The implementation status of "education development army" as a strategy to enhance learning and teaching in three selected universities of Ethiopia.

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The objective of the study was to examine the status of support given to students in cooperative learning practice, students' interest, and their attitude towards cooperative learning (which, as a teaching strategy, has been planned to have effective pedagogic outcomes) in three selected universities (Arsi University, Mada Walabu University, and Hawasa University). The general research design employed for the study was descriptive survey research method with quantitative approach in focus. Multistage sampling design (including simple & stratified random sampling techniques) was used to obtain 800 (521 males and 279 females). Questionnaire items used to collect data included Individual Data Form, opinion items (used to collect data on whether the participants had got support from their teachers in using cooperative learning), Likert-type scale items (used to measure participants' interest in and attitude towards cooperative learning) and open types of interview items (used to collect additional information used to strengthen the information obtained by means of the closed ended items). The pilot test data mean of CVR value of the scale was 0.78, and calculated Cronbach alpha reliability estimate value was r = 0.75 for the interest scale items and 0.78 for attitude scale items in which responses ranged from 1 to 4 (1- strongly agree to 4 - strongly disagree). High magnitude of the score indicated negative status of students' cooperative learning. The statistical techniques used to analyze the data included percentage frequency to observe the rate of support received from their teachers on cooperative learning. Chi-square test was used to test the strength of association of respondents' responses in terms of the categories of university and study fields. Mean scores were used to evaluate the magnitude of the respondents' interest in and attitude towards cooperative learning. Variations among the respondents in terms of the three universities and the study fields were tested using F test. Differences between male and female categories had been tested using t-test. The results of the study had indicated low status of support from the teachers, students' low interest in, and poor (negative) attitude towards cooperative learning. From the open-ended items, it was noted that teachers themselves were not working in team, and, therefore, could not be model to the students to shape their attitude towards team (cooperative) learning. Based on the result of the study, the following working remarks were recommended: 1) the academic staff has to support their students on cooperative learning and supervise the events of the team of the cooperative learning to encourage self-reflection, 2) the academic staff has to share cooperative learning tasks related to the regular tasks in new and creative ways to promote diversity of ideas, and academic debates and mediate on resolutions of debating ideas from which students can choose comments to share with their group members during group work and tutorial sessions, 3) They can also provide an experience of their own course team work which becomes a good basis to continue cooperative learning work, 4) An instructor can use several strategies to encourage students to develop a healthy climate within the cooperative learning groups.

Key terms: cooperative learning; support; interest; attitude

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 An overview

It has been a longstanding interest of the Ethiopian government pushing its people to get organized and work in team for fast and sustainable development. In fact, the vast majority of Ethiopian people, running agrarian economy, have the culture of team work. Team work is the simplest and an immediate alternative strategy to the people in Ethiopia where capital and automated machinery resources are rare to run businesses. Therefore, logically it is appropriate that the Ethiopian Government has introduced the strategy of building "Development Army" in all of the sectors as a strategy to urge the country's people to fight and to eradicate the long lasted poverty in the nation, and to strive to join the lower middle income countries by 2027. The term "army," is translated as ('serawit' in Amharic Language, or 'raya' in

Afan Oromo; in Ethiopian context, it means "a large number of people working together with team spirit for a common purpose."
It is not optional to learning institutions too. Like any other development sectors of the nation, the Ethiopian Ministry of Education enforces the building of "Development Army" or cooperative learning as a strategy for enhancing the implementation of education and training policy. In order to reduce dropout rate and to increase the quality of education, the MoE has been pushing all educational institutions (primary to higher learning institutions) to implement the strategy of using "Education Development Army," translated as '*Ye Timhirt Limat Serawit*' (Amharic Language) or '*Raya Misoma Barnotaa*' (in Afan Oromo).

It is a key strategy to development for Ethiopian Government to build its people's capacity through education and training as it is underlined in its policy (MoE, 1994). Competent and resourceful teachers, learning materials and laboratories are insufficient. Learning and teaching of a subject matter is highly influenced by learning material and learning activities (experiences) where a resourceful teacher guides the learners. Learning activities necessarily require interactive learning exercises and experiences. Cooperative learning is beneficial in postsecondary education because it maximizes student learning - particularly the learning of difficult material of a higher complexity (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 2007).

1.2. Statement of the problem

The Ethiopian Media are reporting improvement of the strategy of "Education Development Army" in the primary and secondary education; however, the writer observed that it was not implemented uniformly, particularly, in Higher Learning Institutions. Although the education development army, study groups of students, working groups of academic and supportive staffs are formed yearly since 2012 academic year, its implementation and gains have been reported poor (MOE, 2017).

The current Ethiopian constitution allows extreme exercise of democracy (FDRE, 1994). It was an automatic shift from radical dictatorial leadership of the "Dergue" regime to the democratic leadership of the present federal government system. There is public criticism that nowadays individuals have less concern for their responsibility but demand more for their rights. It seems that there is a sense of "no obligation" for teachers to enforce students to implement group learning practices. It is common to observe that the deans and teachers become frustrated to push or take administrative actions whenever team work principle does not cross beyond the line of group formation to discharging the responsibility of group learning and teaching. On the other hand, the government enforces for the application of institutional transformation tools, like team work, business process reengineering, balanced score card, kaizen, etc.

As some authors stated (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1993), the group work (cooperative learning of students) is an instructional arrangement in which small groups or teams of students study together to achieve academic success in a manner that promotes the students' responsibility for their individual learning as well as the learning of others. Since "knowledge is a social construct," cooperative team learning enhances the instructional use of small groups to facilitate students' helping of one another in maximizing one's own and each other's learning.

It is frequently argued, on the part of students and teachers, that the strategy encourages weak students to score what they do not deserve on group work (assignments, projects, etc.). Another argument from students is that the strategy is a disadvantage to outstanding students as it costs them time. This had been observed by the writer frequently in different discussion forums with the academic staff and students of Arsi University. This situation implies that there is a gap in understanding about the issue (importance of

cooperative learning or effectiveness of group work for academic success) and concurrently hesitating to facilitate cooperative learning on the part of the teachers.

Although the students meet once or twice right after the orientation, they insist in studying independently; or choose their own preferred (the usual) friends if they study in group of two or more. There is always criticism from the university leaders blaming teaching staff for not supporting students to implement cooperative learning. On the other hand the teaching staff blames the students for not accepting their advice and instruction. The writer could not discover a scientific study output in Ethiopian context as to the status of the implementation of the strategy when different literatures suggest that cooperative learning helps for overall improvement of all students' academic success.

In this regard, there is no research result reported specific to this situation. It is worth to study the problem for appropriate intervention. It is also to study about the opinion, attitude and interest of students in relation to cooperative learning. The study is expected to stimulate team work initiatives in specific contexts, and ultimately helps in strengthening teachers' team work practices in the universities. Therefore, the writer is interested in closing the gap and to come up with possible reasons for difficulty in implementing the strategy, and possible recommendations.

1.3. Objectives of the study

The general objective of the study was to assess the status of support given to students in cooperative learning practice, students' interest, and their attitude towards cooperative learning in the three universities.

Specifically, the study was intended to:

1. Examine the level of support given to students by their respective teachers on cooperative learning?
2. Evaluate the magnitude of scores of the participants on the measure of their interest in cooperative learning?
3. Evaluate the magnitude of scores of the participants on the measure of their attitude towards cooperative learning?
4. Find out if there are significant differences among the categories of study participants in their perception about cooperative learning?
5. Find out if there are significant differences among the categories of study participants in their attitude towards cooperative learning?

1.4. Significance of the study

The advantages of the study are vital to the improvement of the academic environment in the universities. Based on the findings, it is important to continuously improve teachers and students interest in and attitudes towards 1 to 5 group learning strategy. Literature reviews had scientifically supported that the strategy is helpful in increasing students' rate of learning, and ultimately increasing educational quality. The finding gives room to work to avoid confusion and disagreement about the effect of cooperative learning on students' achievement. More importantly, conditions under which cooperative learning has failed became clear by this investigation (at least in the three universities). This means, evidences obtained by the survey study may be used as testimony to the wrong perception of the staff and students about the "education development army". It can also be used as a baseline for further research work.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. An overview

Institutions, including universities, call for team work to achieve their missions. In order to address their three fold mandates (processing students learning, thematically set research works, and demand driven community services). The end results of the missions rely on outcome based delivery of services to

produce employable graduates. This happens if the service providers operate tasks at mastery level. In turn, effective daily performances rely on processing the tasks in group. In most literatures, it has been argued that strong business organizations usually operate through organized teams to carry out critical strategies and operational tasks in achieving their business objectives (Johnson, 2009; Beem, 1999). In fact, in a traditional society of Ethiopia, there had been a widespread culture of working in group. There were social connections, termed as social capital, by which they used to support one another.

2.2. Students' Cooperative learning

As presented in different literatures (Johnson & Johnson, 1999), cooperative learning is defined as an instructional method in which small groups are used to maximize student learning. Students work together in groups to accomplish shared goals. According to Kagans (2009), it has been argued that teachers are expected to work for successes in student learning by transitioning from centralized discourse, in which the majority of classroom dialogue stems from teacher leadership, to decentralized discourse, in which student-led discussions direct learning.

As stated in Kreek (2012), crystallized knowledge and skills are obtained through practical and interactive educational climate. One of the learning climates is the group learning situation in which learners are encouraged for self-awareness and for self reflection. One of the most important things an academic staff can do, as a teacher and researcher, is to have students get involved in group learning and reflect regularly on their group experiences. Their self-reflection will reinforce and further develop critical teamwork skills. This means a teacher is expected to create a nurturing team work environment that supports the group working effectively together despite possible differences among the group members. In developing strong and friendly work spirit, it is essential to support students through engaging them in classroom and home take assignments and field projects broadens students' perspectives of their environment and the world in a more diversified ways (Smith et. al., 2005).

Group work influences students to build the skill of reflecting on the activities and two way interactions. According to the theory of observational learning (as stated in McLeod, 2016), group learning in a socio-cognitive process contributes to the development of self efficacy. It implies that students who had developed self-efficacy can encourage other group members to develop such skills. Therefore, students with high self-efficacy, meaning those who believe they can perform well, are more likely to view difficult classroom or home take tasks as assignments that can be learned rather than tasks to be avoided (Slavin, 1995).

Social cognitive theory emphasizes the role of observational learning and social experience in the development of personality (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 2013). Team work furnishes the opportunity to observe the practices of one another. For successful group work of students, members must demonstrate a sense of cohesion. An effective process of cooperative learning will emerge as students exhibit their individual responsibility and accountability, constructive feedback, problem solving, organizing management of their business, and knowledge of roles of each member (McLeod, 2016). Developing the spirit of teamwork requires changing one's mind-set so that he/she sees achievable positive end result in each interaction, and find common ground with other team members and behave with respect when requesting as well as responding.

2.3. Academic staff support to students' cooperative learning

As asserted in Slavin (1995), there is a growing consensus among researchers about the positive effects of cooperative learning on student achievement. As argued in Attle and Baker (2007), teachers can utilize cooperative learning in order to maximize student learning and professional development, preparing them both to cooperate and compete by structuring learning activities that require them to cooperate in teams

and compete against one another. Once the team as a whole finds common ground in the contents of the learning material, it becomes easier to work together more effectively (Davis, 2009; Ashkenas, 2012). Empirical studies on cooperative learning by small groups of students had shown positive outcome, improvement in scoring results (Johnson, Johnson & Holubec, 2013). This implies that teamwork is an important value that students need to exercise at school. Moreover, students benefit from their team learning experiences in terms of intellectual growth, personality development and future career (Ibid).

Constructivists argue that knowledge cannot be given to students by their teachers; rather students must construct knowledge in their own minds. Learning germinates as it is situated in students' activity in a given social, cultural and physical contexts. However, it requires helping students to discover their own meaning in the sense of supporting, inspiring, advising, guiding, and coaching, shifting teacher centered teaching to student-centered instruction. It means shifting from teaching to learning: focus on student learning, student perspective of learning (Barkely, Cross & Howell Major 2005).

In conclusion, since learning is an active process of discovering and transforming information in a social process, it happens through joint interactions with peers. As educational strategy, cooperative learning has pedagogic value if the support given by the teachers goes with the principle of "guide on the side" and if the learning process is regularly facilitated by making information meaningful and relevant to students (Barkely, Cross & Howell Major 2005). This implies that an active role of the student and the teacher is essential for effective learning to take place (McLeod, 2016). Beyond helping in group formation, teachers need to support students in designing group task with clear expectations and objectives to work together. This helps the group members to be more motivated and committed to work together. Furthermore, the teacher is also expected to support the students to develop, as one of their early assignments, a group contract in which they articulate ground rules and group goals (Davis, 2009).

3. RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Research Design

The general research design employed for this study was descriptive survey research method. Quantitative approach was preferred in conducting the survey as the population was large and diversified with possible categories.

3.2 Participants and Sampling technique

The study participants were 800 (Male = 521, Female = 279) students randomly selected out of 7886 student population from the randomly selected different colleges of the three universities. *As per the* formula provision, $n = \frac{X2\,NP\,(1-P)}{d^2\,(N-1) + X2P\,(1-P)}$ about 323 sample size would have been sufficient. However, as smaller differences are expected among university students, and the writer had plenty of time for data collection, 800 participants were drawn. Simple, stratified and systematic random sampling techniques were used to obtain the representative participants. The units of random selection were study fields, sections and individual students.

3.3 Instrumentation

Questionnaire items used to collect data included Individual Data Form which was used to obtain demographic data, opinion items which were used to collect data on whether the participants had got support from their teachers in using cooperative learning as a means of group learning. Likert-type scales used to measure participants' interest in cooperative learning and their attitude towards cooperative learning. Open types of interview items were also used to collect additional information used to strengthen the information obtained by means of the closed ended items of the questionnaire. The

interview items were important for qualitative analysis which was used to elaborate the quantitative analysis.

The items were set in such a way that lower values were given to positively stated items and higher values to the negatively stated items. The responses were made to run from 1- strongly agree to 4 - strongly disagree). Therefore, higher scores on the scale items meant that the participants had no interest in cooperative learning, and lower scores on the scale items meant they had interest in cooperative learning. Similarly, data on participants' attitude towards cooperative learning were collected using a scale consisting of items measuring the participants' attitude towards cooperative learning. The items were set in such a way that lower values were given to positively stated items and higher values to the negatively stated items. The responses were made to run from 1- strongly agree to 4 - strongly disagree). Therefore, higher scores on the scale items meant that the participants had negative attitude towards cooperative learning, and lower scores on the scale items meant they had positive attitude towards cooperative learning.

3.4 Reliability and validity of the scale

Content validity of the scale was estimated using Lawshe's (1975) statistical method of estimating content validity ratio (CVR). The mean CVR value of the scale was 0.78. Analysis of pilot test data was obtained and the calculated Cronbach alpha reliability estimate value was r = 0.75 for the scale items. Four response options were assigned for the scale items. The scores were made to range from 1 to 4 (1- strongly agree to 4 - strongly disagree). High magnitude of the score indicated negative status of students' cooperative learning.

3.5 Methods of Data Analysis and interpretation

The statistical techniques used to analyze the data included descriptive statistics. Frequency distributions were used to observe the rate of occurrence of the respondents' behavior of perception of support received from their teachers on cooperative learning. Chi-square was also used to test the strength of association of respondents' responses in terms of the categories of university and study fields. Mean scores were used to determine the status of the respondents' behavior of interest in cooperative learning; and the direction of their attitude towards cooperative learning. In order to see differences among the respondents in the three universities and in terms of the study fields, ANOVA was used. Differences between male and female categories had been tested using t-test. The SPSS 20.0 for windows was applied for these purposes. The approach of presentation of the result was by means of tabulation of the statistical analysis, interpretation, and discussion against or for the relevant literature.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Response rate

In order to find out the implementation status of cooperative learning in selected Ethiopian universities, data were collected from randomly selected students of three universities (Arsi University, Hawasa University and Mada Walabu University). The response rate obtained was 100% for both Arsi University and Mada Walabu University, and 92.77% for Hawasa University. The final number of questionnaire papers appropriate for analyses was 775 (96.87%). Levene's homogeneity test resulted in non significant value ($P > 0.05$) for the scores of the total respondents on both interest and attitude scales, and approximated the normal distribution. Therefore, the writer was confident enough to rely on the data collected for the possible analyses and interpretation of the data that can be concluded to students of the three universities, and possibly implied to other Ethiopian universities.

4.2. Demographics of the Respondents

The respondents were grouped in terms of their university, study fields, and sex categories. The age range was from 15 to 34 years for females, and from 15 to 26 for males. The average age of the respondents was 20.5 years with standard deviation of 1.69 years. More than 50% (445) of the participants were concentrated within the age range of 21-24 years. There were only 12 male students whose age was above 27 years. There were no female students whose age was above 27 years. A few students were aged below 18 years (9 females and 10 males). Figure 1 illustrates the concentration of students within the age between 19 and 24 inclusive.

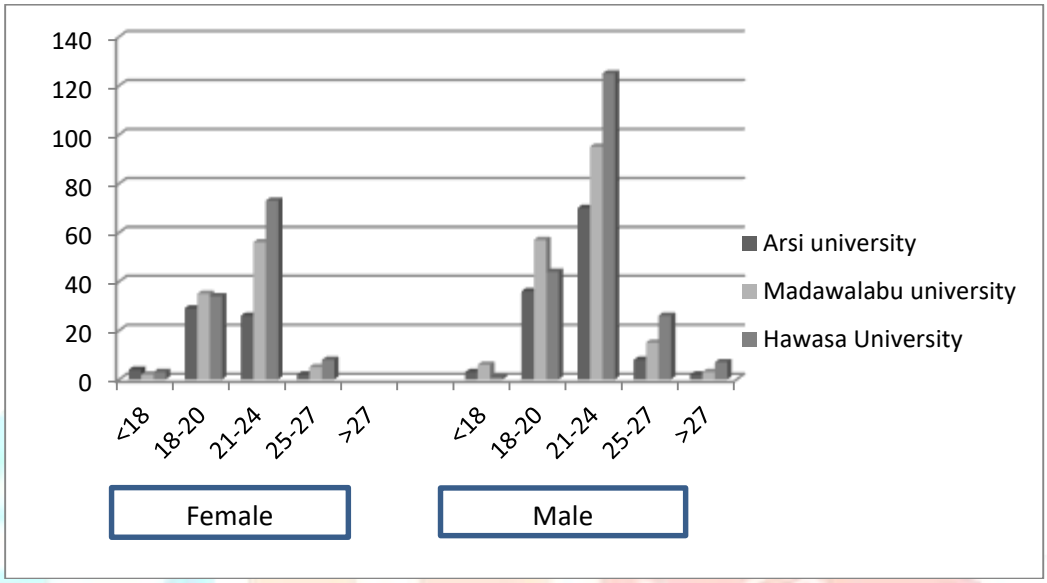

Figure 1Bar chart for age categories of participants by sex and the three universities

4.3. Opinion of students on the availability of support from teachers on cooperative learning

The analysis of data on opinion of participants on the availability of support from the teachers indicated that the majority of the participants responded positively confirming that the teachers had helped their students to study together and reflect on their experience to help each other. The number of female students who responded positively to the item was double (68.59%) of those who responded negatively (31.41%) implying that a considerable number of female students had the complaint that they were not advised properly. When the percentage of male (25.51%) and female (31.41%) students who responded negatively to the opinion checklist items compared, it seems teachers supported male students more than they supported the female students. Study field wise evaluation of the response rate to the first item across the study fields (Figure 4.3) indicates that the most neglected female students were in the Engineering fields of study.

As stated in (Pollard, 2002; Kincheloe, 2002; Aubvsson and Schuck, 2006), one of the learning climates is the situation in which learners are encouraged to be mentally ready for self reflection and to study together. Studies on learning experiences indicate that crystallized knowledge and skills are obtained through practical and interactive learning climate (Ibid). To this effect, one of the most important things an academic staff can do in guiding students is to support their students reflect regularly on their group experiences and learn from one another.

4.4. Analysis of data on the measures of respondents' interest in cooperative learning

The mean scores are only slightly above the 50% (Table 1), it is possible to say that the majority of students had motivation to the practice of cooperative learning (low score represents better interest and vis versa). The mean values seemingly reflect that Madawalabu University had the highest mean score on the interest scale, while Arsi University had the lowest. This indicates that Madawalabu University

students lacked interest most compared to the other two universities. In relation to the study fields, students in the Social Science had the lowest mean score on the scale while Engineering had the highest mean score. However, the statistical result for analysis of variance indicated that there were no statistically significant differences among the universities.

Similarly, analysis of variance for the study fields resulted in statistically no significant differences. On the other hand, the magnitude of the mean scores of females and males was almost the same. Statistical test for differences between the mean scores of females and males on measures of interest scale resulted in statistically no significant difference ($p<0.05$). Table 1 presents the statistical summary result in terms of university, study field and sex categories of the respondents. Differences in mean scores of students on the interest scale in terms of their categories (universities, study fields and sex) did not bring about significant differences in the total scores on the measure of interest scale (Table 1). That means, respondents in the three universities only slightly varied in their scores on the scale. The same was true for respondents in different fields of study as observed in one way analysis of variance. It corresponds that the plenty of supports given by their teacher had been in line with the students' interest in doing exercises in group and studying in group.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for data on the scale used to measure students'interest in cooperative learning

University	**Mean**	**N**	**Std**	**Sum**	**Min**	**Max**	**F**	**df**	**Sig.**
Arsi university	13.21	180	2.87	2378.00	6.00	23.00	8.09	2 & 772	.000
Madawalabu university	14.03	274	2.76	3845.00	6.00	23.00			
Hawasa university	13.13	321	2.97	4217.00	6.00	22.00			
Total	13.47	775	2.90	10440.00	6.00	23.00			
Study field									
Engineering	13.60	302	2.70	4108.00	6.00	20.00	2.812	4& 770	.025
Agriculture	13.44	143	3.20	1922.00	6.00	23.00			
Social science	13.80	118	2.91	1629.00	8.00	22.00			
Business & economics	13.12	182	2.91	2388.00	6.00	23.00			
Educ.& beh.sc.	13.10	30	3.28	393.00	8.00	20.00			
Total	13.47	775	2.90	10440.00	6.00	23.00			
Sex							**t**	**df**	**Sig.**
Female	13.20	277	2.80	3659.00	6.00	22.00	-1.870	2& 773	.062
Male	13.61	498	2.95	6781.00	6.00	23.00			
Total	13.47	775	2.90	10440.00	6.00	23.00			

Intriangulation, it can be stated that the fairly high number of students who responded positively to the items of "supports given" may imply that the supports and orientation given by their teachers might had been potential (had encouraged the students) for the considerable level of students' interest in cooperative learning. The magnitude of the mean score of all the respondents on the scale for measuring their interest in cooperative learning was slightly more than 50% of the total maximum possible score. As per the dimension of the interest measure set, the students had almost been behind interest to be involved in cooperative leaning. This was true for the entire students in all the categories as the mean values of the scores of the respondents in the interest scale were almost the same with narrow differences in standard deviations. Analysis of the correlation between age of the participants and their mean scores of the measure of interest in cooperative learning also showed statistically significant relationship but varying in opposite direction. It implies that as the age of the participants increased, their interest to study in group had decreased.

4.5. Analysis of data on the scale for respondents' attitude towards cooperative learning

The magnitude of mean scores of the respondents on the attitude scale across the university categories were almost the same (9.13, 9.795 and 9.236, for Hawasa University, Arsi University, and Madawalabu University, respectively). The corresponding standard deviation values were 2.142, 2.235, and 2.043, respectively. Across all the categories of the participants, the magnitude of the mean score was above average score (57.06%). It means that the majority of the participants had unfavorable attitude towards cooperative learning. Extreme cases were also observed. A participant had a score of 100%, strong negative feeling towards cooperative learning. On the other hand, there were 20 individuals (2.6%) with fairly positive feeling towards cooperative learning (with score of only 25% on the negative dimension of the attitude measures), and might have shared 75% of the positive feeling towards cooperative learning.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of data on the measure of participa**nts' attitude towards cooperative learning**

Variables	N	Max	Min	Sum	Mean	Std Dev	% of Total Sum	% of Total N
University								
Arsi University	180	14.00	4.00	1620.00	9.00	2.142	22.3%	23.2%
Madawalabu University	274	16.00	4.00	2684.00	9.795	2.235	36.9%	35.4%
Hawasa University	321	14.00	4.00	2965.00	9.236	2.043	40.8%	41.4%
Total	775	16.00	4.00	7269.00	9.379	2.157	100.0%	100.0 %
Study Field								
Engineering	302	16.00	4.00	2918.00	9.662	2.212	40.1%	39.0%
Agriculture	143	14.00	4.00	1341.00	9.377	3.125	18.4%	18.5%
Social Science	118	14.00	4.00	1061.00	9.991	2.251	14.6%	15.2%
Business & Economics	182	14.00	4.00	1665.00	9.148	2.077	22.9%	23.5%
Educ.& beh.sc.	30	12.00	5.00	284.00	9.466	1.455	3.8%	3.9%
Total	775	16.00	4.00	7269.00	9.379	2.157	100.0%	100.0 %
Sex								
Female	277	16.00	4.00	2608.00	9.415	2.120	35.9%	35.7%
male	498	14.00	4.00	4661.00	9.359	2.179	64.1%	64.3%
Total	775	16.00	4.00	7269.00	9.379	2.157	100.0%	100.0 %

The relationship between the mean scores on the measure of interest and the mean scores on the measure of attitude happened to be statistically significant and varying in the same direction although the Pearson correlation value is apparently low. Lawrie (2008) argued that developing the spirit of cooperative learning in the students requires changing their mind-set so that they see something positive in each interaction, and find common ground with other team members and behave with respect when interacting. Similar trend is observed for both female and male categories. Table 2 presents the average score, total score and standard deviation on the attitude scale. When females and males were compared in terms of

the minimum and the maximum scores on the attitude scale, the category of female participants had a maximum score of 100% while the category of male participants had maximum score of 87.5%. However, the magnitude of the mean scores for both female and male participants on the attitude measure was high. Moreover, the difference between female and male in their scores on the attitude measure was not statistically significant (Table 3). The overall result indicated that the majority of both female and male participants had no positive attitude towards cooperative learning.

Table 3: F-test for differences among the university categories and t-test for difference between females and males in their attitude towards cooperative learning

Levene's test for equality of variances			t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean diff	Std. error diff	95% confidence interval of the difference	
	F	Sig.						Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	3.090	.079	-1.870	2 & 773	.062	-.40708	.21768	-.83439	.02023

Literatures (for example, Kreek, 2012) commented that a teacher is expected to create a nurturing cooperative learning environment that facilitates and become supportive of students in educational institutions. If the environment, including the teachers and supportive staff are friendly, the students working in group will be motivated to study together effectively despite possible cultural differences among group members. Practicing cooperative learning plays the role of building students' interactions thereby developing knowledge and skills of reflecting on the activities of the learners.

Bandura's theory of observational learning (in McLeod, 2016) presents a comprehensive discussion on the contribution of socio-cognitive process to the development of self efficacy. It means, individuals who had developed self-efficacy can encourage other group members to develop such skills. If students are motivated, they can promptly conceive the cooperative learning spirit, develop positive attitude and use the friendly work environment already initiated and continuously guided by their teachers. The students can continue processing their group learning by reflecting their reaction to group members and interactions. Self-reflection will reinforce and further develop their critical thinking and teamwork skills.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

The results of the study had indicated the presence of support from the teachers to students on cooperative learning at moderate level. In all the three universities, the students' interest in cooperative learning was low. It requires teachers to work on continuously creating friendly learning climate to improve their students' motivation. If students are motivated, they can promptly conceive the cooperative learning spirit and use the friendly work environment (climate) already initiated and continuously guided by their teachers. The result also indicated that the students' attitude towards cooperative learning was to the negative side. The low level of students' attitude towards cooperative learning indicated that teachers need to work on improving their students' motivation for cooperative learning. From the open-ended items, it was noted that teachers themselves were not working in team. In fact, to improve students' interest and attitude towards group learning, teachers themselves could have worked in team (at least in course team) and could have decided to remain positive on their own side to be model to the students' cooperative learning by transferring their experience to and instill in their students so that students learn to develop their confidence in academic success.

5.2 Recommendations

Basically, in a country with a diversified society, like Ethiopia, with possibly differing backgrounds and interests, a lot of tasks have to be done by teachers and support staff of the universities where students of highly culturally diversified society are accommodated for successful cooperative learning. They have to create group cohesion while entertaining differences of ideas. Based on the result of the study, the writer is interested in recommending the following working remarks. Ethiopian people, even during antiquity, had the culture of working together. Various literatures also advise on the importance of team work in achieving plans. Presently, the Ethiopian government is promoting the essentials of group work. Therefore, teachers and students need to open their mind to have positive attitude towards team work, and develop interest in working together.

To this end, the following points are recommended:

1. The academic staff has to support their students on cooperative learning and supervise the events of the team of the cooperative learning to encourage self-reflection.
2. The academic staff have to share cooperative learning tasks related to the regular tasks in new and creative ways to promote diversity of ideas, and academic debates and mediate on resolutions of debating ideas from which students can choose comments to share with their group members during group work and tutorial sessions.
3. They can also provide an experience of their own course team work which becomes a good basis to continue cooperative learning work.
4. An instructor can use several strategies to encourage students to develop a healthy climate within the cooperative learning groups:
   - 4.1. during group formation, assign students into diverse groups so that they encounter others with different backgrounds and interests; promote awareness of differences within the group, and point out the demands of working in a group.
   - 4.2. support students by designing activities that put the students at ease, encourage reflection on the stresses of working within a group,
   - 4.3. facilitate learning situation by preparing schedules for students to reflect regularly on their group experiences so that students will be reinforced and further develop critical teamwork skills.
   - 4.4. reform groups as required to ensure further diversity and to promote the ease of working in team, and experience participating in challenges.
5. The university management organs may use the experience of best performing team as a model for transforming individualistic practice approach to group practice approach among students and teachers and enhance team working strategy at the universities.

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