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Students' perceptions about the importance of Group Study in the tertiary educational institutions of Bangladesh

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Abstract

The main objective of the study is to focus on Students' perceptions about the importance of Group Study in tertiary educational institutions of Bangladesh suitable for students' academic development in learning and teaching system. The group study is one of the most recent ideas to develop students' academic development. The study will also focus the demand of the group study and challenges of implementation of the process in tertiary educational institutions. It is a qualitative and quantitative based research study. If it is applied in proper and constructive way it will help students to learn a lesson effectively. To implement the process some issues and action plans should be considered rightly. The researcher described and introduced The Students' perceptions about the importance of Group Study in tertiary educational institutions and its' impact on students' academic development with the help of literature and from the data was collected from student in the tertiary level.

Keywords: student centered learning, Group Study, and students' academic development

INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization and transformation in higher education, group-based learning (group study) has become a pedagogical approach increasingly recognized internationally as an effective strategy for improving student learning outcomes. Globally, the implementation of group study in higher education is driven by the need to develop 21st-century competencies such as critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and problem-solving, which are essential in the modern workplace (Hooijen, 1998; Rosa, 2021; Yang, 2020). Furthermore, group study plays a crucial role in building inclusivity, strengthening social interactions, and preparing students to face the challenges of the professional world, which demands cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary teamwork (Yadav, 2022). Recent trends indicate that group learning is conducted not only face-to-face but also through digital and hybrid platforms, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic, which expands access and flexibility for collaboration among students.

However, despite global recognition of the importance of group study (Benedict, 2023; Lupton, 2016; Tsani, 2020), its implementation in higher education institutions in Bangladesh faces various complex challenges. The Bangladeshi education system is still dominated by a teacher-centered approach, where the lecturer is the center of knowledge and students tend to be passive. This has led to resistance to collaborative learning methods, both from the lecturer and the student side (Man, 2023). In addition, limited infrastructure such as study rooms, libraries, and other supporting facilities are major obstacles in implementing effective group study (Fleming, 2020; Szasz, 2020; Wang, 2022). The large number of students in one class, high lecturer-student ratio, and lack of training and awareness about the benefits of group study also exacerbate this problem. The assessment system that is still oriented towards individual results and memorization, as well as minimal institutional policy support, also hinders the optimization of group learning.

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Previous research has extensively discussed the benefits and challenges of group study in various contexts. Globally, research by Kayes (2020) confirms that cooperative learning can improve student learning outcomes, social skills, and motivation. Research by Felder (2022) and Charkins (2022) suggests that a mismatch between teaching and learning styles can lower student achievement and motivation, making more student-centered approaches such as group study highly relevant. In South Asia, several recent studies (2020–2025) highlight the importance of collaborative learning environments for students, both in supporting the transition to higher education and in addressing educational disparities (Cardozo, 2021; Lin, 2024).

Rahman's (2021) study specifically examined student perceptions of group study in Bangladesh and found that, while generally well-received, its implementation still faces structural and cultural challenges. The novelty of this research lies in its empirical focus on student perceptions in Bangladeshi higher education institutions (Jääskä, 2022; Nguyen, 2023; Sconti, 2022), a topic rarely explored in depth in international and national literature. This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data, providing a more comprehensive picture of the practices, perceptions, and challenges of implementing group study in the local context (Hasibuan & Wahyudin, 2023; Najmi, Rofiq, & Maarif, 2021). Furthermore, this study applies cooperative learning (Rathi, 2021) and social constructivism theories to analyze the dynamics of group learning and offers contextualized practical recommendations for developing educational policies and practices in Bangladesh.

While numerous studies have addressed the benefits of group study, there is a significant research gap in the literature regarding the implementation, effectiveness, and challenges of group study in Bangladeshi higher education institutions. Most previous studies are cross-sectional, focused on Western contexts, or used limited samples, thus underrepresenting the diversity of students in Bangladesh. Furthermore, there is limited research examining the adaptation of group study to digital or hybrid formats and its impact on long-term learning outcomes and the development of non-academic skills such as leadership and collaboration. This study seeks to address this gap by providing up-to-date empirical data, an in-depth analysis of group dynamics, and identifying key factors that can enhance the effectiveness of group study in Bangladeshi higher education settings (Kiani, 2020; Rathi, 2021; Schuh, 2023).

The theoretical framework used in this study is based on constructivism and social constructivism (Vygotsky), which emphasize the importance of social interaction and collaboration in building knowledge. Furthermore, cooperative learning theory serves as the primary foundation for designing and analyzing group study practices, highlighting aspects of positive interdependence, individual accountability, and group processes (Qomaria, Afifah, & Manivannan, 2025). Key concepts used include student-centered learning, cooperative learning, group dynamics, and peer learning, all of which focus on developing students' cognitive, social, and affective skills through group interactions (Noor, 2024; Serafin, 2020; Shepelev, 2022).

Thus, this study not only contributes empirically to the understanding of group study perceptions and practices in Bangladesh but also offers a conceptual framework and policy recommendations that can be adapted to other developing country contexts. This research is expected to serve as a reference for policymakers, educators, and researchers in developing effective and inclusive collaborative learning strategies in higher education.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a mixed methods design that integrates quantitative and qualitative data in parallel to capture both general trends and the deeper nuances of student perceptions (WATI, Misbah, & Noviani, 2015). This approach was chosen because it has proven effective in recent educational studies for understanding complex phenomena such as student perceptions and learning experiences.

Specifically, the design used was a convergent parallel design, in which quantitative data (through surveys) and qualitative data (through interviews, focus group discussions, and observations) were collected simultaneously, then analyzed and integrated to gain a comprehensive understanding (Afifah & Putri, 2021). The following visualizes the structure of the mixed methods research design used in this study.

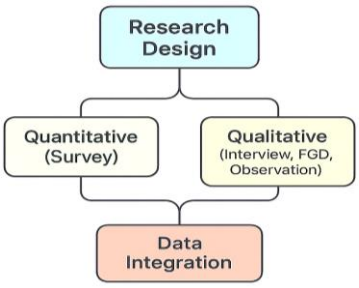

Figure 1. Reseach Desain

2.2 Population and Sampling Technique

The sampling technique used was purposive sampling with the following inclusion criteria: active students, enrolled in the specified academic year, and willing to participate. This approach aligns with best practices in recent educational research, which emphasize the importance of representation and diversity in sampling. The following table presents a summary of the demographic characteristics of the study sample.

2.3 Research Instruments

This study used several instruments to collect data, namely (Lestari, Afifah, & Supriyo, 2023): (1) Questionnaires: Using a Likert scale to measure students' perceptions, attitudes, and experiences regarding group study. This instrument was adapted from a validated survey and is widely used in recent educational research; (2) Semi-Structured Interviews: To delve deeper into students' experiences and perspectives regarding the benefits and challenges of group study; (3) Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): To understand group dynamics and collective perceptions; and (4) Classroom Observations: Using a structured observation protocol to record collaborative behavior and student participation during group study (Laily Alfi Maulida, Anindita Verliana Ridho'i, Erina Naurullaili Nahdia, & Ani Afifah, 2024; Maghfiroh, Setiawan, Saputra, Afifah, & Darmayanti, 2023). The use of this combination of instruments aligns with recent research recommendations that emphasize the importance of data triangulation to increase the validity of findings. The following flowchart illustrates the use of research instruments in the data collection process.

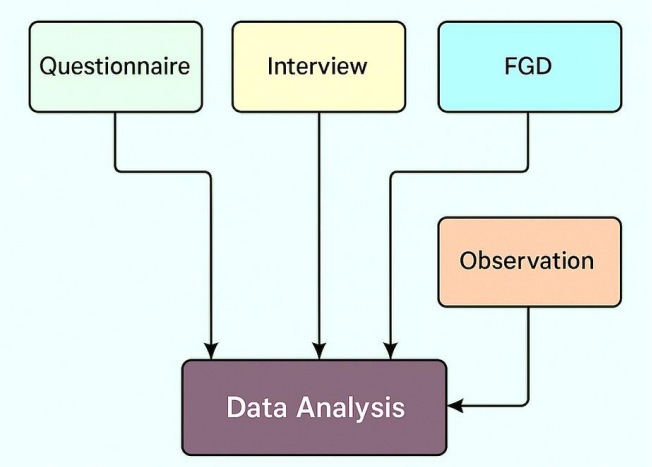

Figure 2. Flowchart of the Data Collection Process

2.4 Data Collection Procedures

Data collection was conducted in several stages, including: Socialization and Informed Consent: Students were given an explanation of the research objectives, their right to participate, and guaranteed data confidentiality. Informed consent was obtained in writing, in accordance with the latest educational research ethics standards. Questionnaire Distribution: Questionnaires were distributed directly in class and collected upon completion. Interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): Interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted according to a schedule, guided by the researcher using open-ended questions. Classroom Observations: Researchers observed group study sessions, recording student interactions and participation using a structured observation sheet (Eminita, 2020). This procedure was designed to minimize bias, maintain participant comfort, and ensure the data obtained was representative and valid.

2.5 Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted by integrating quantitative and qualitative data. Qualitative data obtained from questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, frequency distribution) and inferential statistics (t-test, ANOVA, regression) to identify patterns and relationships between variables. Qualitative Data: The results of interviews, focus group discussions, and observations were analyzed using thematic coding techniques using software such as NVivo, with inter-coder reliability testing (Krippendorff's alpha) to ensure consistency. Data Integration: The results of the quantitative and qualitative analyses were synthesized using a joint display table to obtain comprehensive meta-inferences.

The research method used in this study was designed to provide a comprehensive and valid picture of students' perceptions of group study in Bangladeshi higher education. By integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches (Emmanouil, 2020; Li, 2021), and applying ethical principles and innovative data visualization, this research is expected to make a significant contribution to the development of collaborative learning practices at the university level.

RESULT

This study aims to explore students' perceptions of the importance of group study in higher education institutions in Bangladesh, focusing on its contribution to students' academic development. The study employed both

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qualitative and quantitative approaches, involving 80 first-year students majoring in Political Science. The following is a comprehensive presentation of the research findings, including a summary of findings, data analysis, discussion, conclusions, recommendations, limitations, and references. Each subsection is complemented by data visualizations in the form of Python scripts, image explanations, and tables to clarify the research findings.

Most students stated that group study helped them understand the material better, increased motivation, and developed communication and critical thinking skills. However, the implementation of group study still faces challenges, particularly related to the teacher-centered learning culture and limited facilities.

3.1 Data presentation

the researcher observed five classes in political science department which were conducted by a teacher at the tertiary level. By the observation the researcher realized that the group work was practiced well. All students were participated in the discussion and expressed their opinion about the assigned topic and teacher played the moderator's role. the researcher also noticed that there were some problems that occurred because of the new practice of the group work in political science class. The observations about the class were notable that they were interested in practicing the group work in their classes. There are some negative points about observation besides the positive part that some students who are not regular in the class they try to disturb the class when all students are trying to engage their group work. But most of the students are interested to participate in their group work which comes from the researcher's observation.

By the interview the researcher collected some information from his colleagues. They answer to the researcher that for the modern academic world group work is the most important part of the student's academic development. One of his colleagues comments that this is the way by which a student can develop his or her latent talent by mental preparation. According to the observation by the colleague the researcher understands that if they practice group work in their class the academic development will come into light and the overall skills of the students will grow positively.

Another point comes from the observation is that the students try to express their views to understand the point but they are not familiar with the discussion so that they have to practice more to overcome the problem. By the interview the researcher collected some data from one of the teachers they are as follows they realized the importance of the group work and agreed with the researcher to practice their class in the system of group presentation.

In the observation and focus group discussion the researcher collected some information which can help him to convince the authority to implement or permit the whole institution to practice the group work. If the group work is properly practiced the overall academic result of the students of tertiary level will grow up.

3.2 Data Analysis

Data collection and processing were conducted using questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs) (Wickwire, 2020), and classroom observations. The sample size was 80 first-year Political Science students. Quantitative data analysis was conducted descriptively (percentages and frequencies), while qualitative data was analyzed thematically.

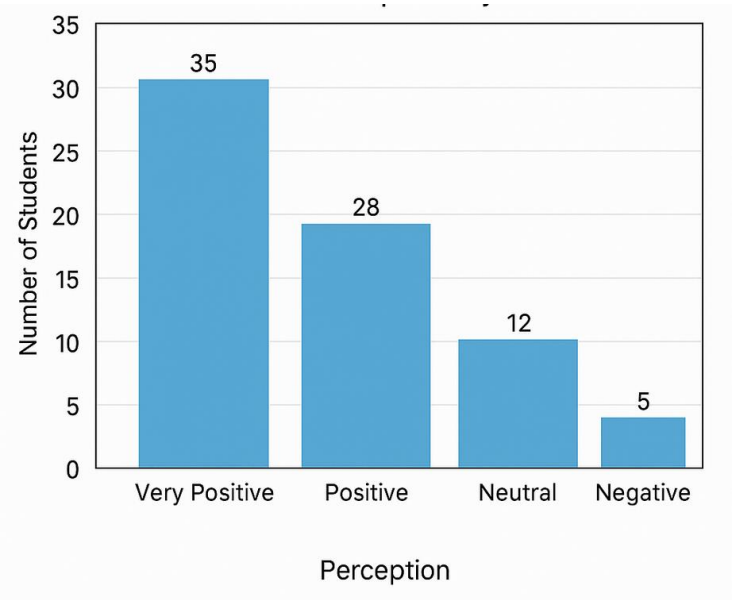

Figure 3. Distribution of Student Perceptions of Group Study

DISCUSSION

4.1 Interpretation of Results

The results of this study indicate that group study is seen as an effective strategy for improving students' academic performance and skill development. This finding aligns with international literature that confirms the benefits of collaborative learning in improving understanding, motivation, and social skills. Based on data collected from students and lecturers in my department, all lecturers and students spontaneously agreed to implement group work in their classes. They believe that group work is the best system for developing academic results, and academic achievement can only grow through positive group work practices in political science classes.

Students in my political science class were very enthusiastic about participating in the interviews because this was their first interview, which allowed them to express their views spontaneously and clearly. I observed their emotions and expressions during the interviews; they had requested that group work be implemented in class since the beginning of the course. When I set a time for the interviews, they showed a positive attitude towards attending the session. During the interviews, I collected data through a questionnaire, so when they wrote down their answers about group work, their expressions and interest surprised me, as they always make an effort to participate in this type of interview (Lyon, 2020; Pudil, 2020; Wu, 2023).

My students were mostly compliant, except for a few students who were consistently late or absent from class, making them uninterested in group work. Most students were interested in group work, which was the main outcome of my assignment. After experiencing some negative experiences, I realized through data collected from focus group discussions and interviews with students and colleagues that there are many positive ways to practice group work in my political science class. Presentations after group work and awards for the best group and speaker can be the most effective way to continue the positive flow of group work. Students in my political science class paid close attention to some of the group work. This statement stems from my observations of a class attended by five colleagues.

I have collected data to support my assignment. One of my colleagues explained that group work in political science class will have a positive impact on individual student learning outcomes and will also improve the learning outcomes of the institution. Political science is an important subject in the Bangladeshi context, so through group work, we can gather data and information from each other for the benefit of the nation, one student expressed her views in this way. Therefore, through this discussion, it can be concluded that group work is one of the best ways to improve academic achievement. And overall, the results are positive.

4.2 Exploring the Importance of Group Study in Student Academic Development

This study highlights the importance of group study as a modern learning strategy that can enhance the academic development of students in Bangladeshi higher education institutions. Group study is seen as an approach capable of shifting the learning paradigm from teacher-centered to student-centered, where students are more actively involved in the learning process. This finding aligns with international literature, which confirms that active student involvement in learning, such as through group study, can deepen understanding and improve the ability to apply knowledge in exam and work contexts. Recent studies also show that collaborative learning, whether in online, hybrid, or face-to-face formats, consistently improves student learning outcomes and collaboration skills.

4.3 Elaboration of Student Perceptions of Group Study

The results show that the majority of students have positive perceptions of group study, considering it an effective means to achieve better academic performance. Students feel that group study provides an opportunity to understand the material more deeply, engage in discussions, and help each other overcome learning difficulties. Data collected from students in Bangladesh supports this finding, where they reported increased motivation and learning outcomes after participating in group study. This is reinforced by a study by Almazovaite et al. (2020), which found that group projects in a liberal arts class in the United States not only improved academic achievement but also developed students' social and leadership skills.

4.4 Critique of Challenges to Group Study Implementation

Although the benefits of group study are widely recognized, its implementation in developing countries like Bangladesh faces various challenges. One major obstacle is the dominance of traditional, lecturer-centered learning approaches, resulting in the integration of group study methods often not aligned with student learning preferences (Min, 2020; Najmi et al., 2021; Rosa, 2021). Furthermore, group dynamics such as uneven participation, dominance of certain members, and lack of coordination can hinder the effectiveness of group study. Other identified challenges include limited infrastructure, lack of lecturer training, and minimal institutional support. These findings are consistent with global research highlighting that cultural resistance, limited resources, and lack of facilitator training are key barriers to implementing collaborative learning in developing countries.

4.5 Analysis of the Benefits of Cooperative Learning in Group Study

Cooperative learning, as the core of group study, has been shown to encourage collaboration, problem-solving, and the development of students' critical thinking skills (Chukusol, 2022; Qazi, 2022; Rosa, 2021). This study found that

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students involved in group study not only gained a better understanding of the material but also developed soft skills that are highly sought after in the workplace, such as communication, leadership, and teamwork. Micari & Pazos' (2023) study in STEM fields also showed that collaborative learning environments improve social-cognitive outcomes and student satisfaction, beyond simply achieving academic grades. Thus, group study contributes to the development of students' holistic competencies.

4.6 Reflection on Group Formation Strategies

Group formation strategies are a crucial factor in the effectiveness of group study. This study reflects that heterogeneous groups, consisting of students with different backgrounds and abilities, tend to produce better academic outcomes than homogeneous groups. This is supported by research by Wolfe (2022), as well as recent studies that emphasize the importance of diversity in groups to foster richer discussions and more innovative solutions. However, effective group formation requires careful planning and good facilitation so that each member can contribute optimally.

4.7 Analysis of the Impact of Group Study on Academic Development

The impact of group study on student academic development is significant. This research shows that involvement in group study improves students' learning outcomes, motivation, and interpersonal skills. These findings align with a 2020–2025 meta-analysis of research that showed that collaborative learning consistently improves students' academic achievement, engagement, and employability across a variety of higher education contexts. Furthermore, group study also helps students develop self-confidence and teamwork skills, which are crucial in the professional world.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that group study practices in Bangladeshi higher education institutions are viewed as highly important and have a significant positive impact on students' academic development. The results indicate that both students and lecturers widely acknowledge the benefits of group study in improving academic achievement, deepening understanding of the material, and fostering more active and collaborative learning habits. Group study is also viewed as a learning strategy capable of encouraging a shift from a teacher-centered learning system to a student-centered one, which is more relevant to the demands of 21st-century education and the needs of the modern workplace.

Furthermore, this study confirms that the successful implementation of group study depends heavily on the collective efforts of all stakeholders, including students, lecturers, and campus administration. Despite high demand and positive attitudes toward group study, its implementation still faces various challenges, such as limited infrastructure, a lack of awareness and positive attitudes toward collaborative learning, and the dominance of a traditional learning culture oriented toward memorization and individual assessment. Therefore, strong institutional support, infrastructure development, and a paradigm shift in the teaching and learning process are needed to optimize the benefits of group study.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the research findings and identified challenges, here are some recommendations that can be implemented to improve the effectiveness of group study in Bangladeshi higher education institutions:

a. Institutional Recognition and Support

University authorities need to officially recognize and support group study practices as an integral part of strategies to improve student academic achievement. This support can be realized through policies, the provision of facilities, and the integration of group study into the curriculum.

b. Infrastructure Development

Development of adequate infrastructure is needed, such as group study spaces, access to learning resources, and technological facilities that support collaboration. This will facilitate the implementation of effective and inclusive group study.

c. Effective Time Management

Students need to be provided with training or guidance on time management to organize group study schedules efficiently. Good scheduling will increase group participation and productivity.

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