antagonistic (competitive), in shaping individual learning outcomes within a group context.

Furthermore, Jacob (2004) supported the concept of positive interdependence, asserting that in such a scenario, group members equally benefit from their interactions by assisting each other in the learning process.

These theories provide a valuable framework for understanding collaborative learning, as both underscore the notion that learning is facilitated through social interaction. When group members interact and cooperate in a task, it promotes effective learning. Learners receive help and extend assistance to fellow group members, ensuring that no one is left behind. This collaborative approach makes collaborative learning strategies more meaningful for learners and enhances knowledge transfer.

The researcher intends to apply this theory to assess learners' predominant collaborative learning preferences in this study. This assessment will enable teachers to understand how these strategies operate within the classroom. Compared to traditional teaching methods, which typically involve teacher-centered lectures, individual assignments, and competitive grading, collaborative learning has several advantages for learners. These benefits include higher academic achievement, increased graduation rates, enhanced high-level reasoning and critical thinking skills, more profound comprehension of course material, greater engagement with tasks, reduced disruptive behavior in class, lower levels of anxiety and stress, heightened intrinsic motivation to learn and excel, improved

ability to consider situations from others' perspectives, more positive relationships with peers, more favorable attitudes toward subject areas, and increased self-esteem.

Additionally, collaborative assignments offer teachers the advantage of reduced grading workload, as the number of papers to be assessed decreases significantly when assignments are completed collaboratively (Felder & Brent, 2016).

In this study, several independent variables were being considered, each representing different approaches to collaborative learning. These collaborative learning preferences served as the factors that may influence the development of social skills among learners.

Group discussion involves learners coming together to exchange ideas, opinions, and information about a certain topic. It is a collaborative forum where learners collectively explore and discuss various aspects of the subject matter.

Peer teaching is an educational strategy where learners teach and learn from one another, either as tutors for their classmates or as part of a collaborative group. This method helps both the "tutor" and the "tutee" by reinforcing the tutor's understanding and providing the tutee with personalized, peer-led support. Key benefits include improved comprehension for the teacher, personalized learning for the student, and the development of crucial soft skills like communication, teamwork, and critical thinking.

The jigsaw technique is a collaborative learning strategy where a class is divided into smaller "home" groups. Each member of a home group becomes an "expert" on a specific part of a topic, learns it in an "expert" group with others studying the same part, and then returns to their home group to teach their section to the rest of their team. Learners are divided into small groups, with each group member specializing in a particular aspect. Subsequently, they collaborate to exchange their specialized knowledge, resulting in a thorough comprehension of the topic at hand.

Think-pair-share is an active learning strategy where learners first think individually about a question, then pair up with a partner to discuss their ideas, and finally share their combined thoughts with the larger class. Involves a structured process where learners contemplate a question or topic individually. Afterward, learners should form pairs with their classmates to engage in a discussion about their opinions prior to presenting their ideas to the entire group. It promotes and fosters active engagement and cooperation.

On the other hand, the dependent variable in this study is the development of social skills among learners. abilities that enable effective communication and interaction with others, encompassing verbal, nonverbal, written, and visual forms of communication. They are crucial for building relationships and include competencies like empathy, active listening, and

teamwork. Social skills encompass various abilities and behaviors that enable individuals to interact with others in social situations effectively. collaborative learning settings mentioned above.

### *Significance of the Study*

The significance of this study extends to various stakeholders, including the Department of Education, school heads, teachers, learners, peers, and future researchers.

Learners stand to gain significantly from this research, as it holds the potential to enrich both their academic and social experiences. Understanding the impact of collaborative learning on developing their social skills can empower learners to actively engage in these collaborative activities actively, fostering more effective learning outcomes and contributing to enhanced interpersonal relationships.

Teachers can use the findings to tailor their teaching methods and strategies, ensuring that collaborative learning activities in the classroom are designed to effectively enhance learners' social skills. This study can provide teachers with evidence-based practices that can lead to improved classroom dynamics and learner interactions.

School heads can benefit from this research by understanding the relationship between collaborative learning and social skills among Grade 5 learners. This knowledge can assist individuals in making well-informed decisions regarding curriculum creation, teacher training, and resource allocation to promote the comprehensive development of learners.

Peers can anticipate a more collaborative and supportive learning environment, courtesy of the study's outcomes. As learners grasp the advantages of collaborative learning in fostering social skill development, there is a potential inclination towards increased collaboration, mutual support, and cultivating a positive classroom atmosphere.

The School Administrators benefit from this study, as it aligns with its commitment to evidence-based educational practices. By offering valuable insights into the effectiveness of collaborative learning strategies in enhancing social skills, the findings can inform the development of pedagogical guidelines and policies. Consequently, this has the capacity to make a substantial contribution to enhancing the general standard of education in the Philippines.

Future researchers can build upon the foundation laid by this study in education and social sciences. Expanding upon these findings will provide an opportunity to enrich the knowledge base surrounding collaborative learning and its influence on social skills within diverse

educational contexts. This study encourages the ongoing exploration of effective teaching and learning strategies, fostering continuous improvement in educational practices.

### ***Definition of Terms***

The subsequent explanations are presented to guarantee consistency and comprehension of these concepts throughout the investigation. The researcher generated all definitions that lacked a citation.

*Collaborative Projects.* For this study, collaborative projects refer to structured group assignments or activities in the classroom where Grade 5 learners work together to achieve common goals or complete specific tasks, requiring active cooperation and coordination among team members.

*Collaborative Learning Preferences.* Collaborative learning preferences pertain to the individual Grade 5 learners' inclinations and tendencies regarding their approach to collaborative learning strategies, including group discussion, peer teaching, jigsaw technique, and think-pair-share. This variable assesses the degree to which learners are inclined towards or comfortable with these specific collaborative learning methods.

*Group Discussion.* Group discussion is a collaborative learning technique in which Grade 5 learners engage in verbal exchanges within a group setting to explore and analyze the concepts collaboratively.

*Jigsaw Technique.* The jigsaw technique involves dividing Grade 5 learners into groups, each responsible for mastering specific portions of the activity inside the classroom. They then reassemble into new groups where members share their expertise on assigned topics to understand the subject matter comprehensively.

*Peer Teaching.* Peer teaching signifies the practice of Grade 5 learners taking on the role of educators within their peer group, where they explain and impart their knowledge to fellow learners. This approach aims to enhance understanding through teaching and learning from peers.

*Social Skills.* Social skills, in the context of this study, refer to a set of interpersonal abilities and behaviors exhibited by Grade 5 learners in maintaining and building positive relationships while working in a group relative to their academic activities.

*Think-Pair-Share.* Think-pair-share involves Grade 5 learners initially reflecting on a question or topic individually (think), then sharing their thoughts and ideas with a partner (pair), and finally, presenting their insights or conclusions to the larger group (share), promoting collaborative learning and discussion.

## *The Methodology*

### *Research Design*

This study used the descriptive-correlational research design. A descriptive-correlational research design collects and describes information without changing the environment. It involves a one-time interaction with groups of people, gathering, analyzing, classifying, tabulating, and interpreting such data. Further, it is designed to discover relationships among variables and allow predictions of future events from the present knowledge (Neuman, 2014). In this study, the researcher collected the data through a survey questionnaire on the collaborative learning preference of Grade 5 learners and established existing relationships with their social skills in the classroom. Then, these were described, analyzed, and correlated through quantitative analysis.

### *Research Locale*

This study was conducted in the eight (8) schools of Kibawe West District, Kibawe, Bukidnon. Kibawe is in the heart of Mindanao, a region in southern Bukidnon. The municipality is bordered by the municipality of Danggagan to the north, Damulog to the south, Magpet in North Cotabato to the east, and Kadingilan to the west, with the Muleta River as a natural boundary. It covers a total land area of 301.43 square kilometers (116.38 sq mi) and has an approximate elevation of 337 meters (1,106 ft) above sea level. Kibawe is a municipality within the landlocked province of Bukidnon. Bukidnon occupies 2.90% of the total area, which is comparable to 304.13 square kilometers or 117.43 square miles.

According to the 2020 Census statistics, the population of Kibawe was documented as 41,897 inhabitants. This figure accounts for 2.72% of the total population of Bukidnon province and 0.83% of the overall population of the Northern Mindanao area. The population density is calculated to be 138 individuals per square kilometer or 357 individuals per square mile, based on the provided numbers. The town's original inhabitants were the Manobo people, but lowlanders have largely replaced them.

Nowadays, only a few Manobos remain in the interior barrios. In 1972, the significant barrios of Damulog and Kadingilan were established as separate municipalities, while Kibawe retained its land area of 301.43 km<sup>2</sup> (116.38 sq mi). The present-day residents of Kibawe come from diverse ethnic origins, including the indigenous Manobo and Bukidnon Lumad tribes, as well as immigrants from Cebu, Bohol, Iloilo, Negros, and Samar.

In the municipality of Kibawe, Bukidnon, education has long been a cornerstone of community life, with several schools serving the educational needs of the local population. In

the heart of Kibawe, Bukidnon, lies a tapestry of educational institutions, each with its unique history and purpose. Central

Elementary School is a testament to longevity, its origins tracing back to July 1, 1950. Nestled along Syre Highway East, it has steadfastly served the community with its monograde class structure. New Kidapawan Integrated School, established on June 1, 1971, embodies innovation in education. Situated in the bustling district of New Kidapawan, it offers a monograde class system, providing holistic learning experiences for its learners.

Most schools in the district are surrounded by agricultural landscapes, creating a serene and conducive learning environment. The strong partnership between schools, parents, and local government units further strengthens the implementation of academic programs, extracurricular activities, and community-based initiatives.

Together, the selected educational institutions provide an appropriate and relevant setting for this study, given their unique characteristics and alignment with the study's objectives. Its accessibility, availability of data, and the presence of the target population make it a suitable environment for gathering meaningful insights and ensuring the validity and reliability of the research findings in the vibrant town of Kibawe, Bukidnon.

### ***Respondents of the Study***

The study's respondents were the Grade 5 learners from Kibawe West District, Kibawe, Bukidnon, selected through simple random sampling. These learners were selected for their significance in investigating collaborative learning preferences and social skills development within the classroom. At this pivotal stage, they were cultivating their academic interests, learning preferences, and personal responsibility for their learning. Analyzing these dimensions of their learning experiences provides teachers with valuable insights into enhancing the engagement and relevance of classroom instruction for these young learners.

### ***Sampling Procedure***

This research adopted a simple random sampling method to establish a fair and unbiased representation of the population. This approach ensures that each of the 501 Grade 5 learners has an equal and independent chance of being selected as a respondent, fostering inclusivity. Employing Raosoft, an online sample calculator, 240 further contributed to the rigor of the sampling process. By randomly choosing 240 respondents, the study aimed to enhance the generality of findings across the entire Grade 5 learner population and mitigate potential

sources of sampling bias, thereby bolstering the reliability and validity of the research outcomes. The respondents of the study per school was determined through a lottery.

***Rresearch Instrument***

This study utilized an adopted two-part questionnaire. A section of the questionnaire drew upon the work of Fernandez-Rio et al. (2017) to assess learners' collaborative learning preferences. This section covers various aspects of collaborative learning, including group discussions, peer teaching, the jigsaw technique, think-pair-share, and collaborative projects. Concurrently, the second part of the questionnaire was adapted from the research conducted by Mota (2011) and focuses on evaluating the social skills of the participating learners.

***Scoring Procedure***

The respondents answered the questionnaire on collaborative learning preferences using a five-point Likert scale. Below is a tabular presentation of the scale to be used with its scale, range, description, and interpretation.

Scale	Range	Qualitative Description	Qualitative Interpretation	Qualifying Statement
5	4.21–5.00	Always	Very high preference	5 times out of 5 instances
4	3.41–4.20	Often	High preference	4 times out of 5 instances
3	2.61–3.40	Sometimes	Moderate preferences	3 times out of 5 instances
2	1.81–2.60	Seldom	Low preference	1-2 times out of 5 instances
1	1.00–1.80	Never	Very low preference	None at all

The respondents answered the questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale to quantify the learners' social skills. Below is a tabular presentation of the scale, range, description, and interpretation.

Scale	Range	Qualitative Description	Qualitative Interpretation	Interpretation
5	4.21 – 5.00	Strongly Agree		Very High Level
4	3.41 – 4.20	Agree		High Level
3	2.61 – 3.40	Neutral		Moderate Level
2	1.81 – 2.60	Disagree		Low Level
1	1.00 – 1.80	Strongly Disagree		Very Low Level

### ***Data Gathering Procedure***

The research study aims to investigate the collaborative learning preferences of Grade 5 learners in eight schools within the Kibawe District, Division of Bukidnon. To collect the necessary data, the researcher first requests permission from the office of the school division Superintendent, District Supervisor, and school principals/heads. The purpose of the study and its potential benefits to the school community was explained. Once approval is granted, the researcher scheduled a meeting with the Grade 5 advisers to discuss the details of the data gathering process. During this meeting, the researcher explained the study's objectives and instructed the learners on administering the survey questionnaires. Adequate time was given to the advisers to prepare to distribute the survey questionnaires.

On the day of data collection, the researcher visited the schools to oversee the distribution of the survey questionnaires. The researcher introduced herself to the Grade 5 learners and explained the purpose of the survey questionnaire. The learners were given ample time to complete the questionnaire, with the advisers supervising the process. Subsequently, after data collection, the researcher retrieved the survey questionnaires and thoroughly checked for completeness and accuracy. The questionnaires were then coded, recorded, and organized into a tabular format using spreadsheet software. The researcher reviewed the data and meticulously checked for errors and inconsistencies.

The next step involved subjecting the data to statistical analysis. The results were discussed, analyzed, and interpreted to establish the study's findings. The data gathering procedures were executed with the utmost care and professionalism throughout this process. The researcher adhered to ethical standards and protocols in data gathering, processing, and analysis to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings.

### ***Findings***

Group discussions, peer teaching, think-pair-share activities, and collaborative projects were very highly favored among grade 5 learners. Meanwhile, the jigsaw technique was also highly preferred.

Grade 5 learners exhibited high levels of social skills. Such a foundation in social skills enriches their learning experience and prepares them for future collaborative endeavors within and beyond the classroom.

A highly positive significant relationship existed between collaborative learning preferences and social skills among Grade 5 learners. When learners engage in activities like peer

teaching, collaborative projects, and other interactive learning techniques in their classes, they learn the subject matter better and improve their social skills.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The findings indicate that Grade 5 learners favor collaborative learning strategies, suggesting that these methods are effective and engaging among learners in learning.

Additionally, the observation of high levels of social skills among Grade 5 learners indicates that their engagement in collaborative learning activities fosters the development of critical interpersonal abilities.

Finally, the significant relationship between collaborative learning preferences and social skills implies that the choice of instructional methods in classrooms directly correlates to the learners' social skills, highlighting the importance of incorporating collaborative learning approaches to enhance academic and social outcomes.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Curriculum developers may integrate collaborative learning strategies into the Grade 5 Subjects curriculum, accompanied by teacher training and ongoing evaluation.

Grade 5 Subjects teachers, supported by school administrators and educational policymakers, may prioritize collaborative group work in lessons to foster teamwork and communication skills.

School administrators and educational policymakers may encourage varied collaborative learning approaches, support teachers in creating positive classroom environments, and emphasize ongoing research to enhance academic and social outcomes.

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