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## Attitude of Students towards Cooperative Learning Methods (the Case of Wolaita Sodo University Psychology Department Second Year Students)

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### Abstract

This paper was intended to investigate student's attitude towards cooperative learning method in Wolaita sodo university second year psychology department students. Therefore, based on the quantitative research design employed 48 participants (30 females and 18 males) were taken as both a population and sample. The necessary data was collected through semi structured questionnaires. After the data was collected it was critically transcribed and analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics methods of analysis particularly mean, standard deviation and Analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used. The result indicates that the participants have a positive attitude towards cooperative learning methods and there was a statistical significant difference between male and female participants in their attitude towards the learning methods. However, female participants had positive attitude than their counter parts. In addition, the finding indicates that there was no statistical significant difference between class levels. The academic performances (Average mark) of the students were found negative strong relationship with student's attitude towards cooperative learning methods. The results of the study also provided an insight on the way student perceive cooperative learning method with recommendations for designing more interactive classroom learning interventions that promote context learning, which in turn poster quality education.

**Keywords:** Attitude; Cooperative Learning; Methods; Wolaita Sodo; Ethiopia

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## **1. Introduction**

Educational is base for over all activities or development of the country. It plans significant role for the success of political, economic, social and police or strategies developed by government. It also the most important things to acquaint the practical of cooperative learning method in my case seem to long lasting a support academic performance. The starting of cooperative learning in Ethiopia school is the directly related with the learning of modern education in 20<sup>th</sup> centre [2].

Now a day the greater number of students has forced to carry out their teaching learning process a cooperative learning method [3]. Same study have provided strong support of the effectiveness of active learning instruction for improving social and academic competency for students of diverse ability, when it compared with competitive and individualistic learning instruction [6].

Active learning methodology can be incorporated through different ways. It may be through cooperative learning discovery based learning, collaborative learning, self-directed learning problem based learning and others [8].

Since the world's education system is becoming increasingly diverse, It is crucial that learning strategies are beneficial in educating a wide variety of student, teachers must engage students so they retain and comprehends the subject matter through in the classroom and provide them with the proper social skills needed to succeed beyond the classroom environment [9, 12]. One of the learning method educators can to use help students develops those necessary skills is cooperative learning method. Cooperative learning method is a strategy that develops the healthy interaction skills, promotes success of the individual students and group members, and forms personal and professional relationships [6].

In the light of the above theoretical framework the focus of this study was on investigate the high school student's attitudes towards cooperative learning method in Wolaita sodo university second year psychology department students enrolled in 2013.

### **1.1 Statement of the problem**

Although research studies [6, 11] have shown that cooperative learning is a successful learning method. It is important that to considered different issues. It does not necessary follow from those results. That all students in cooperative environment developed positive attitude towards the learning experience, stronger, more permanent and more transferable problem solving skills [1]. The issue such as what impacts has cooperative learning on student's motivation have not been a focus of research in many universities and colleges, specifically in Wolaita Sodo University.

That's why the researcher indicated to investigate on a student's attitude towards cooperative learning and the relationship between their attitude and academic performance. Therefore, the present study attempts to examine the attitudes of students towards cooperative learning in Wolaita sodo university second year psychology department students.

Moreover, specifically, this research was concerned with the following Basic research question.

- 1) What is the attitude of students toward cooperative learning methods?
- 2) Is there any relationship between student's attitude towards cooperative learning and academic performance?
- 3) Is there any significance difference on student's attitude towards cooperative learning method and academic performance in terms of average mark?

## **1.2 Objective of the study**

### **1.2.1 General objective of the study**

The general objective of this study is to investigate the attitude students towards cooperative learning method in Wolaita sodo university second year psychology department students.

### **1.2.2 Specific objective**

Upon the completion of the study this study was able to:

- Examine the students attitude towards cooperative learning method in the classroom
- Indicate the relationship between student's attitude towards cooperatively learning method and academic performance.
- Investigate whether there is a significance difference in their attitude towards cooperative learning method.

## **1.3 Significance of the study**

The main objective of this study was to investigate attitude of Wolaita sodo university second year psychology department students towards cooperative learning method. So the following will be the main contribution of the study:

- ✓ The finding of this study can assist students to understand the impact their attitude towards the learning method on their motivate, social skill and academic achievement
- ✓ The result of the study could also help teachers in understanding their student's attitude and interpretation of the group they are assigning.
- ✓ Understanding of student's attitude towards cooperative learning method could also help teachers and school administrators, in particular for understanding the feedback of students for the implementation of the cooperative learning method.
- ✓ At the end this study can further helps to give comments and recommendations for school teachers and administrators.

## **1.4 Delimitation of the study**

The study was delimited to Wolaita sodo university second year psychology department students. The study was

also delimited in terms of the problem to be addressed and therefore, the study is very concerned to investigate the attitude of students towards cooperative learning.

### **1.5     *Limitation of the study***

In addition to its strengths and significances, this study has certain limitations. In fact, success is not the absence of failure. Therefore, the researcher had faced problems while conducting this study because of the following reasons.

- ❖ Shortage of enough current related studies, particularly studies on sex and class level differences between students in their attitude towards cooperative learning methods.
- ❖ Some respondents were very reluctant to fill the questionnaire as per the intention of the researcher.
- ❖ The selected sample of the study was 48 students and the questionnaire was distributed to these 48 students. However, few respondents were not neatly filling the questionnaire.
- ❖ In addition, there were lack of enough finance, time and material to do this study.
- ❖ In addition, there were limited researches done on the areas of cooperative learning methods in Ethiopia and hence the research lacks sufficient literatures and reference materials to fully scrutinize the natures of the problem. However, this does not mean that the objectives of the study were not achieved rather every specific details of cooperative learning methods were not mentioned. The more the sources, the better our insights about would be.

## **2.     Methodology**

### **2.1     *Design of the study***

The major objective of this study is to investigate high school student's attitude towards cooperative learning methods among Wolaita sodo university second year psychology department students. In order to do that a descriptive survey research method was used as research design. Because it can include collections of quantitative data and it was collected within a short period of time using cross sectional survey from these students in the study area.

### **2.2     *Description of the study area***

The study was conducted at Wolaita sodo university second year psychology department students. The area is found in Wolaita sodo town of southern Nation, Nationalities and People Regional State. It is also located 378 KM away from Addis Ababa to the South part of the country.

### **2.3     *The target population of study***

The target populations of the study were all second year psychology department students which enrolled on 2013 academic year.

## 2.4 *Sample and sampling technique*

First, second year psychology department were selected purposefully with the assumptions of getting accurate data from the respondents. Therefore, since the populations of the study were very small in number, the researcher was subjected to take all the target population as a sample. Therefore, 48 second year psychology department students were considered in this study.

## 2.5 *Methods of data collection Instrument*

In order to get the desired information about students' attitude towards cooperative learning method, the researcher has used questionnaire as a primary instrument/ tool. This questionnaire was prepared in both open ended and close ended items to measure the objective of the study.

## 2.6 *Data analysis and presentation*

After the data was collected systematically, it was analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods according to the nature of the data. Descriptive statistics was used for the purpose of assessing and understanding the student's attitudes towards cooperative learning methods. Inferential statistics specifically, Independent test was used to see the differences in attitude towards cooperative learning between male and female students. In addition, Person correlation coefficient was used to look in to the relationship between student's attitude towards cooperative learning and academic achievement in terms of average marks.

## 3. **Data Analysis and Presentations**

In this chapter the data collected through questionnaires was analyzed and discussed based on the pertinent to the objective of the study and the basic research questions framed under chapter one.

### 3.1 *Results*

#### 3.1.1 *Socio demographic characteristics of the participants*

As shown in table 1, 30(62.5%) and 18(37.5%) of the participant were male and female students. Regarding the age level of the respondents, 29(60.4%) were ranged from 14-18 years, 15(31.2%) were ranged from 19-22 years and the rest 4(8.3%) were above 22 years. In addition, the religion of the respondents, 15(31.2%) were orthodox believers, 14(29.1%) were Muslim followers, and the remaining 8(16.6%) were catholic believers.

#### 3.1.2 *Attitude of students towards cooperative learning methods*

The first objective of this study was to identify student's attitude towards cooperative learning method. To address this objective mean and standard deviation for the attitude scale was computed and it was compared

with the expected mean for the attitude scales the formula of mean= $\frac{\sum X}{N}$  and standard deviation =  $\sqrt{\frac{\sum X^2 - \frac{(\sum X)^2}{N}}{N}}$

The actual mean score of the participants, as indicated in table 2, of the attitude scale is 40.68 with standard

deviation of 11.39 which is above the expected mean for the attitude scales which is 39. To decide whether the actual computed mean score of the attitude scale are lower or higher, it can be simply done by comparing the actual mean with the expected mean scored listed in the above table2, were expected mean of the attitude scales.

**Table 1:** Frequency Distribution of participants by demographic characteristics

No.	Demographic variable	Category	Frequency	%
1	Sex	Male	30	62.5
		Female	18	37.5
		Total	48	100
2	Age	14-18	29	60.4
		19-22	15	31.2
		Above 22	4	8.3
		Total	48	100
4	Religion	Orthodox	15	31.2
		Protestant	14	29.1
		Muslim	11	22.9
		Catholic	8	16.6
		Total	48	100

**Table 2:** Descriptive statistics of attitude of participants towards cooperative learning method.

Variable	No of items	Actual mean	Expected mean	SD deviation
Attitude	13	40.68	39	11.39

Scores means, the average of the expected minimum and maximum score to be obtained in 13 items of the attitude scale and responded in 5 point rating scales. So by comparing the actual an expected mean score of attitude scale (actual mean= 40.68 and expected mean= 39), the result slightly shows that the participants have higher score in the attitude scales. That implies the respondents have a positive attitude towards cooperative learning method. However, the above table cannot show clearly which group of participants (male or female, 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> grade) scored higher mean, it is simply crude statistical descriptions of the attitude of all participants. That's why it requires further statistical computations. The following depicts the comparison of participant's attitude made on the base of their sex and age class level.

### 3.1.3 The effect of class level on students attitude towards cooperatively learning

Based on the objective of the study it was attempted to investigate the students' attitude towards the cooperative

learning method and for such purpose, an independent t- test was applied.

**Table 3:** independent t-test for the difference in attitude by class level (income)

Dependent variable	Demographic variable	Category	N	Mean	SD deviation	T	Sig (2-tailed)	df
Attitude	Income level	rich	23	42.1	11.59	0.818	2.015	46
		poor	25	39.4	11.29			

As indicated in table 3 above, rich students in terms of income seemed to have a higher mean score on the attitude scale (mean= 42.1, SD=11.59) than the poor students (mean=39.4, SD=11.29).

The critical table value (CV=2.015) is greater than the obtained 1- value =0.818. This implies that here is no significant difference between rich and poor students in their attitude toward cooperative learning method.

### 3.1.4 The effect of sex on participants attitude towards cooperative learning method

Regarding sex the attitude of students in relation to gender, towards cooperative learning, an independent sample t-test was computer.

**Table 4:** Independent sample t-test for the difference in attitude towards cooperative learning method by sex.

Category (sex)	N	Mean	Standard deviation	T	Sign t( 2-tailed)	Df
Male	30	42.8	11.58	7.09	2.015	46
Female	18	37.2	10.89			

As indicated in table 4 above, male participants seemed to have higher mean score on the attitude scale (mean=42.8 SD=11.58) than female participants (mean= 37.2, SD=10.89). However, to answer the question to what extent does such a difference between male and female students for the attitude scale is significant. The researcher need to consider the significance value of t. so when it compare the obtained t-value= 7.09 is greater than critical/ table value= 2.015. This implies that there is a significance difference between male and female student in their attitude towards cooperative learning method. As the male students have appositve attitude than female students towards this learning strategies.

## 4 Discussions

In the forth section of this paper, the student’s attitude towards cooperative learning method was presented. Here discussions of the analysis presented earlier were made in relation with the objective of the study and related literatures. Accordingly, the results are discussed in the following manner.

Students Attitudes towards cooperative learning methods is similar to many studies for example [6, 11] that are discussed in the literature review, the findings of this study shown that significant number of high school students have a positive attitude towards cooperative learning method. However, even though a significance number of students have a positive attitude towards cooperative learning. They also provide suggestions regarding the advantages and disadvantages and other related points for the implementation of this learning methodology.

Among the negative impact that the implementation of cooperative learning on students: it is difficult for teachers to control the class. Who is distributing and who engages on the discussion or not. Even though, the teacher is circulating in the class, it is somewhat difficult in controlling as who is working productively and who is not, since there is a high noise of different small groups.

In addition to this the implementation of a cooperative learning method is long time taker, leads students and teacher in to conflict, invites students to joke during the normal discussion, it make summary teachers to be less responsible and not prepared very well and the way in which students seat in the class in relation to the black board is not suitable.

The present findings seem similar to the different studies on the advantages and disadvantages of cooperative learning method [9] which stated that a cooperative learning has the following draw backs: there is loss of control it is very time consuming to implement. Especially teachers who are un familiar with may not accept and implement very well this style of learning.

The difference between male and female student's attitude towards cooperative learning method were clearly investigated. In this finding male students have significantly positive attitude towards the learning method than their counter parts. The result is consistent to related previously study for example [4] which stated that female student in some cooperatively grouped class reported as they have generally negative attitude and less confidence than males in the traditional grouped class and the river was true for males. This may be because of different reasons; most of the time, females students are busy and have not enough time to study at home than males, they are somewhat dependent in decision making than males, the way they socialize, and other.

This study also revealed that there is no statistical significance difference between class level (rich and poor) participants in their attitude towards cooperative learning methods. This may be because, most of the students are in a similar environment age and most of the teachers that guide the learning method are the same.

In addition this study was assessing of the relationship between the student's academic performance in terms of average mark and their attitude towards cooperative learning method.

The result of this study indicated a strongly negative relationship between the average mark and attitude towards cooperative learning method, that implies the lower achiever in the average mark have positive attitude than the medium. This because of the higher achievers, assumes that they did not got any benefit from the lower achiever, and the reverse is true for the lower achievers, they assumes that they can be helped in different difficult problem solving in decision making, further concept analyzing, and other issues.



The present finding seems similar to the previous study on the relationship between academic performance and attitude towards cooperative learning method reported by [1]. His result finding stated that, from a total of 213 participant students were more motivated and has as positive attitude than the medium achievers, the medium achievers than the higher achievers, and relatively opposite to the James in 1978 cited in [1] stated that there is no significant relationship between the level of academic performance difference and the attitude difference towards the cooperative learning method.

#### **4. Summary and Conclusion**

##### **a. Summary**

The purpose of this study was to assess the attitude of students towards cooperative learning methods in Wolaita sodo university second year psychology department students. In this study 48 participants were as a sample (census) as far as the population of the study was very small in number. The study design was descriptive method the collected data was analyzed by quantitative analyzed approach. Accordingly:-

- Students have a positive attitude towards cooperative learning method
- There is a strong negative relationship between student's academic performance and their attitude towards cooperative learning.
- There is a significance difference between the attitude of male and female students towards cooperative learning methods.

##### **b. Conclusions**

Based on the major findings the following conclusions were drawn:

- Second year psychology department students have a positive attitude towards cooperative learning method.
- There is a strong negative relationship between students academic performance and their attitude towards cooperative learning method
- There is no significant difference between the attitude of poor and rich income level students in their attitude towards cooperative learning methods
- There is a significance difference between the attitude of male and female students towards cooperative learning method.

##### **c. Recommendation**

Based on the major findings the researcher has suggested the following recommendations:-

- In order to successfully implementing and minimizing the negative impacts of this cooperative learning method. University administrators, teachers and counselors should provide trainings to teachers about the way how to implement this learning methodology.
- As the result indicates male student have better attitude than the female students towards cooperative learning method. So to get conducive and productive the teaching learning process. It is better to fulfill the

gap in attitude by making the male students to improve their attitude an cooperatively working using training, advices and other techniques.

- Even though students have a positive attitude towards cooperative learning. They suggested that there are some limitations, thus the students should aware as they have the responsibility in addressing the problems.
- The finding indicates that students who have good performance have weak attitude towards cooperative learning method than students have low performance.. so it is better to the school administrators and other concerned bodies supposed to pursuit the student's have good performance, as every student can discover new way of problem solving, share different knowledge's and other if there is cooperatively working regardless of any difference.

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## APPENDIX

### WOLAITA SODO UNIVERSITY

### SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE

### DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

#### Questionnaires of respondents

The purpose of this questionnaire is to assess or gather information about the attitude second year psychology department students with networking cooperative learning method. The quality and success of this study is highly the depending on the relevance of the information that you will provide. So, you are kindly or requested to give your genuine response to each item of the questionnaire. I would like to assure you that response will be used only for research proposer and will keep confidential.

Dear respondents read the questions carefully and put (X) mark for the following questions.

*Thank you in advance!*

#### **Part I. questions related to personal information**

- |    |                   |          |            |          |
|----|-------------------|----------|------------|----------|
| 1. | Sex               | a. Male  | b. Female  |          |
| 2. | Age               | 14-18    | 19-22      | above 22 |
| 3. | Educational level | 9 class  | 10 class   |          |
| 4. | Religion          | orthodox | protestant | Muslim   |
|    |                   | catholic |            |          |
| 5. | Ethnicity         |          |            |          |

#### **Part II. Questions which are related to measure attitude of the respondents using a standardize scale.**

**Direction:-** From last one year about now in Wolaita sodo psychology department students one to five (networking) cooperative learning method is done with regarded to this the researcher is prepared questionnaires to measure the attitude of the students using the scale. Dear respondents read the questions carefully and put (X) mark for the following questions on space provided.

**Alternatives that represent inside the table**

1. **Strongly disagree**                      3. **Agree**                                      5. **Never decided**  
 2. **Disagree**                                      4. **Strongly agree**

Nº.	Questionnaires	Alternative				
	Attitude scales	1	2	3	4	5
1	It reduces your interest in education					
2	It encourages teachers to prepare themselves well and deliver effective information					
3	It minimizes your competition with your friends in class					
4	There is effect instigation of your success					
5	It bring unnecessary stress between you and your teacher					
6	It has an effect to cover based on the education in class period or schedule					
7	It makes both you and your friends to have a good relationship					
8	It enable you not only to depend on the result rather it helps to have a good knowledge					
9	In education period it assess your disturbance					
10	It has an effect a positive or negative take it specific					
11	It makes or creates self confidence					
12	It has effect on education					
13	It reduces un health for tension from you					

14. Write the importance of one to five cooperative learning methods for students?

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15. Do you think there any disadvantage on the students while implementing or reducing cooperative learning methods

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16. What condition do you suggest in the future for cooperative learning method to be effective?

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**Thank you**