INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY: APPLIED BUSINESS AND EDUCATION RESEARCH
2025, Vol. 6, No. 3, 1001 – 1009
http://dx.doi.org/10.11594/ijmaber.06.03.02

Research Article

Challenges in Cooperative Learning Approach in Secondary Social Studies Instruction, Zone 1, Department of Education, Division of Zambales, Philippines

Jovelyn E. Acosta[1], Marie Fe De Guzman[2]

[1]Department of Education, Candelaria School of Fisheries
[2]President Ramon Magsaysay State University, Zambales, Philippines

Article history:
Submission 03 February 2025
Revised 28 February 2025
Accepted 23 March 2025

**Corresponding author:*
E-mail:
deguzmanmariefe2018@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study examines the challenges encountered in implementing the cooperative Learning (CL) approach in Secondary Social Studies instruction in Zone 1, Division of Zambales, Philippines. using descriptive research design, survey data were collected from 101 randomly selected Social Studies teachers. Findings indicate that teacher sometimes utilize the CL approach and face challenges related to student engagement, teacher preparation, and assessment methods. The study recommends that teachers explore alternative cooperative learning strategies such as the Tea Party, Carousel, CO-OP CO-OP, and Round Robin methods. Additionally, structured planning and classroom management techniques should be prioritized to enhance the effectiveness of cooperative learning.

Keywords: *Challenges, encourage, cooperative learning approach, well – managed classroom environment*

Introduction

Teachers are expected to know and utilize latest innovations in teaching, effectively manage instruction that would provide better learning atmosphere in classroom setting. Article V, Section 2 of the Code of Ethics of Professional Teachers adopted in 1997 states that "every teacher shall uphold the highest standards of quality education, shall make essential preparations for teaching, and shall be at his best at all times in the practice of his profession." This policy is thereby meant to support teachers in upholding quality education standards. On the other hand, DepEd Order No. 8, series of 2015 instructs teachers to be committed to ensure learner success in moving from guided to independent practice of knowledge, understanding and skills and to enable them to transfer this successfully in future situations. In the present Social Studies instruction, the learners' product and performance tasks such as simulated activities, group investigation, role plays, designing models, projects and many others are examples of learner centered classroom activities and are done by pupils through co-operative and collaborative ways and processes.

How to cite:
Acosta, J. E. & De Guzman, M. F. (2025). Challenges in Cooperative Learning Approach in Secondary Social Studies Instruction, Zone 1, Department of Education, Division of Zambales, Philippines. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary: Applied Business and Education Research*. *6*(3), 1001 – 1009. doi: 10.11594/ijmaber.06.03.02

Student-centered teaching and learning is the recommended approach to modern day pedagogy especially in the Kto12 Basic Education Program where the teachers served as the facilitator of learning activities rather than performing the traditional method. Teachers therefore are always in the forefront of identifying the most appropriate learner centered instructional pedagogy to satisfy and address what the Basic Education in the country aims for which is "to achieve mastery of core competencies and skills" as stated in the DepEd Discussion Paper on Kto12 (2010).

Cooperative learning can be defined as a structured form of group work where students accomplish common goals but are assessed individually (Feden & Vogel, 2008). Johnson, Johnson & Holubec (1993) as cited by Iyer (2013) acknowledged that one of the important reasons for its cooperative learning advocacy in the K-12 classrooms was its feature of group tasks that tend to effect higher academic scores, higher self-esteem and positive social skills. Nunnery, Chappell & Arnold (2013) stated that one of the most important strategies for making the students to be active in the learning process is employing the study groups allowing the students to discuss, inquire and share views.

However, there are many challenges that educators address in the usage of cooperative learning. Group conflict and the noise level in the classroom were found by Iyer (2013) as the main challenge faced in cooperative learning activities. Cooperative learning takes too much of teachers' time in planning and might also take longer to cover the required portion of the curriculum (Laguador, 2014). Grading practices in cooperative learning are perceived as unfair if students' grades are affected by the achievement of their group-mates (Iyer, 2013). Problem in classroom size, lack of knowledge and experiences related to cooperative learning, classroom management and preparation and lack of resources were the disadvantages of using cooperative learning (Xuan, 2015). Tran (2014) argued that it is important and beneficial for the school to give attention in determining the drawbacks and disadvantages of instructional pedagogy. Thus, the researchers find it beneficial to give attention in identifying and addressing operative learning challenges, issues/concerns and propose the implementation and institutionalization of intervention strategies for an enhanced cooperative learning instruction.

With this research, curriculum planners and school administrators would be more informed of the encountered challenges by teachers as they utilize cooperative learning approach. The school administrators are in the position to help their teachers to lead the implementation of intervention strategies to enhance cooperative learning instruction. With the findings of the study, the Social Studies teachers would be more receptive and responsive to the challenges and difficulties in the usage of CL when teaching Social Studies lessons and adopt strategies to improve further the CL instruction thereby providing the learners quality education they deserve. Findings of this research can serve as a guideline for secondary school teachers who wish to progress and innovate the utilization of cooperative learning to advance their pupils' proficiency and the development of motivation toward learning. By carrying out this study, the researcher hopes that cooperative learning can receive more attention among secondary school teachers of Zambales not only those who are teaching Social Studies (Araling Panlipunan) but at all subjects towards improved service of quality education in the Division. With the enhanced and improved utilization of the CL, pupils can benefit more from learning with other in small groups and will be more actively involved in their own learning within a cooperative learning environment. By carrying out this study proposal, the researcher hope that cooperative learning can receive more attention among elementary school teachers of Zambales not only those who are teaching Social Studies but at all subjects towards improved service of quality education in the country.

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive research design to assess the challenges in implementing cooperative learning. A survey was conducted among 102 Social Studies Teachers from secondary schools in Zone 1, Division of Zambales. A purposive sampling technique was used to ensure representation across different

districts. the survey instrument consisted of three sections: (1) teacher demographics, (2) commonly used cooperative learning methods, and (3) test, and reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, ANOVA, and mean comparison tests to determine significant differences in responses based on demographic factors.

The research instrument is researcher's made; therefore it was subject to checking by the research adviser and members of the oral examiners of PRMSU Graduate School. The survey questionnaire was also pilot tested. A pilot test examined whether all instructions in the questionnaire given can be understood and to make sure all respondents comprehend the purpose of the research. The pilot test was conducted among Social Studies teachers of Rofulo Landa National High School, Salaza, Palauig, Zambales.

The researchers secured a written permit from the Schools Division Superintendent of the Division of Zambales for the conduct of the study and the distribution of survey questionnaire to the school-respondents. The researcher also sought the permission and assistance of the School Principals/Heads of the Secondary Schools of Zone 1, Division of Zambales to allow the distribution of the survey questionnaires to the Social Studies teacher-respondents. Survey questionnaires was administered by the researchers to the respondents personally. The objectives of the study were explained to the participants and the confidentiality of their responses were assured. These have to be done to assure a 100% retrieval of the research instruments. The administration of the instruments was conducted on the 3rd week of January, 2019 and were retrieved after a week. Data which were collected from the survey questionnaire were tabulated, analyzed, interpreted and summarized accordingly with the aid of: (1) descriptive statistical techniques such as: frequency counts, simple percentage and mean and (2) inferential statistics - Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

Results and Discussion

The teacher-respondents were "always" use the think-pair-share cooperative learning approach manifested by its high mean value of 3.62 and ranked 1st followed by the use of learning together approach, 3.44 and ranked 2nd while least on the tea party with mean of 2.89 interpreted as "sometimes" and ranked 15th. The computed overall weighted mean on the responses towards level of extent on the utilization of cooperative learning method was 3.18 with qualitative interpretation of "sometimes".

Cooperative learning work well with groups or teams wherein members help one another to achieve a desired outcome Corpuz & Salandanan (2007). It promotes the development of the skills in democratic procedures as they solve problems in collaborative manner. It recognizes and rewards collective effort at the same time fosters strong motivation. A smooth personal interaction occurs. With these methodologies, some approaches are used like Students Team Achievement Division (STAD), Think-Pair-Share, Buzz Groups, Jigsaw, and Group Investigations.

1. Level of extent on the Utilization of Cooperative Learning Methods

Table 1. Assessment on the level of extent on the Utilization of Cooperative Learning Method N=101

	Cooperative Learning Method	WM	QI	Rank
1	Think - pair - share	3.62	Always (A)	1
2	Jigsaw	3.38	Always (A)	3.5
3	Students Team Achievement Division (STAD)	3.33	Always (A)	5
4	Group Investigation	3.38	Always (A)	3.5
5	Learning Together	3.44	Always (A)	2
6	Reciprocal Teaching	3.02	Sometimes (SO)	11
7	CO-OP CO-OP	2.96	Sometimes (SO)	13
8	Buzz Groups	3.14	Sometimes (SO)	8
9	Graphic Organizers	3.26	Always (A)	6

	Cooperative Learning Method	WM	QI	Rank
10	Problem Solving	3.05	Sometimes (SO)	10
11	Numbered Heads Together	3.11	Sometimes (SO)	9
12	Round Robin	2.97	Sometimes (SO)	12
13	Write Around	3.19	Sometimes (SO)	7
14	Carousel	2.94	Sometimes (SO)	14
15	Tea Party	2.89	Sometimes (SO)	15
	Overall Weighted Mean	**3.18**	**Sometimes (SO)**	

Think-pair-share is a type of cooperative learning approach where the student are given the opportunity to discuss, and shared views. The Cooperative learning is a structured form of group work where students accomplish common goals but are assessed individually (Feden & Vogel, 2008). In the study of Johnson, Johnson & Holubec (1993) as cited in Iyer (2013) acknowledged that one of the important reasons for its cooperative learning advocacy in the K-12 classrooms was its feature of group tasks that tend to effect higher academic scores, higher self-esteem and positive social skills. Nunnery, Chappell & Arnold (2013) stated that one of the most important strategies for making the students to be active in the learning process is employing the study groups allowing the students to discuss, inquire and share views.

Table 2. Summary Table on the Responses towards extent of challenges in the utilization of cooperative learning approach

	Extent of Challenges	OWM	Qualitative	Rank
1	Students aspects	3.02	Sometimes (SO)	1
2	Teachers Aspects	2.96	Sometimes (SO)	2
3	Assessment of Output Aspect	2.91	Sometimes (SO)	3
	Grand Mean	**2.96**	**Sometimes (SO)**	

The data clearly indicates on the greater challenges in the utilization of cooperative learning approach as to student aspects. The cooperative learning approaches for the student activity to assure the positive involvement in all classroom undertakings.

2. Test of differences on the level of extent on the occurrence of the challenges the utilization of cooperative learning approached when grouped according to profile variables

2.1 Student Aspects

The analysis of variance to the test difference on the extent of occurrence of the challenges in the utilization of cooperative learning as to student aspect when grouped according to profile variables is shown in Table 3. There is no significant difference on the extent of occurrence of the challenges in the utilization of cooperative learning as to student aspect when grouped according to age, specialization, highest educational attainment and academic rank/position profile variables respectively manifested by the computed P-values of 0.127,0.477,0.502 and 0.096 which are higher than (>) 0.05 Alpha level of Significance, therefore the Null Hypothesis is Accepted. On the other hand, the computed P-value of 0.021 which is lower than (<) 0.05 Alpha level of significance, therefore the Null Hypothesis is rejected, hence there is significance difference when grouped according to sex profile variables.

Table 3. Analysis of Variance to test differences on the extent of occurrence of the challenges in the utilization of cooperative learning as to student aspect when grouped according to profile variables

Source of Variations		SS	df	MS	F	Sig.	Decision
Age	Between Groups	2.033	7	0.290	1.665	0.127	Accept Ho Not Significant
	Within Groups	16.222	93	0.174			
	Total	18.255	100				
Sex	Between Groups	0.965	1	0.965	5.526	0.021	Reject Ho Significant
	Within Groups	17.290	99	0.175			
	Total	18.255	100				
Specialization	Between Groups	0.648	4	0.162	0.883	0.477	Accept Ho Not significant
	Within Groups	17.607	96	0.183			
	Total	18.255	100				
Highest Educational Attainment	Between Groups	0.436	3	0.145	0.79	0.502	Accept Ho Not Significant
	Within Groups	17.819	97	0.184			
	Total	18.255	100				
Academic Rank/ Position	Between Groups	1.152	3	0.384	2.17	0.096	Accept Ho Not Significant
	Within Groups	17.10	97	0.176			
	Total	18.255	100				

The teacher-respondents' most often encountered challenge in the utilization of cooperative learning in Social Studies according to Deliquina & de Guzman (2017) was pupil-related aspects like having large group sizes with group members who do not work hard as others and do not always focus on the task. The teachers also often experienced teacher-related challenges in the utilization of cooperative learning mainly adjusting to the role of pupils of increased responsibility, demanding significant time in terms of instructional planning and guiding the pupils.

Cooperative learning involves students working in groups, usually mixed ability groups. Students complete the group task, which requires group interdependence and assessments are individually and group determined (Hajra, 2011). According to Hajra, the different forms of cooperative learning include Student Team Learning, Jigsaw, Group Investigations and Learning Together.

2.2 Teacher Aspects

The analysis of variance to test difference on the extent of occurrence of the challenges in the utilization of cooperative learning as to teacher aspect when grouped according to profile variables is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Analysis of Variance to test difference on the extent of occurrence of the challenges in the utilization of cooperative learning as to teacher aspect when grouped according to profile variable

Source of Variations		SS	df	MS	F	Sig.	Decision
Age	Between Groups	0.910	7	0.130	0.684	0.685	Accept Ho Not Significant
	Within Groups	17.675	93	0.19			
	Total	18.585	100				
Sex	Between Groups	0.898	1	0.898	5.026	0.027	Reject Ho Significant
	Within Groups	17.687	99	0.179			
	Total	18.585	100				
Specialization	Between Groups	0.403	4	0.101	0.532	0.713	Accept Ho Not significant
	Within Groups	18.183	96	0.189			
	Total	18.585	100				

Source of Variations		SS	df	MS	F	Sig.	Decision
Highest Educational Attainment	Between Groups	0.362	3	0.121	0.642	0.590	Accept Ho Not Significant
	Within Groups	18.224	97	0.188			
	Total	18.585	100				
Academic Rank/ Position	Between Groups	0.870	3	0.29	1.587	0.197	Accept Ho Not Significant
	Within Groups	17.716	97	0.183			
	Total	18.585	100				

There is no significant difference on the extent of occurrence of the challenges in the utilization of cooperative learning as to teacher aspects when grouped according to age, specialization, highest educational attainment and academic rank/position profile variables respectively manifested by the computed P-value of 0.685, 0.713,0.590 and 0.197 which are higher than (>) 0.05 Alpha level of significance, therefore the Null Hypothesis is Accepted. On the other hand, the computed P- value of 0.027 which is lower than (<) 0.05 Alpha Level of significance, therefore the null Hypothesis is rejected, hence there is significance difference when grouped according to sex profile variables.

Female teachers are noted to be patient, dedicated and has greater control on classroom management. The classroom management and mastering order inside the classroom are also considered the basic problems which face the teacher during students' group task. Since teachers complain about mastering the order inside the classroom, and it consumes much effort and time, and they are considered as sensitive, important and critical factors for the teacher's success or failure in his tasks (Salem al-amarat, 2011). The disadvantages faced by teachers when implementing cooperative learning are according to Esa & Mahbib (2015) include (a) Teacher's ability to control cooperative learning in class.

Lack of direction and guidance that can lead to behavior does not want to socialize or all members want to talk at the same time; (b) Over reliance on a group of friends. Cooperative learning can make students become dependent on each other and can have negative effects when they are required to work individually. It becomes difficult when it involves emotion as the nature of student cooperative or otherwise; (c) The issue of time constraints. Teachers need time to plan their strategies in terms of time for preparation and implementation; and (d) Problem Statement.

2.2 Assessment of Output Aspects

Table 5 shows the analysis of variance to test difference on the extent of occurrence of the challenges in the utilization of cooperative learning as to assessment/evaluation of output aspect when grouped according to age, sex, specialization, highest educational attainment and academic rank/ position profile variables respectively.

There is no significant difference on the occurrence of the challenges in the utilization of cooperative learning as to assessment of output aspect when grouped according to age, specialization, and highest educational attainment profile variables respectively manifested by the computed P-values of 0.493, 0.171, and 0.415, which are higher than (>) 0.05 Alpha Level of Significance, therefore the Null hypothesis is Accepted. On the other hand, the computed P-value of 0.009 and 0.05 which are lower than (<) 0.05 Alpha Level of significance difference when grouped according to sex and academic rank/position profile variables respectively.

Table 5. Analysis of Variance to test difference on the extent of occurrence of the challenges in the utilization of cooperative learning as to assessment/evaluation of output aspect when grouped according to profile variable

Source of Variations		SS	df	MS	F	Sig.	Decision
Age	Between Groups	1.029	7	0.147	0.922	0.493	Accept Ho Not Significant
	Within Groups	24.821	93	0.159			
	Total	15.850	100				
Sex	Between Groups	1.047	1	1.047	6.999	0.009	Reject Ho Significant
	Within Groups	14.804	99	0.150			
	Total	15.850	100				
Specialization	Between Groups	1.012	4	0.253	1.637	0.171	Accept Ho Not significant
	Within Groups	14.838	96	0.155			
	Total	15.850	100				
Highest Educational Attainment	Between Groups	0.456	3	0.152	0.959	0.415	Accept Ho Not Significant
	Within Groups	15.394	97	0.159			
	Total	15.850	100				
Academic Rank/ Position	Between Groups	1.218	3	0.406	2.692	0.050	Accept Ho Not Significant
		14.632	97	0.151			
		15.850	100				

The data clearly demonstrate on the deviation and differences of opinion towards assessment or evaluation of students when grouped according to sex and academic rank. Female teachers are noted to be patient in recording student progress and development. The academic rank correlated with their years in service and educational attainment demonstrate on their competence in the use of assessment techniques. Tejada (2012) provided a list of techniques that to some extent address both issues about evaluating group work which include (a) group grading for projects, (b) students grading each other or evaluating the level of contribution made by each member to a team project, (c) extra credit given when groups exceed their previous average or when individuals within a group exceed their previous performance by a specified amount, and (d) the use of quizzes, exams, or assignments graded to ensure individual accountability. The study of Sheehy (2009) have found that in cooperative leaning approach, it is very important to inform the students of the criteria on how they would be rated by the teachers, therefore, rubric should be formulated so that the learners are guided of their participation and the expectation on their academic performance would also be enhanced.

3 Test of differences on the level of extent on the utilization of cooperative learning approach when grouped according to profile variables.

Table 6 shows the Analysis of Variance to test difference on the level of extent on the utilization of cooperative learning approach when grouped according to age, sex, specialization, highest educational attainment and academic rank/position profile variables respectively.

There is no significant difference on the extent on the utilization of cooperative learning when grouped according to age, specialization, highest educational attainment and academic rank/position profile variables respectively manifested by the computed P-values of 0.215, 0.918, 0.612 and 0. 696 which are higher than (>) 0.05 Alpha Level of Significance, therefore the Null Hypothesis is Accepted.

Table 6. Analysis of Variance to test difference on the level of extent on the utilization of cooperative learning approach when grouped according to age, sex, specialization, highest educational attainment and academic rank/position profile variables

Source of Variations		SS	df	MS	F	Sig.	Decision
Age	Between Groups	1.529	7	0.218	1.400	1.215	Accept Ho Not Significant
	Within Groups	14.509	93	0.156			
	Total	16.038	100				
Sex	Between Groups	0.655	1	0.655	4.217	0.043	Reject Ho Significant
	Within Groups	15.383	99	0.155			
	Total	16.038	100				
Specialization	Between Groups	0.155	4	0.039	0.234	0.918	Accept Ho Not significant
	Within Groups	15.883	96	0.165			
	Total	16.038	100				
Highest Educational Attainment	Between Groups	0.295	3	0.098	0.607	0.612	Accept Ho Not Significant
	Within Groups	15.743	97	0.162			
	Total	16.038	100				
Academic Rank/ Position	Between Groups	0.235	3	0.078	0.481	0.696	Accept Ho Not Significant
		15.803	97	0.163			
		16.038	100				

On the other hand, the computed P-values of 0.043 which is lower than (<) 0.05 Alpha Level of significance, therefore the Null Hypothesis is rejected, hence there is significant difference when grouped according to sex profile variables. To implement successfully cooperative learning, Jayapraba (2013) proposed that schools provide the teachers with all the physical amenities for cooperative learning activities; give teachers the opportunity to participate in workshops regarding cultivating cooperative learning skills, critical thinking skills, and metacognition in their classes depending on the class level; help teachers by providing guidelines for planning and ready-made activities that are ready to be implemented in class; and a need for longer training periods for students and teachers on cooperative learning skills especially self-assessment.

Cooperative learning is an educational methodology based on working in small and usually heterogeneous groups, in which students work together to expand or hone their own skills and those of other group members (Velázquez-Callado, 2012). In the study of Laguador (2014) focused on cooperative learning is an approach to the aim of student-centered classroom activities towards the attainment of the outcomes-based environment. It was recommended that the teacher should prepare the activities appropriately to obtain remarkable learning experience on the part of the learners. The teacher provide clear objectives of the classroom activities gives the learners a sense of direction towards the attainment of the group goals. The teachers should set the environment conducive for learning including the materials to be used, safety of the students during the activity, motivation to participate, and encouragement to obtain high academic performance.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the summary of the investigations conducted, the researchers have arrived to the conclusions that majority of teacher-respondents are female in their early adulthood, specialized in Social Studies, Teacher-1 and with masteral units. The teacher-respondents "sometimes" utilized the cooperative learning approach. The teacher-respondents "sometimes" encountered challenges on student, teacher and assessment of output aspects respectively. There is significant difference on the occurrence of challenges when grouped according to sex towards student, teacher and assessment of outputs respectively while significant difference on academic rank towards

assessment of outputs aspects. There is significant difference on the level of extent of utilization of cooperative learning approach when grouped according to sex profile variables.

Findings suggest that while cooperative learning is sometimes utilized in Social Studies instruction, challenges remain in student engagement, teacher preparedness, and assessment. Teachers should be provided with targeted training on cooperative learning methodologies, particularly strategies like Round Robin, Jigsaw, and CO-OP CO-OP, which promote structured collaboration. Administrators should support teachers in implementing classroom management techniques tailored to group-based learning. Future research should explore the long - term effects of cooperative learning on student performance in Social Studies.

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