

Perceptions and Practices of Cooperative Learning in Preparatory Schools of East Hararge Zone, Oromiya Regional State, Ethiopia

Anwar Ahmed Hussien

Lecturer in Haramaya University, College of Education and Behavioral Sciences
Department of Adult Education and Community Development

Abstract

The rationale behind this research was to investigate the perceptions and practices of cooperative learning (CL) in preparatory schools of east Hararge zone. In order to achieve this intention, descriptive survey research design was employed. The total of population of the study was 6045 of which 140 teachers and 334 students were incorporated in the sample via stratified random sampling. In addition to this, 12 supervisors were considered as a sample by using available sampling technique. Moreover, the combinations of both purposive and available sampling techniques were used to involve 12 principals in to the sample. As an instrument to collect necessary data questionnaire, semi-structured interview, document analysis and observation checklist were utilized. The analysis of quantitative data was carried out by using percent and mean while qualitative data was analyzed using explanation. T-test was also used to distinguish whether or not significant difference exists between teachers and students regarding their perception on CL. The result of the study showed that, the perception of both teachers and students towards the benefits of CL was neither positive nor negative. Regarding the practice of CL, the study indicated that: students, teachers and principals were sometimes (moderately) performing their roles. As a result, it is suggested that, school leaders in cooperation with woreda and zonal educational officials need to attentively follow up teachers' progress of practicing CL and facilitate trainings by focusing on how to apply CL as a method of instruction in classroom.

Keywords: Cooperative learning, Implementation, Perceptions, Practices

1. INTRODUCTION

In traditional approach of teaching, most class time is spent with the teacher talking and students watching and listening. In other words, the students work individually on provided tasks or assignments, and cooperation seems to be depressed (Felder & Brent, 1994). Similarly, Johnson and Johnson (1997) and Galton et.al (1999) specified that, in traditional way of teaching, students are often passive recipients of knowledge rather than being active participants due to teachers' inclination to talk at students and how students interact with one another is relatively neglected aspect of instruction.

Today, there seems to be a move towards allowing learners to be more actively involved in the teaching and learning process. In line with this, Moeller and Reitzes (2011); Abebaw (2011) wrote that, "one-size-fit-all" approach of teaching is on the way to be replaced by more adaptive and flexible approach which further indicates the shift in classroom organization from teacher-centered to student centered approach.

Relative to students taught traditionally: i.e. with instructor-centered lectures, individual assignments, and competitive grading, rapidly growing body of research is confirming the effectiveness of Cooperative Learning (CL). For instance; Liang (2002); Mabrouk (2007); Adeyemi (2008); Ume and Fidelia (2009); Cheong (2010) and Mohammed (2014) confirmed that CL is important to increase the academic achievement of students. Meaning, students who are exposed to CL outperformed those students that followed traditional approach. More briefly, cooperatively taught students tend to exhibit higher academic achievement, greater persistence through graduation, deeper understanding of learned material, and greater time on task, greater ability to view situations from others' perspectives, more positive and supportive relationships with peers, better skills in leadership, communication, and conflict resolution.

In support of the above idea, Johnson (2007) and Johnson (2009) stipulated that extraordinary achievement comes not from individualistic or competitive efforts of isolated individuals but from CL that promotes a situation in which students work together in small groups to maximize the learning of all members, sharing their resources, providing mutual support, and celebrating their joint success.

By recognizing the importance of CL, the government of Ethiopia incorporated the concern of active learning in general and CL in particular on policy documents. For instance: MoE (2009) confirmed that, active learning methods are not properly and sufficiently employed (addressed) in TESO program. As a result, this document stressed on five themes that serve as Standards for Pre-service Secondary School Teachers. One of them is facilitating students learning through the practice (application) of diverse active and reflective instructional techniques pertinent to objectives & contents.

Additionally, handbook of Higher Diploma Program (HDP) for teacher educators (MoE, 2011) indicated

that, HDP will enable candidates to be involved in collaborative learning and team work. It also affirmed that, HDP candidates will be able to organize and monitor group work and begin to develop the ability to manage cooperative groups effectively. So, these policy documents imply that, the government of Ethiopia is currently training higher institution instructors (teacher educators and non teacher educators) in a way that they can have the knowledge and skill about active learning in general and CL in particular so that they can practice it in their classroom instruction. This is to mean that, CL has got attention in all levels of education starting from the lower level to the universities.

In support of the above idea, Abebaw (2011) stated that textbooks and other teaching & learning materials which are prepared currently are being designed in line with the practice of role play, pair work and group work. He also wrote that, the practice of group work is quite common in secondary schools, colleges and universities.

Furthermore, a comparative study carried out by (Abebaw, 2011) on both higher and lower achiever learner's attitude towards CL also indicated that both groups of students (higher and lower achiever) have a favorable attitude towards CL and no significant difference was found in their attitude. That means academic achievement level does not play any significant role in differentiating learners' attitude towards CL.

In general, all the above studies focus on the effectiveness of CL and attitudes of students towards CL signifying that none of them are deliberate enough to scrutinize the status of practicing CL in the context of Ethiopian secondary schools specifically preparatory schools of east hararge zone. Additionally, the above researches were unable to see the roles of stakeholders like teachers, students and principals in practicing CL. This indicates that they are not comprehensive enough to elaborate the practices of CL and none of them were capable to spot up the perception of stakeholders towards CL. In slightly similar manner with the present study, Aschalew (2013), Birhanu (2010), Taye (2008) and Wudu (et.al. 2009) conducted their research on implementation of Active Learning Approaches (ALA) in Haramaya University, Addis Ababa University, Dilla University and upper primary schools of Ethiopia respectively. Surprisingly, all of them found out that the implementation of ALA in their study area was low. However, all these researches excluded the roles of students, higher institution leaders and secondary school principals in determining the practices of ALA by emphasizing only on the roles of lecturers and teachers. This shows that, first they are not inclusive enough to show the practice of ALA in terms of the roles of students and principals. Secondly, they are too general that tell us about ALA and not specific to CL. Therefore, being different from the above studies, this study focused on status of practicing CL by emphasizing on the roles of teachers, students and principals in preparatory schools of east hararge zone. In doing so, this research used theoretical framework discussed below to determine the status of CL.

Theoretical frame work

Chen (2005) suggested conceptual framework having two models for program implementation. These are Action model and Change model. According to him the action model can be implemented in order to activate the change model and it is the operation of the change model that leads to the attainment of the program goals. In other words, enhanced implementation of action model can enhance the change model and thus in turn enhances the final outcome. In addition to this, Altrichter (n.d) and Olives (1998) stated that the implementation of a certain program can be successful when three factors are fulfilled. These are the program being introduced (innovational characteristics like clarity, complexity and quality), the people being involved (Actors such as teachers, students, principals and others) and the organization in which the peoples work (organizational characteristics like organizational culture, organizational structure and process). The ideas of these scholars indicates that, status of program implementation will increase when the peoples that are involved in program implementation effectively perform their responsibilities and the organizational situations are convenient (fulfilled well) in a manner that sufficiently support its implementation. In the context of this study, peoples being involved include teachers, students and principals' while organization refers to school facilities. For detailed information see the diagram below.

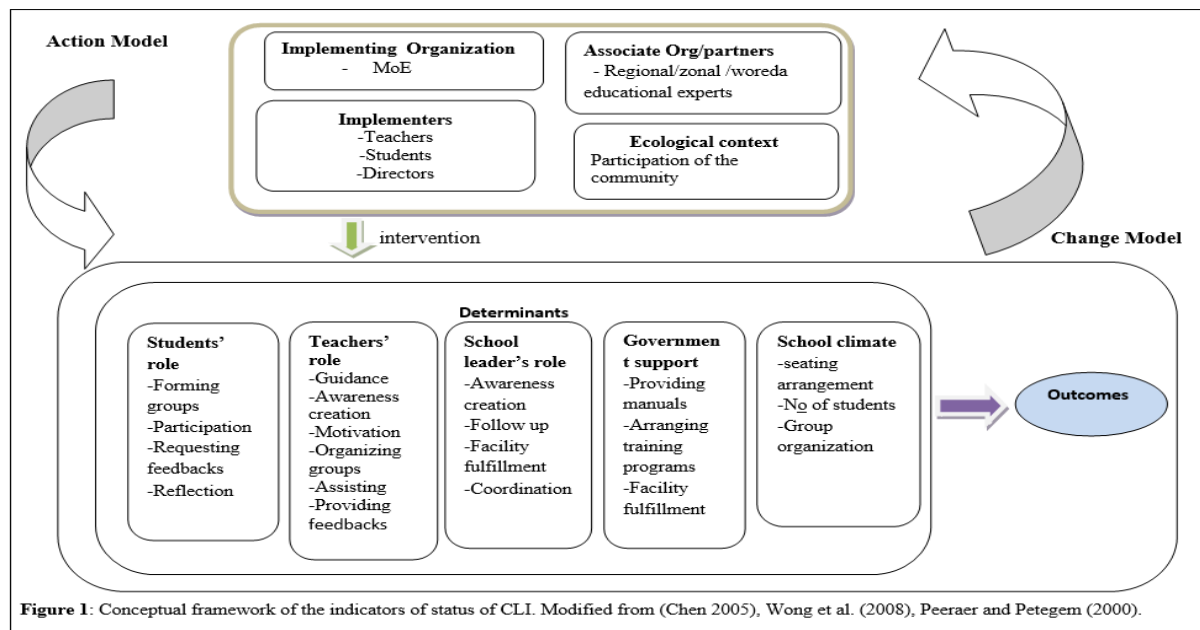


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of the indicators of status of CLI. Modified from (Chen 2005), Wong et al. (2008), Peeraer and Petegem (2000).

In line with the frame work above, the general objective of this research was therefore, to investigate the perceptions and practices of CL in preparatory schools of east hararge zone. Specifically, it is to; a) describe the perceptions of teachers and students towards the benefits of CL: b) find out whether significant difference lies between teachers and students on perception of CL: C) examine the status of CLI with respect to the roles of stakeholders such as teachers, students and principals.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1. The Concept of Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning is a victorious teaching strategy in which small teams, each with students of different ability levels use a variety of learning activities to improve their understanding of a subject. In this strategy, each member of a group is responsible, not only for learning what is taught, but also for helping his or her teammates learn (Jabberwocky, n.d). Farzaneh and Nejadansari (2014) also defined CL as a teaching approach in which learners of diverse abilities, talents and backgrounds work together in small groups to attain a common goal. According to (Johnson et al. 1994), cooperative learning is a specific kind of collaborative learning in which students of different academic achievements, race, and sex work together in small groups on a structured activity while they are individually accountable for their work, and the work of the group as a whole.

2.2. History of Cooperative Learning

Theorizing on social interdependence began in the early 1900s when Kurt Koffka proposed that groups were dynamic wholes in which the interdependence among members could vary. In 1920s and 1930s Kurt Lewin refined Koffka's notions by stating that the essence of a group is the interdependence among members which results in the group being a "dynamic whole".

In the late 1940s, Morton Deutsch extended Lewin's reasoning about social interdependence and formulated a theory of cooperation and competition (Deutsch, 1949, 1962). Deutsch conceptualized three types of social interdependence—positive, negative, and none. According to him, positive interdependence tends to result in promotive interaction; negative interdependence tends to result in oppositional interaction, and no interdependence results in an absence of interaction.

Moreover, literatures indicated that two main theories guided the studies related to cooperative learning. The first theory is constructivism which emphasizes the need for the learner to actively participate in the teaching-learning process. According to Hein (1991), the term constructivism refers to the idea that learners construct knowledge for themselves individually and socially as they learn. The second is the theory of motivation which suggests that it is not only the instructional style that influences a students' academic performance, but how much that individual wants to succeed. Since then, CL is practiced in almost all countries of the world implying that CL has been practiced in both traditional and modern educational systems where Ethiopia is not the exception.

2.3. Classification of Cooperative Learning

According to Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec (2008) CL can be classified as three kinds. The first type is formal

cooperative learning that consists of students working together for one class period to several weeks to achieve shared learning goals and complete jointly specific tasks and assignments. According to them, formal CL will be more fruitful if teachers make pre-instructional decisions, monitoring their students learning to provide assistance, and assess students learning. The second type of CL is informal cooperative learning which consists of students that work together to achieve a joint learning goal in temporary, ad-hoc groups that last from a few minutes to one class period. The third type is known as cooperative base groups in which heterogeneous cooperative learning groups work together for long-term with a stable membership

2.4. Characteristics of Cooperative Learning

James A. Duplass (2006) believes that cooperative learning incorporates the following eight basic features:

- ❖ **Teacher Supervision:** the instructor should always monitor group activity in order to make sure that learners are not veering too far off the assigned task. Also, the instructor should also be available for answering questions raised by the learners and guiding them through the discussion.
- ❖ **Heterogeneous Groups:** groups of diverse levels of ability and from different backgrounds should be created.
- ❖ **Positive Interdependence:** to achieve positive interdependence, the group should work towards a reward or final learning objective.
- ❖ **Face-To-Face Interaction:** the teacher should encourage the learners to use verbal and nonverbal communication to explain learning materials to each other or deal with problems encountered.
- ❖ **Individual Accountability:** learners are assigned specific roles in the group to ensure they are accountable for completing their tasks. In addition, each member of the group should assist the whole group in meeting the learning outcome.
- ❖ **Social Skills:** cooperative learning promotes social skills such as speaking in an appropriate manner, being respectful, and wisely utilizing the time allocated to a task.
- ❖ **Group Processing:** learners should reflect on the way the group functioned during learning activities.
- ❖ **Evaluation:** assessment can take the form of both individual and group assessment.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research Design

In order to attain the stated objective, the researcher adapted a survey research design that involves both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. Survey involves acquiring information from a large population by surveying their representative sample, summarizing their responses in percentages, frequency, as well as with more sophisticated statistical methods (Sarantakos, 2005).

3.2. Source of Data

Both primary and secondary sources of data were used to gather the relevant information. Primary source of data were teachers, students, school principals, and supervisors while secondary sources of data were report documents prepared by home room teachers, and school principals. In addition to this, lesson plans prepared by teachers and students mark list were observed. Moreover, Education Sector Development Program (ESDP V) and Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP-II) of Ethiopia were consulted for further information.

3.3. Target Population of the Study

The total population of this research included, students (N=5581), teachers (N=411), principals, (N=32), supervisors (N=24). Thus, a sum of 6045 was the population of this study.

3.4. Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

Multistage sampling technique was used to inculcate the required respondents. That means 12 (about 50%) of schools were selected first by using stratified random sampling. Then after, teachers, principals and supervisors were selected using different sampling techniques as indicated in table 1 bellow. To select the appropriate number of student and teachers sample size determination formula developed by Yamane (1967) was used. Accordingly, 334 students and 140 students were incorporated in the sample.

Table 1: Summary of Sample Size of Respondents

Respondent	Total Number	Sample Size	Sampling Technique
Students	2060	334	Stratified Random
Teachers	214	140	Stratified Random
Principals	16	12	Available and Purposive
Supervisors	12	12	Available

3.5. Tools of Data Collection

Questionnaire, interview, observation checklist and document analysis were employed for data collection.

The questionnaire has five major parts. The first part consisted of 3 items on demographic information about the background of respondents. The second part comprised about 6 items that emphasize on the perception of respondents while the third, fourth and fifth part of the questionnaire was about the roles of students, teachers and principals respectively.

In order to ensure the feasibility of the research, pilot test was conducted on 40 randomly selected students of Haramaya Secondary and Preparatory School. Accordingly, the internal consistency reliability of the scales was 0.79 (for perception), 0.84 (for teachers' role), 0.82 (for students' role) and 0.76 (for principals' role).

In addition to the questionnaire, interview was also considered as means for securing important data. To get detailed information, interview guides were designed to principals and supervisors. The main purpose of interview was to obtain detailed information about the extent to which they make effort to follow up the ICL and identify the current gaps on the ICL. This procedure helped the researchers to triangulate and strengthen the information obtained through the questionnaire.

Documents prepared by teachers like annual and daily lesson plan were critically analyzed to see how much teachers include the issue of CL in their instruction. Additionally, policy materials like ESDP-V, GTP-2 and different journal researches were consulted to supplement the findings of the questionnaire.

Direct classroom observation was also conducted on two sections per school to evaluate the extent to which teachers and students interact one another and to see the rate at which teachers and students perform their roles at the time of CLI.

3.6. Methods of Data Analysis

Quantitative data that was collected through close-ended questionnaire from teachers and students was analyzed by using mean and standard deviation. Percentage was also used to analyze background information of respondents. Moreover, inferential statistics, particularly independent sample t-test was used to find out whether there exist significant difference between teachers and students regarding their perception on the benefits of CL. Furthermore, qualitative data that was collected through interview and document analysis were analyzed by organizing and categorizing them into themes and noting patterns.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the data obtained through close ended questionnaire and observation checklist were analyzed quantitatively and presented one after the other. Following these, qualitative data was presented in a way that supplements the earlier data.

4.1 Background Information of the Respondents

Table 2: Characteristics of Respondents

No	Items		Respondents							
			Teachers		Students		Principals		Supervisors	
			No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1	Sex	Male	100	71.4	244	73.1	10	83.3	12	100
		Female	40	28.6	90	26.9	2	16.7	0	0
		Total	140	100	334	100	12	100	12	100
2	Age	15-20	-	-	252	73.3	-	-	-	-
		21-25	10	7.2	60	17.4	-	-	-	-
		26-30	35	25	32	9.3	-	-	-	-
		31-40	65	46.4	-	-	5	41.7	6	50
		41-50	30	21.4	-	-	7	58.3	6	50
		Total	140	100	344	100	12	100	12	100
3	Educational level	Grade 11	-	-	194	56.4	-	-	-	-
		Grade 12	-	-	150	43.6	-	-	-	-
		Diploma	3	2.1	-	-	-	-	-	-
		BA/BSc	124	88.6	-	-	6	50	9	75
		MA/MSc	13	9.3	-	-	6	50	3	25
		Total	140	100	344	100	12	100	12	100

As item 1 of table 2, indicates 100 (71.4%) of teachers and 244 (73.1%) of students are males while the remaining 40 (28.6%) of teachers and 90 (26.9%) of students are females. Additionally, item 1 of the same table indicates 100% of supervisors are males. This indicates that there exists gender disparity in secondary schools. That means secondary schools of the study area are occupied by high proportion of male teachers, principals,

supervisors and students.

As can be seen in item 2 of table 2, 10 (7.2%) and 35 (25%) of teachers are within age level 21-25 and 26-30 while the remaining 65 (46.4%) and 30 (21.4%) of teachers are within the age level of 31-40 and 41-50 respectively. Regarding the age of students, table 2 shows that, 251 (73.3%), 60 (17.4%) and 32 (9.3%) of students are within the age level of 15-20, 21-25 and 26-30 years respectively. Moreover, table 2 shows, 5 (41.7%) of principals are within the age of 31-40 years and the remaining 7 (58.3%) are within the age level of 41-50. As a result it is possible to say that all the respondents are matured enough to understand and fill the questionnaire distributed to them.

Table 2 further indicates that, 13 (9.3%), 6 (50%) and 3 (25%) of teachers, principals and supervisors respectively have second degree. Whereas 124 (88.6%), 6 (50%) and 9 (75%) of teachers, principals and supervisors have first degree respectively. Moreover, 194 (56.4%) of students were grade 11 and the remaining 150 (43.6%) were grade 12. This diversity in education level indicates that, these stakeholders have an ability to communicate and share their experiences regarding CL.

4.2. Concerning Perception of Students and Teachers

To determine perceptions of teachers and students on the benefits of CL in secondary schools of East Hararge zone, five point likert scale (1= *strongly Disagree*, 2= *Disagree*, 3= *Not Sure (Undecided)*, 4=*Agree*, and 5= *strongly Agree*) questions were distributed. Table 3 below presents the summary of it.

Table 3- Views on perceptions of teachers and students towards the benefits of CL

Item	Description/Indicator	Respondent	No	Mean	SD	t value
1	Improve the achievement of students	Students	200	3.75	0.83	0.77
		Teachers	70	3.97	0.95	
2	Enhance retention power of students	Students	200	2.64	0.96	0.95
		Teachers	70	2.64	0.82	
3	Allow students to take responsibility for their own learning	Students	200	3.80	0.81	0.022
		Teachers	70	4.00	0.54	
4	Build more positive feeling towards the subject matter	Students	200	2.70	0.98	0.42
		Teachers	70	2.79	0.68	
5	Provide more active learning opportunity	Students	200	2.93	0.94	0.09
		Teachers	70	3.14	0.84	
6	Help students to spend more time on learning	Students	200	3.30	1.19	0.91
		Teachers	70	3.29	0.71	
7	Lower frustration (fear) among students	Students	200	3.25	0.83	0.36
		Teachers	70	3.14	0.84	
8	Develop mutual interdependency among group members as all students need to do their assigned duties in order for the task to be completed	Students	200	2.85	0.86	0.64
		Teachers	70	2.79	1.02	
9	Afford accountable to all group members	Students	200	3.00	0.84	0.09
		Teachers	70	3.12	0.95	
10	Escalate confidence of students on their response	Students	200	3.55	1.03	0.85
		Teachers	70	3.57	0.73	
11	Improve communication skill of students	Students	200	3.92	0.78	0.72
		Teachers	70	3.85	0.69	
12	Encourage critical thinking skill as it provide opportunity for all students to think before forwarding their idea	Students	200	3.75	0.83	0.27
		Teachers	70	3.86	0.64	
13	Help students to celebrate diversity (promote positive race relation)	Students	200	4.20	0.68	0.14
		Teachers	70	4.07	0.60	
14	Acknowledge individual difference among students	Students	200	3.30	1.19	0.31
		Teachers	70	3.46	0.88	
15	Reduce the coast of materials needed in cooperative learning like chemicals, and other equipments	Students	200	2.20	1.03	0.56
		Teachers	70	2.12	1.07	
16	Promote classroom attendance	Students	200	2.63	0.97	0.23
		Teachers	70	2.79	0.93	
Overall result		Students		3.24		
		Teachers		3.29		

Scales <1.49= strongly disagree, 1.5-2.49=disagree, 2.5 – 3.49= undecided (not sure)
 3.5 – 4.49=agree >4.5= strongly agree

As indicated in table 2, the mean score of teachers and students for item number 1, 3, 10, 11, 12 and 13 is between 3.5 and 4.5. This shows that, both groups of respondents agreed that CL provides all the benefits

indicated behind each items such as: CL improves the achievement of students, it allow students to take responsibility for their own learning, it escalate confidence of students, it improve communication skill of students, it encourage critical thinking skill and help students to celebrate diversity respectively.

In opposite to the above, students and teachers showed disagreement on item number 15 with mean score 2.2 and 2.12 respectively. This indicates that CL cannot reduce the coast of materials required for teaching learning. However, Andrew, (n.d) stated that less materials are needed in CL because one of the social skill taught in CL is sharing resources. That means due to the existence of sharing resources in CL teachers usually purchase a class set of materials for the groups to share. Andrew also added schools are moving towards implementing higher technology and computers are becoming a norm. In such situations, students are able to gain more skills through computer peer tutoring in a cooperative setting. That means, students who work on computers have a natural tendency to help their peers even without suggestion by the teacher.

The mean score of both groups of respondents is between 2.5 and 3.5 for item number 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 14. This indicates that, they are unable to decide whether CL; Enhance retention power of students, Build more positive feeling towards the subject matter, Provide more active learning opportunity, Help students to spend more time on learning, Lower frustration (fear) among students, Develop mutual interdependency among group members, Afford accountable to all group members , and Acknowledge individual difference among students respectively.

In contradictory to this finding, Aschalew (2012) and Taye (2008) in their studies conducted in Haramaya and Dilla Universities respectively founded out that, respondents (teachers and students) have positive perception towards the practice of active leaning. As to the researcher the main reason for the occurrence of such differences in the findings of these two researches and the present study were: first teachers and students in higher institutions like Haramaya University and Dilla University have various opportunities to obtain awareness raising trainings about the application of active learning than teachers and students of preparatory schools where this research was conducted.

In general, the overall mean score of both groups of respondents for the all items prepared to determine their perception on CL is between 2.5 and 3.5 (students mean=3.24 and teachers mean=3.29). This indicates that, both groups of respondents were not able to decide whether cooperative learning provides the benefits indicated above. Hence it is possible to say that, there is gap on the perception of the two groups of respondents regarding the benefits of CL. In opposite to this, the research finding of Jolliffe (2005) showed that, teachers were overwhelmingly positive about the benefits of cooperative learning after implementing it for about one to three years.

The t-test result $t(268)$ is greater than 0.05 for all items indicating that, there is no significant difference among the two groups of respondents regarding their perception on cooperative learning at 0.05 level.

4.3. Concerning Student's Activity

As different scholars identified in their studies, the implementation of a program cannot be effective if students do not share their own roles. To this effect, questions having 5 likert scales namely: almost never (0), Rarely (1), Sometimes (2), Usually (3) and almost always (4) were distributed to teachers and students to determine the extent to which students perform their roles in relation to the ICL. Table 4 below summarizes the overall response of respondents.

Table 4: Views regarding the extent to which students perform their roles

No	Indicators	Respondent	No	Mean	SD
1	Form groups immediately as classroom teachers order them to provide the task	Students	200	2.75	0.77
		Teachers	70	2.50	0.74
2	Listen the rules attentively when teachers tell procedures on how to work through the task	Students	200	2.45	0.86
		Teachers	70	2.44	0.82
3	Accept their roles when teachers assign them in different responsibilities like leader, writer, time keeper ...etc	Students	200	2.45	1.05
		Teachers	70	2.07	0.71
4	Show motivation to participate on cooperative learning	Students	200	2.45	1.05
		Teachers	70	2.50	0.74
5	Perform their duties according to their assigned responsibility	Students	200	2.3	0.73
		Teachers	70	2.1	0.96
6	Request help from teachers to obtain extra support when group members face unclear or difficult issues (concept).	Students	200	3.00	0.71
		Teachers	70	2.70	0.71
7	Complete group tasks in the allotted time range	Students	200	2.35	0.86
		Teachers	70	2.24	0.82
8	Accept the comments (feedbacks) provided by teachers.	Students	200	3.00	0.75
		Teachers	70	3.14	0.75
9	Presenter (reflect) their work after they completed the given task	Students	200	1.63	0.94
		Teachers	70	1.50	0.63
Overall Mean Result			Student	2.37	0.86
			Teachers	2.39	0.76

Scales of interpretation <0.49= almost never, 0.5-1.49=rarely, 1.5 – 2.49= sometimes
 2.5 – 3.49=usually >3.5= almost always

As depicted in table 4, the mean score of both groups of respondents for item numbers 1, 6 and 8 are between 2.5 and 3.49. This indicates that students **usually** perform activities like forming groups immediately as classroom teachers order them to provide tasks, request help from teachers to obtain extra support and accept feedbacks provided by teachers. But, for item number 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 9 the mean score of both groups of respondents fall in the range of 1.5 and 2.49. This indicates that students of the study area were **sometimes** performing activities such as listening the rules attentively when teachers tell procedures on how to work through the task, accepting their roles when teachers assign them in different responsibilities, showing motivation to participate on CL, performing their duties according to their assigned responsibility, completing group tasks in the allotted time range and reflecting their task after they completed the given activity.

By supporting the above idea, out of 8 sections observed, students were unable to complete the given activities within the allotted time in about 5 sections (62.5%). Moreover, in almost all sections which were observed at the time of data collection, students were not able to reflect their ideas to the whole class after they completed the discussion in groups even if teachers were motivating them to present what they did. In addition to this, it was observed that, students were not able to start tasks immediately after their teachers tell them what and how to do. That means they were not strictly following procedures on how to do activities when their teachers tell them and become confused after they started doing some activities.

In table 4 above, the overall standard deviation of teachers and students was 0.76 and 0.86 respectively. This also indicates that, the response of teachers is averagely 0.76 units far from their overall mean score (2.42) and students is 0.86 units averagely far from their mean value (2.43). Thus students response is slightly diverse than that of teachers for the 9 items indicated in table 3. That means, there was more variation in students' response than that of teachers for the same item.

3.4. Concerning Teachers Role

9 items having 5 likert scales: almost never (0), rarely (1), Sometimes (2), usually (3) and almost always (4) were disseminated to teachers and students to find out the extent to which teachers perform their roles in relation to the ICL. It is summarized in the table 5 below.

Table 5: Respondents views for the extent to which teachers perform their roles

No	Description	Respondents	No	Mean	SD
1	Provide awareness about the importance of cooperative learning	Students	200	1.90	0.77
		Teachers	70	2.00	0.76
2	Organize the sitting arrangement of students so that students will be close enough to each other to share materials and ideas	Students	200	2.56	0.86
		Teachers	70	2.71	0.71
3	Explain the rules and procedures on how every member of the group works	Students	200	2.15	0.73
		Teachers	70	3.00	0.76
4	Determine/Assign the roles for each group members	Students	200	1.35	0.91
		Teachers	70	2.71	0.71
5	Offer the task to be done in a group	Students	200	2.71	0.89
		Teachers	70	2.36	0.72
6	Follow up the contribution of each group member	Students	200	2.15	0.73
		Teachers	70	2.71	0.71
7	Vary the composition of groups every week/month/semester so that each student will have a chance to work with a large number of classmates during the term or year	Students	200	0.70	0.78
		Teachers	70	1.48	0.63
8	Offer timely feedback/sufficient support	Students	200	1.42	0.53
		Teachers	70	1.38	0.67
19	Provide appropriate mark for each student/group based on their effort	Students	200	0.98	0.73
		Teachers	70	1.24	0.43

Scale of Interpretation <0.49= almost never, 0.5-1.49=rarely, 1.5 – 2.49= sometimes 2.5 – 3.49=usually >3.5= almost always

In the above table the mean score of both teachers and students lie between 0.5 and 1.49 for item number 7, 8 and 9. This indicates teachers are rarely performing activities such as varying the composition of groups at different times, offering timely feedback, and providing appropriate mark for each student/group based on their effort. Additionally, observation held in a classroom evidenced that, out of 8 observed sections teachers were unable to vary the composition of groups in all sections. Moreover, it is observed that teachers were spending their time on telling what and how to do given activities rather than providing timely feedback to students. This indicates students were unable to clearly understand procedures of doing tasks told by their teachers at the beginning.

For item number 1 and 5 of table 4 the mean score of respondents lies between 1.5 and 2.49. This indicates that teachers were sometimes performing activities such as providing awareness to students about the importance of CL and affording different tasks to be done in groups. By supporting this interview conducted with one of the principal reported “few teachers do not accept policy directions given by government. As a result they do not provide tasks for students to be done in group”. Another interviewee also said “there are some teachers that consider providing task for students to be done in group as loading burden up on students”. One of the supervisors also explained that “**most** teachers but not all can implement CL very well but still we hear complaints from students as some of their teachers can not strictly implement CL as expected”.

From the above table and its discussion, it is possible to say the practice of CL with regard to teachers’ activity was low. Similarly, studies conducted by (Wudu et.al 2009) in upper primary schools of Ethiopia indicated that the application of student centered methodology by upper primary school teachers was not adequate. Moreover, studies conducted by Birhanu (2010), Aschalew (2012) and Taye (2008) in three different universities revealed that the employment of active learning method by university instructors was low. In opposite to the present study, Jolliffe (2005) found out that, an average of 78.6% of all staff were using CL as an instructional strategy after implementing it for about one to three years.

3.5. Concerning School Leaders Activity

Table 6: Teachers views regarding the extent to which school leaders support the ICL.

It. No	Indicator	No	Mean
1	Provide awareness about the benefits of cooperative learning for students	70	1.63
2	Follow up your progress of implementing cooperative learning	70	2.81
3	Identify teachers that do not implement CL and encourage them to use it.	70	2.08
4	Identify gaps regarding the implementation of cooperative learning	70	1.23
5	Try to prepare workshops by communicating with the Zonal education bureau based on the identified gaps to use it.	70	2.04
6	Try to fulfill materials which are required for practicing CL by communicating with the zonal and/or woreda educational officials	70	2.48

Scales of interpretation <0.49= almost never, 0.5-1.49=rarely,
 1.5 – 2.49= sometimes 2.5 – 3.49=usually >3.5= almost always

As table 5 indicates the mean score of item 4 is between 0.5 and 1.49. This indicates that, school leaders rarely plan and prepare training opportunities for teachers so that they can obtain awareness regarding the ICL. Interview held with one of the principals also evidenced that “I always think about training opportunities for teachers. But still I did not facilitate training situations on the ICL”.

Moreover, the mean score of item 1, 3, 5 and 6 in the same table lies between 1.5 and 2.49. This in turn indicates school leaders sometimes provide awareness about the benefits of CL for students, identify teachers that do not implement CL, sometimes encourage those teachers that do not implement CL and offer incentives for teachers who are efficient in implementing CL. In support of this, one of the principal at the time of interview elaborated “yes I sometimes follow up teachers and advice those teachers that cannot practice CL so as to practice it. But it is difficult to take measures up on them”. The second principal from other school also said “students have long years of experience in CL, therefore I don’t think it is important to talk about it for them”. In addition to this, one of the supervisors informed “I do not have direct contact with students. I think providing awareness about CL is the responsibility of teachers and principals”.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- As per the finding of this study (over all mean of students =3.24, and Teachers =3.29), both teachers and students were unable to agree or disagree whether CL provides different kinds of benefits listed in table 4. This indicates that, the perception of teachers and students on the benefits of CL is neither negative nor positive. From this, one can understand that, there exist gap on the perception of CL among teachers and students though they do not perceive the benefits of CL as positive or negative. Therefore, school leaders such as principals and supervisors in cooperation with woreda education bureaus, teacher education colleges and universities have to work on raising the awareness of both teachers and students.
- For majority of the activities need to be performed by the students, it is found out that the mean score of both groups of respondents was below 2.49. This indicates that students were **sometimes** performing their activities such as listen the rules attentively when teachers tell procedures on how to work through the task, accept their roles when teachers assign them in different responsibilities, show motivation to participate on CL, perform their duties according to their assigned responsibility, complete group tasks in the allotted time range and reflect their task after they completed the given activity. Hence, it is recommended that,
 - ❖ Students need to be aware of their roles and actively perform it at different stages of CLI.
 - ❖ Classroom teachers have to follow up each and every activity of students and provide the necessary support to them.
 - ❖ School leaders need to work hard in creating awareness so that students by themselves can take responsibility in identifying and performing their roles. These recommended activities can be realized by using different opportunities like preparing formal meeting with students and creating awareness at the time of flag ceremony.
- It was found out that the mean score of students and teachers were between 1.5 and 2.49 for majority of (8 out of 10) of activities need to be performed by teachers. This indicates that teachers are **sometimes** performing their roles such as providing awareness to students about the importance of CL and affording different tasks to be done in groups. Therefore, it is advisable that;
 - ❖ Classroom teachers need to identify each and every role that should be performed at different stages of CLI.
 - ❖ Stakeholders particularly principals and supervisors need to attentively follow up the teachers’ progress of CLI in collaboration with school principals
 - ❖ School principals in collaboration with other concerned stakeholders need to arrange training

- opportunities for teachers. In doing this, the training need to focus on the benefits of utilizing CL and mechanisms of tackling different problems that classroom teachers face at different stages of CLI.
4. The mean score of majority of activities need to be performed by school leaders are between 1.5 and 2.49. This indicates school leaders are sometimes performing their roles expected of them such as providing awareness about the benefits of CL for students, identify teachers that do not implement CL, encouraging those teachers that do not implement CL in order to practice it and offering incentives for teachers who are efficient in implementing CL. Therefore, it is suggested that,
 - ❖ Supervisors need to follow up the progress of school leaders' extent of providing their support and work in collaboration with school leaders.

References

- Abebaw Andargie (2011). *EFL learner's attitude towards group work: The case of high and lower achievers*. Available at [etd.aau.edu.et/bitstream/123456789/726/3/AmeneAfework](http://etd.aau.edu.et/bitstream/123456789/726/3/AmeneAfework.pdf).
- Adeyemi, B. A. (2008). *Effect of cooperative learning and problem-solving strategies on junior secondary school student's achievement in students*. *Electronic Journal of Research in Educational psychology*, 6(3), pp. 691-708.
- Altrichter, H. (n.d). *Curriculum implementation-limiting and facilitating factors. Johannes-Keplers-University. Austria*. Available at www.slideshare.net/MarieNhie/curriculum-implementation
- Aschalew Teshome (2013). *Teachers perception and practice of active learning in Haramaya University*. An international multidisciplinary peer review and Journal. 1(6). pp. 370-390.
- Birhanu Moges (2010). *Active Learning Approaches in Mathematics Education of Universities in Oromiya, Ethiopia*. Retrieved from https://books.google.com/books/.../Active_Learning_Approaches_in_Mathematic.html?i...
- Chen, H. (2005). *Practical program evaluation: Assessing and improving planning, implementation and effectiveness*. Thousand Oaks: Sage publication.
- Farzaneh, N & Nejadansari, D. (2014). Students' Attitude towards Using Cooperative Learning for Teaching Reading Comprehension. Vol. 4, No. 2, pp. 287-292
- Felder, R. & Brent, R. (1994). "Co-operative learning in technical courses: Procedures, pitfalls and Payoffs". Available at <http://www.ncsu.edu/felder-public/papers/Coopereport.html>.
- Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. (1999). *Learning together and alone: Cooperative, competitive, and individualistic learning (5th Ed.)*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Jabberwocky (n.d). What Is Cooperative Learning, and What Does It Do? Retrieved 18 June 2015 from <https://www.teachervision.com/cooperative-learning/teaching.../48448.ht>
- Jack, R. F., Norman, E. W & Helen, H. H. (2012). *How to design and evaluate research in education* (8th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Company.
- Kothari, C. R. (2004). *Research methodology, methods and technique*. New Delhi: New age international publisher.
- Kumar, R. (2006). *Research methodology: A step-by-step guide for beginners*. (2nded.). England: sage publication Ltd.
- Liang, T. (2002). *Implementing cooperative learning in EFL teaching: Process and effects*. National Taiwan Normal state University. Available at www.asian-efl-journal.com/Thesis_Liang_Tsailing.pdf
- Mabrouk, P. A. (2007). *Active Learning: Models from the Analytical Sciences*. Washington, DC: American Chemical Society.
- MoE (2011). *Higher Diploma Programme for Teacher Educators: Handbook*. Addis Abeba, Ethiopia.
- MoE (2009). *Curriculum framework for secondary school teacher education program in Ethiopia*.
- Muhammed Kedir (2014). *Cooperative learning practices in college of education and behavioral sciences in Haramaya University*. *International Journal of Science and Research*, 3(11), pp. 3044-3051.
- Olives, P. (1998). *Developing the Curriculum*. Longman Inc. New York.
- Peeraer, J & Petegem, P. V. (2000). *Factors influencing integration of ICT in higher education in Vietnam*. Belgium: University of Antwerp.
- Taye Gerresu (2008). *Perception and practices of active learning in EFL class of Dilla University*. Addis Ababa University.
- Sarantakos, S (2005). *Social science research methodology*. (3rd edition). Basingstoke, Newyork. Palgrave Macmillan Company.
- Srinivas, H. (n.d). *44 benefits of cooperative learning*. Available at www.gdrc.org/kmgmt/c-learn/44.html
- Ume, M & Fidelia, N. (2009). *Cooperative learning approach and student's achievement in sociology*. An international multidisciplinary journal, 3(3), pp. 388-398.
- Wudu Melese, Tefera Tadesse & Woldu Assefa (2009). *The practice of learner centered method in upper primary schools of Ethiopia*. *Ethiopian Journal of Education and Science*, 4(2), pp. 27-44.