



LINKING COOPERATIVE LEARNING AND ACADEMIC MOTIVATION IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION: EVIDENCE FROM THE PHILIPPINES

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between cooperative learning and academic motivation in elementary education in the Philippines, with particular reference to the Schools Division of Zamboanga del Sur. It employed a descriptive research design involving 337 elementary school administrators and 1,771 teachers. Data were gathered using a researcher-developed questionnaire covering five cooperative learning approaches, Student Teams–Achievement Division (STAD), Think–Pair–Share, Buzz Groups, Jigsaw, and Group Investigation and five dimensions of academic motivation: self-efficacy, task value, peer influence, teacher support, and parental involvement. Weighted mean and inferential statistical procedures were employed to analyze the data. Findings showed consistently high implementation of cooperative learning approaches, with Buzz Groups obtaining the highest mean among the dimensions assessed by school administrators ($M = 5.53$), followed by Jigsaw ($M = 5.52$) and Think–Pair–Share ($M = 5.51$). Academic motivation was likewise highly evident, with task value obtaining the highest mean ($M = 5.51$), followed by parental involvement ($M = 5.48$) and peer influence ($M = 5.47$). The analysis further revealed a positive but relatively small relationship between cooperative learning and academic motivation ($r = 0.37$). These findings indicate that collaborative instructional practices and motivational support are interconnected components of the elementary learning environment. The study underscores the importance of strengthening structured peer collaboration, meaningful learning tasks, learner confidence, teacher support, and family engagement to promote more engaging and supportive elementary classrooms.

KEYWORDS: Academic Motivation, Cooperative Learning, Elementary Education, Learner Engagement, Peer Collaboration.

1. INTRODUCTION

Contemporary elementary education increasingly emphasizes learning environments in which pupils actively construct knowledge through interaction, shared responsibility, and meaningful participation rather than functioning merely as passive recipients of instruction. Cooperative learning supports this orientation by organizing learners to work toward common academic goals while developing communication, accountability, and interpersonal skills. Recent evidence indicates that peer interaction and reciprocity can contribute positively to academic performance among elementary pupils, demonstrating the educational value of productive social relationships in the classroom (Candia et al., 2022). Similarly, Cho et al. (2022) found that structured collaborative learning environments can influence elementary pupils' learning effectiveness, motivation, and group self-efficacy, although differences in participation remain an important consideration in designing collaborative activities. Cooperative learning therefore requires more than simply placing pupils in groups; meaningful interaction, appropriate instructional structure, and opportunities for equitable participation are essential. Research on elementary classrooms further demonstrates that the quality of student dialogue and social interaction can vary considerably across cooperative groups, underscoring the continuing importance of teacher guidance in facilitating productive collaboration (Matsumoto & Kondoh, 2021). These findings reinforce the value of examining how structured cooperative

learning practices operate alongside motivational processes in elementary education.

Academic motivation is equally important because learners' willingness to participate, persist, and regulate their learning depends partly on how capable they perceive themselves to be and how much value they attach to academic tasks. Recent research among primary education students demonstrates that self-efficacy is an important predictor of planning and monitoring behaviors in self-regulated learning, while motivational and emotional factors influence how pupils approach and sustain classroom tasks (García-Ros et al., 2026). Motivation also interacts with the social organization of learning. Okada (2021), for example, found that autonomous motivation to participate in cooperative learning contributed to elementary pupils' perceptions of active participation and that peer modeling played an important role in this process. Although existing studies provide substantial evidence concerning cooperative learning and academic motivation, these constructs are frequently investigated separately or within specific instructional interventions and contexts. Consequently, there remains a need to understand how cooperative learning practices and academic motivation are associated within the everyday context of Philippine elementary education. Addressing this gap, the present study examines the relationship between cooperative learning and academic motivation as perceived by teachers and school administrators, focusing on cooperative strategies such as STAD, Think–Pair–



Share, Buzz Groups, Jigsaw, and Group Investigation and motivational dimensions including self-efficacy, task value, peer influence, teacher support, and parental involvement.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 2.1 To assess the extent of cooperative learning practices in terms of Student Teams–Achievement Division (STAD), Think–Pair–Share, Buzz Groups, Jigsaw, and Group Investigation.
- 2.2. To determine the extent of academic motivation in terms of self-efficacy, task value, peer influence, teacher support, and parental involvement.
- 2.3. To compare the assessments of school administrators and teachers regarding the extent of cooperative learning practices and academic motivation.
- 2.4. To determine whether there are significant differences between the assessments of school administrators and teachers regarding cooperative learning practices and academic motivation.
- 2.5. To examine the relationship between cooperative learning and academic motivation in elementary education.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to examine cooperative learning practices and

academic motivation in elementary education and to determine the relationship between these two constructs. The study involved 337 elementary school administrators and 1,771 elementary school teachers from the Schools Division of Zamboanga del Sur, Philippines, with school administrators selected purposively and qualified teachers selected through stratified random sampling. Data were collected using a researcher-developed questionnaire consisting of indicators measuring cooperative learning in terms of Student Teams Achievement Division (STAD), Think–Pair–Share, Buzz Groups, Jigsaw, and Group Investigation, and academic motivation in terms of self-efficacy, task value, peer influence, teacher support, and parental involvement. Before its administration, the instrument underwent a dry run and expert review, and relevant recommendations were incorporated into its final version. Permission to conduct the study was secured from the appropriate educational authorities before the questionnaires were distributed to the respondents. The collected data were analyzed using weighted mean to determine the extent of the identified practices, appropriate tests of difference to compare the assessments of school administrators and teachers, and a correlation coefficient to determine the relationship between cooperative learning and academic motivation.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Extent of Cooperative Learning Practices as Assessed by School Administrators and Teachers

Cooperative Learning Dimension	School Administrators	Teachers	Average Mean	Interpretation
Student Teams–Achievement Division (STAD)	5.38	5.50	5.44	Always Practiced
Think–Pair–Share	5.47	5.53	5.51	Always Practiced
Buzz Groups	5.40	5.65	5.53	Always Practiced
Jigsaw	5.38	5.65	5.52	Always Practiced
Group Investigation	5.37	5.53	5.45	Always Practiced
Overall	—	—	5.49	Always Practiced

Table 1 shows that all five cooperative learning approaches were always practiced, with an overall mean of 5.49. Buzz Groups ranked highest ($M = 5.53$), followed by Jigsaw ($M = 5.52$), Think–Pair–Share ($M = 5.51$), Group Investigation ($M = 5.45$), and STAD ($M = 5.44$). These results suggest that elementary classrooms in the study context provide substantial opportunities for peer interaction, exchange of ideas, shared responsibility, and collaborative problem-solving. The prominence of Buzz Groups and Jigsaw may be attributed to their capacity to engage learners directly in discussion and peer-supported knowledge construction. This finding is consistent with Salamah et al. (2024), who reported significantly higher learning motivation among elementary

pupils exposed to cooperative learning than among those taught through conventional lecture-based instruction. Filippou et al. (2022) likewise emphasized that successful implementation of cooperative learning is influenced by teachers' values and the extent to which the school environment supports cooperative pedagogical practices. More broadly, a recent meta-analysis by Boke et al. (2025) found positive effects of cooperative learning across cognitive, affective, social, and physical learning domains, with particularly strong effects in the social and cognitive domains. Thus, the consistently high ratings in the present study reinforce the value of structured cooperative approaches as integral components of learner-centered elementary instruction.

Table 2. Extent of Academic Motivation as Assessed by School Administrators and Teachers

Academic Motivation Dimension	School Administrators	Teachers	Average Mean	Interpretation
Self-Efficacy	5.28	5.51	5.40	Always Practiced
Task Value	5.38	5.64	5.51	Always Practiced
Peer Influence	5.30	5.64	5.47	Always Practiced
Teacher Support	5.34	5.54	5.44	Always Practiced
Parental Involvement	5.34	5.62	5.48	Always Practiced
Overall	5.33	5.59	5.46	Always Practiced



Table 2 reveals that academic motivation was also always practiced, with an overall mean of 5.46. Task Value obtained the highest rating ($M = 5.51$), followed by Parental Involvement ($M = 5.48$), Peer Influence ($M = 5.47$), Teacher Support ($M = 5.44$), and Self-Efficacy ($M = 5.40$). The predominance of task value indicates that learners may become more motivated when classroom activities are perceived as meaningful, useful, and connected with their experiences, while the high ratings for parental involvement and peer influence highlight the importance of social support in sustaining motivation. Contemporary research similarly identifies self-efficacy, interest, belonging, and supportive learning relationships as important motivational resources for continued

classroom engagement (Renninger et al., 2026). Santos et al. (2025) further demonstrated that learner-centered, hands-on approaches in primary education can strengthen pupils' motivation and self-efficacy, particularly when learners actively participate in meaningful tasks. In addition, reviews of parental involvement indicate that family participation can contribute positively to student engagement and motivational outcomes when support is educationally constructive and responsive to learners' needs (Yang et al., 2023). Taken together, the results indicate that academic motivation in elementary education is multidimensional and is strengthened not only by learners' personal beliefs but also by meaningful tasks and sustained support from teachers, peers, and families.

Table 3. Difference Between School Administrators' and Teachers' Assessments of Cooperative Learning

Respondent Group	Mean	SD	Computed t	Critical t	df	Decision on H_0	Interpretation
School Administrators	5.40	0.0406					
Teachers	5.57	0.0723	4.584	2.306	8	Reject H_0	Significant Difference

Table 3 indicates a significant difference between school administrators' and teachers' assessments of cooperative learning, as the computed t -value of 4.584 exceeded the critical value of 2.306 at the 0.05 level of significance. Teachers recorded a higher mean ($M = 5.57$) than school administrators ($M = 5.40$), suggesting that teachers perceived cooperative learning practices as being implemented more extensively. This difference may reflect the distinct roles and exposure of the two respondent groups: teachers directly facilitate cooperative activities in classrooms, whereas administrators generally observe instructional implementation from a supervisory or managerial perspective. Cho et al. (2022) demonstrated that the quality and effectiveness of collaborative learning depend considerably on how learners participate within an actual instructional environment, highlighting why those directly involved in classroom implementation may perceive such

practices differently. Klang et al. (2020) similarly emphasized that effective cooperative learning requires individual accountability, promotive interaction, explicit social skills, and opportunities for learners to support one another, elements that classroom teachers experience directly during instruction. From a broader Philippine institutional perspective, Alipoyo (2022) also demonstrated the importance of examining practitioners' firsthand perspectives when evaluating institutional conditions, since actors occupying different organizational roles may experience and interpret the same environment differently. Hence, the significant difference should not necessarily be interpreted as disagreement about the value of cooperative learning, but rather as evidence that implementation may be viewed differently according to respondents' professional roles and degree of direct classroom engagement.

Table 4. Difference Between School Administrators' and Teachers' Assessments of Academic Motivation

Respondent Group	Mean	SD	Computed z	Critical z	Decision on H_0	Statistical Result
School Administrators	5.33	0.0387				
Teachers	5.59	0.0608	2.613	1.96	Reject H_0	Significant Difference

Table 4 likewise indicates a significant difference between school administrators and teachers in their assessments of academic motivation, with a computed z -value of 2.613, which exceeded the critical value of 1.96 at the 0.05 level. Teachers again provided the higher assessment ($M = 5.59$) compared with school administrators ($M = 5.33$), suggesting that teachers may have greater opportunities to observe manifestations of learner motivation through participation, persistence, classroom interaction, responses to feedback, and completion of academic tasks. Recent evidence indicates that students' perceptions of teacher support are closely connected with motivational processes and can change over time as learners interact with their classroom environment (Held et al., 2024). Research also recognizes teacher and peer support as

important social resources associated with students' academic functioning, emphasizing the importance of examining motivation within the interpersonal context in which learning occurs (Zhou et al., 2024). In the Philippine context, Aranjuez et al. (2022) demonstrated the value of assessing awareness, encountered problems, and prospects from the perspectives of concerned stakeholders, illustrating more broadly that perceptions of institutional practices may differ according to respondents' roles and experiences. Accordingly, the significant difference found in the present study suggests that assessments of academic motivation should be interpreted from multiple perspectives rather than assuming that administrators and teachers observe learner motivation in precisely the same manner.



Table 5. Relationship Between Cooperative Learning and Academic Motivation

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Interpretation
Cooperative Learning and Academic Motivation	0.37	Positive, Small Relationship

Table 5 shows a positive but relatively small relationship between cooperative learning and academic motivation ($r = 0.37$), indicating that greater implementation of cooperative learning tends to be associated with higher academic motivation, although the magnitude of the relationship suggests that motivation is influenced by other factors as well. This finding is supported by Fragata and Limpot (2023), who found significant relationships among cooperative learning, peer pressure, and learning motivation among Filipino students and reported that cooperative learning helped reduce the negative influence of peer pressure on motivation. Similarly, the meta-analysis of Damayanti et al. (2023) provides evidence that cooperative learning can contribute to students' learning motivation across different educational levels, reinforcing the theoretical connection between social interaction and motivational engagement. The relatively modest correlation in the present study is therefore plausible because academic motivation is a complex construct shaped by personal, interpersonal, familial, and institutional conditions rather than by instructional strategy alone. Recent Philippine studies outside the education sector likewise illustrate how individual outcomes develop through interactions between personal experiences and surrounding social or institutional conditions, as reflected in research on probationers' transformative experiences (Aranjuez, 2025) and resilience among survivors of trauma (Aroz et al., 2026). Consequently, cooperative learning should be regarded as an important but not exclusive motivational mechanism; its effectiveness is likely strengthened when accompanied by self-efficacy enhancement, meaningful tasks, positive peer relationships, teacher support, and sustained parental involvement.

5. IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The findings highlight the importance of sustaining structured cooperative learning as an integral part of elementary classroom instruction. Since Buzz Groups, Jigsaw, Think-Pair-Share, Group Investigation, and STAD were all rated as "always practiced," teachers may further strengthen these approaches by ensuring purposeful group formation, individual accountability, equitable participation, peer interaction, and opportunities for reflection. Particular attention may be given to STAD and Group Investigation, which received comparatively lower ratings, while successful practices associated with Buzz Groups and Jigsaw may be reinforced across learning areas. The significant difference between administrators' and teachers' assessments also suggests the need for closer instructional coordination. School administrators may conduct collaborative classroom observations, learning action cells, mentoring, and professional development activities that allow teachers and instructional leaders to develop a shared understanding of how cooperative learning is implemented and evaluated. Rather than treating cooperative activities as occasional strategies, schools may systematically integrate them into lesson planning, classroom assessment, and instructional supervision.

The findings likewise underscore the need to address academic motivation as a multidimensional educational concern involving learners, teachers, peers, families, and the wider school environment. While task value emerged as the strongest motivational dimension, self-efficacy received the lowest mean, indicating an area where schools may place greater emphasis on helping pupils develop confidence in their ability to accomplish academic tasks. Teachers can support this through attainable learning goals, constructive feedback, differentiated activities, recognition of progress, and opportunities for successful peer-supported learning. At the same time, the strong ratings for parental involvement, peer influence, and teacher support indicate the value of strengthening school-family partnerships and positive classroom relationships. The positive but relatively small relationship between cooperative learning and academic motivation further implies that cooperative learning should not be viewed as the sole mechanism for improving motivation. Instead, it should form part of a broader instructional approach that simultaneously promotes self-efficacy, meaningful learning, supportive peer relationships, responsive teaching, and parental engagement.

6. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that cooperative learning and academic motivation are strongly embedded in the elementary educational practices examined in the Philippines, with all identified dimensions consistently rated as "always practiced." Among cooperative learning approaches, Buzz Groups emerged as the most prominent, whereas task value ranked highest among the dimensions of academic motivation. Differences between the assessments of school administrators and teachers indicate that perceptions of classroom practices may vary according to professional roles and levels of direct engagement with learners. More importantly, the positive but relatively small relationship between cooperative learning and academic motivation suggests that collaborative instructional practices are associated with learner motivation but represent only one component of a broader motivational environment. Thus, effective elementary education requires the integration of purposeful cooperative learning with strategies that strengthen learner confidence, demonstrate the relevance of academic tasks, cultivate supportive peer and teacher relationships, and encourage meaningful parental involvement. Such an integrated approach can contribute to more engaging, participatory, and supportive learning environments for elementary learners.

7. REFERENCES

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