EXPERIENCE AND PERCEPTION OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING IN NURSING EDUCATION: INSIGHTS FROM INSTRUCTOR PERSPECTIVES

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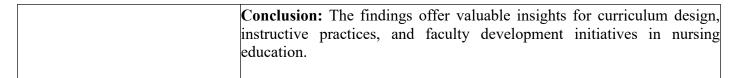| ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Keywords: Experience, perception, Cooperative Learning, Nursing Education, Nursing Instructor **Corresponding Author: Yasir Ali,** MSN at Ziauddin University, Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery, Karachi, Pakistan Email:yrose638@gmail.com , ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0006-6284-9546	**Background:** Cooperative learning (CL) is recognized under the aspect of valuable instructional approach in nursing education, fostering collaboration, critical thinking, and teamwork skills among students. **Objective:** To probe the perception and experience of CL in nursing education across the perspectives of nursing instructors. **Methodology:** A qualitative study was conducted at nursing institutes in Karachi. Seven Nursing Instructors were selected through purposive sampling technique and data collection was continued until thematic saturation was reached, at the point the sample size was deemed sufficient and data collection was stopped. Semi-structured interviews stayed accompanied by discovering the experiences, views, and observations concerning the application of CL strategies in nursing courses. Thematic analysis explored multiple crucial subjects associated with effectiveness, benefits, encounters, and best practices of CL in nursing education. **Results:** The findings indicates that cooperative learning is perceived as highly effective by instructors, leading to increased student engagement, collaboration, and the improvement of societal abilities. Additionally, the absence of administrative pressure allows instructors the freedom to implement cooperative learning strategies that best meet the needs of their students.

	Conclusion: The findings offer valuable insights for curriculum design, instructive practices, and faculty development initiatives in nursing education.

INTRODUCTION

Teachers still have the biggest influence over most teaching processes. Consequently, the focus of teaching and learning activities shifts away from learning and toward teaching. Teaching activities are biased towards the interests of the instructors. In order to make learning more student-centered, cooperative learning models a type of mentality shift in educational activities must be implemented (Ehsan, Vida, & Mehdi, 2019). The societal connected principle, which is the cornerstone of CL, maintains that pupils who are interdependent would cooperate to achieve shared goals. Its five essential elements are interpersonal abilities, group processing, individual accountability, positive interdependence, and face-to-face interaction. (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Instead of students only absorbing the information that faculty members supply, "this learning denotes the learners ' mutual learning , that enables them to study organized helpfully establishing new theoretical accomplishments (Keramati & Gillies, 2021). CL is recognized in the aspect of valuable educational approach in nursing teaching, fostering collaboration, critical thinking, and teamwork skills among students (Y. Ali, Khan, Alamgir, Younas, & Qayyum, 2023; Silalahi & Hutauruk, 2020). In modern era, the grounds of nursing learning has witnessed a paradigm shift towards more student-centered and interactive pedagogical approaches aimed at fostering critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving skills among future healthcare professionals (J. Ali et al., 2024). One such approach that has gained prominence is CL, a strategy that boosts undergraduates to gained the tasks collectively in small clusters for accomplishing shared learning goals (Bores-García, Hortigüela-Alcalá, Fernandez-Rio, González-Calvo, & Barba-Martín, 2021). CL has been widely recognized for its probable benefits to increase engagements of learners, encourage dynamic education, and develop academic outcomes across various disciplines. However, its specific impact within the context of nursing education, particularly from the perspective of nursing instructors, remains relatively underexplored (Erbil, 2020; Hussain et al., 2025). CL involve undergraduates assisting one another, enjoy and become more skillful, believe in the supremacy of cooperation i.e. It means that two heads are better than one "Many hands make light work," and "Go alone if you want to go quickly , go together if you want to go far away." (Gull & Shehzad, 2015). The process of CL includes different clusters of learner functioning collectively to resolve disagreements and come to consensus on issues using techniques including talks, negotiations, and active listening (Zhang & Chen, 2021). Constructivism's central tenet is shown by this style of learning, which is predicated on the premise that people are active agents that actively construct their knowledge by choosing, altering, and making meaning of the information they are exposed to achieve (Artawan, 2023). While numerous researches have examined the impact of CL on learner's outcomes, there is a need to explore this phenomenon from the perspectives of nursing instructors (Ahmed, Ali, Malik, & Khan, 2024; Millis, 2023) This research purposes to fulfill this breach by investigating how nursing educators perceive and experience CL in their teaching practice. The three basic research questions we sought to answer were.

1. How do nursing instructors perceive the effectiveness of cooperative learning in facilitating student learning in nursing education?

2. What are the perceived benefits and challenges associated with implementing cooperative learning strategies in nursing course?
3. What are the best practices and strategies recommended by nursing instructor for successful integration of cooperative learning into nursing education?

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative exploratory study design was employed for exploring the experiences and perception of nursing instructor regarding CL in nursing education at nursing institutes of Karachi, Pakistan. Seven nursing instructors were selected through purposive sampling technique and data collection was continued until thematic saturation was reached, at which point the sample size was deemed sufficient and data collection was stopped (Krishnan, 2024). Study subject were those who are recently working as nursing instructor and have been used CL as teaching strategies. However, the study did not include nursing educators who do not currently hold teaching positions or educate nursing courses. The study subject answered to the semi-structured interview to share their views regarding the efficacy, merits, problems and recommended optimum implementation of CL. The objective of this semi- structured interview was to quote in-depth, and detailed responses that was enlighten the perspective, experiences of the nurse educators. The study objectives and questions worked for the basis of interview process. The open ended question investigate and examine the respondent's perspective regarding CL, its merits and demerits, and its utilization process were discussed among the study participants. Thematic analysis were used to classify the recurrent themes, pattern and categories in the obtained data (Weyant, 2022). This technique made it promising to scientifically observe the records and discover significant perceptions and thoughtful concerning CL in nursing teaching (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). It was essential to code the date, recognize evolving tendencies and go over on issues for the purpose to appropriately reflect the details and depth of the participant's answers.(Creswell & Plano Clark, 2023). Ethical approval has been taken from the head of the institute and ethical review committee. Written informed consent also signed by the participants before the interview. The identity of the participants had been kept confidential. Participants were informed that they have right to withdraw at any time throughout the study period no penalty will be applied if they don't want to be part of the study anymore.

RESULTS

The fact that students' social skills increased when they participated in CL, all study participants reported that they successfully implemented this strategy. Additionally, every one of the chosen participants acknowledges that peer interaction helps students learn the material better. Furthermore, they emphasized that the administration of their institution does not impose any restrictions on the use of CL in the classroom. Quantitative data were analyzed through SPSS version 27.0. Participants exhibited a range of demographic characteristics across multiple categories. Five main themes and their sub themes were identified.

Table No. 1 Demographic characteristics of the participants

The study included a total of seven participants. In terms of gender, the majority were female (57%, n=4), while males constituted 42% (n=3). Regarding age, 42% (n=3) of the participants were between 30 and 40 years old. Those below 30 years and above 40 years each represented 28% (n=2) of the sample. In terms of teaching experience, 57% (n=4) had more than 5 years of experience, while 42% (n=3) had over 10 years of teaching experience, indicating that some participants may overlap across these categories. As for educational qualifications, the majority held a graduation degree (57%, n=4), 28% (n=2) held a master's degree, and 14% (n=1) had qualifications above the master's level.

Table No. 1 Demographic characteristics of the participants

Variable	F (%)
Gender	
Male	3(42)
Female	4(57)
Age	
30 -40	3(42)
Below 30	2(28)
Above 40	2(28)
Teaching Experience	
More than 5 years	4(57)
More than 10 years	3(42)
Qualification	
Graduation	4(57)
Masters	2(28)
Above	1(14)

Themes

1. **Perceived effectiveness of cooperative learning**

   All participants reported successful implementation of cooperative learning methods, noting increased student engagement and collaboration.

   Pseudonym A emphasized, "Cooperative learning has been incredibly effective in fostering active participation and collaboration among students".

2. **Improvement in students' social skills**

   Participants observed a notable improvement in students' social skills as a result of contributing in cooperative learning activities.

   Pseudonym B noted, "Cooperative learning not only enhances academic learning but also facilitates the development of students' social skills, such as communication and teamwork".

3. **Benefits of peer contact**

   Instructors acknowledged the benefits of peer contact in cooperative learning, enabling students to deepen their understanding of course content through interaction with peers. Pseudonym D remarked, "Peer contact fosters a collaborative learning environment where students can exchange ideas and gain insights from one another".

4. **Lack of Administrative Pressure**

   Participants highlighted that there is no pressure from the administration regarding the use of cooperative learning in the classroom, allowing instructors the autonomy to implement effective teaching methods. Pseudonym F stated, "In our institute, there is no administrative pressure regarding cooperative learning, which allows us to focus on what works best for our students."

5. **Participant Voices as Reflective Evidence**

   This theme captures the powerful and insightful contributions of participants, whose direct quotes illustrate and validate the core themes identified in this study. Rather than serving as standalone findings, these reflections function as reflective evidence—rich, personal accounts that deepen understanding of cooperative learning's multifaceted impact. The participants'

voices lend authenticity to the data and reinforce the significance of the themes emerging from the analysis.

Pseudonym G reflected "Peer interaction in cooperative learning settings enables students to construct meaning collaboratively, leading to a deeper understanding of the course material."

Theme 1: Perceived Effectiveness of Cooperative Learning

Subthemes

1.1 Increased student engagement

According to the participants, cooperative learning techniques greatly raised student participation in the classroom. Pupils seemed more engaged and driven to study, and they frequently showed more zeal when working in groups. Cooperative activities' interactive elements pushed students to take charge, pose inquiries, and go deeper into the material, creating a lively and dynamic learning atmosphere.

1.2 Enhanced classroom collaboration

A highly collaborative environment was discovered to be fostered by cooperative learning. Peer-to-peer interaction has significantly increased, according to instructors, and students are not only cooperating more often but are also learning how to listen to other viewpoints and work together to negotiate meaning. Students' capacity to learn from one another was improved by their active engagement and sense of shared accountability, which strengthened both individual and group learning objectives".

1.3 Positive instructor perception of learning outcomes

High levels of satisfaction with the results of cooperative learning were continuously expressed by instructors. Many said that kids showed deeper critical thinking abilities in addition to better material retention. These favorable opinions stemmed from observations of enhanced student performance, more in-depth class discussions, and the obvious excitement that students showed during cooperative learning activities.

Theme 2: Improvement in Students' Social Skills

Subthemes

2.1 Development of communication skills

The development of students' communication skills was one of the most often mentioned advantages of cooperative learning. Students were forced to express their ideas clearly, listen intently to others, and participate in productive group discussions through organized group projects. Students' verbal expressiveness improved, their ability to deliver ideas convincingly increased, and their confidence in social interactions increased as a result of this iterative process.

2.2 Teamwork and interpersonal interaction

Students have many of chances to work together and develop productive working relationships with their peers through cooperative learning. Participants said they were better able to assign assignments, settle disputes, and give peer evaluation. Through these exchanges, students developed their interpersonal awareness and gained an appreciation for the importance of different viewpoints in a group environment.

2.3 Increased student confidence in group settings

Over time, instructors noticed that pupils' confidence in group work increased. People who were first apprehensive eventually became more at ease sharing their thoughts and assuming leadership positions during group projects. This confidence gain was regarded as a significant developmental milestone that carried over into clinical or professional settings outside of the classroom.

Theme 3: Benefits of Peer Contact

Subthemes

3.1 Knowledge exchange among students

In cooperative learning settings, students regularly shared resources, tactics, and insights with one another, which promoted the sharing of knowledge. Participants underlined that this exchange broadened students' academic perspectives by exposing them to various ways of thinking in addition to enhancing individual comprehension.

3.2 Collaborative meaning-making

Through discourse, students were actively co-constructing understanding rather than only transferring knowledge. Participants' quotes emphasized how they discussed ideas, questioned one another's presumptions, and synthesized data in order to create meaning together. Students were better able to internalize topics and engage in critical reflection as a result of this group participation.

3.3 Improved comprehension through discussion

Peer group discussions were found to be a crucial tool for improving subject understanding. Students frequently asked questions, cleared up misunderstandings among themselves, and worked together to investigate difficult concepts. Compared to traditional lecture-based settings, many people were able to understand challenging information more easily thanks to this type of social learning.

Theme 4: Lack of Administrative Pressure

Subthemes:

4.1 Instructor autonomy in teaching strategies

Teachers valued the flexibility to use cooperative learning without being constrained by strict administrative rules. This independence gave them the freedom to experiment with new ideas, modify their approach depending on the dynamics of the classroom, and adjust their teaching practices to the needs of their students—all of which improved the quality of instruction.

4.2 Supportive institutional environment

Though not always explicitly stated, the data suggested that instructors operated within an environment that valued pedagogical flexibility. The absence of top-down pressure to conform to a single teaching method allowed educators to prioritize student-centered approaches and focus on meaningful learning outcomes

4.3 Flexibility in method adaptation

The significance of being able to modify cooperative learning strategies to fit their unique classroom setting was underlined by the participants. This adaptability included incorporating real-world circumstances, changing task complexity, and altering group numbers. Teachers were empowered to choose pedagogical approaches that best facilitated student involvement and learning.

Theme 5: Participant Voices as Reflective Evidence

Subthemes

5.1 Link between cooperative learning and academic success

Cooperative learning was commonly linked by participants to improved academic achievement and preparedness for the workforce. As, Instructor C highlighted how group-based approaches fostered students' academic achievement while also fostering important professional qualities like teamwork and critical thinking, which are particularly important in healthcare education. These observations show how classroom knowledge and practical application are connected through cooperative learning.

5.2 Development of professional competencies

The depth of learning that resulted from organized peer interaction was explained by Instructor G. Their remarks emphasized how collaborative settings encouraged the co-construction of information and greater conceptual clarity, allowing pupils to transcend superficial comprehension. This emphasizes how cooperative learning can support genuine intellectual growth in addition to knowledge gain.

5.3 Deep learning through peer interaction

The quotations also highlight the ways in which cooperative learning contributed to a more human-centered educational environment. Participants talked of pupils become more self-assured, socially aware, and sympathetic. These observations provide a useful window into the interpersonal and emotional aspects of learning, which are frequently disregarded but are crucial to the growth of students.

Table 3: Main themes and Sub-themes

Themes	Sub-Themes
Perceived Effectiveness of Cooperative Learning	1. Increased student engagement 2. Enhanced classroom collaboration 3. Positive instructor perception of learning outcomes
Improvement in Students' Social Skills	1. Development of communication skills 2. Teamwork and interpersonal interaction 3. Increased student confidence in group settings
Benefits of Peer Contact	1. Knowledge exchange among students 2. Collaborative meaning-making 3. Improved comprehension through discussion
Lack of Administrative Pressure	1. Instructor autonomy in teaching strategies 2. Supportive institutional environment 3. Flexibility in method adaptation
Participant Voices as Reflective Evidence	1. Link between cooperative learning and academic success 2. Development of professional competencies 3. Deep learning through peer interaction

Cooperative Learning's Usefulness

CL has been demonstrated to be an effective teaching method for promoting student engagement and enhancing learning results, according to all of the teachers. They highlighted how CL develops nursing students' delicate intellect, problem-solving skills, and effective communication in order to prepare them for clinical practice.

Benefits of cooperative learning

Several benefits of CL, including improved teamwork skills, a greater understanding of the subject matter, and increased student engagement were listed by study subjects.

Peer participation and information exchange in CL activities, which improve students' educational experiences were highlighted by study respondents.

Cooperative learning obstacles

In spite of CL's benefits, there were some difficulty in implementing it, such as managing group dynamics, ensuring fair participation, and finding a balance between individual and group evaluation stated by nursing instructors. Time constraints and logistical issues hindered the effective implementation of CL procedures, Discovered by study respondents.

Best practices and tactics

Teachers discussed a number of tactics for incorporating CL into nursing classes successfully, including as setting clear goals, offering organized group projects, and creating a positive learning atmosphere. To maximize the impact of CL encounters, they underlined the significance of active facilitation, frequent feedback, and reflection.

DISCUSSION

The insights drawn from the qualitative interviews in this study reflect on a number of important points brought up in the literature on cooperative learning. While some of the themes are in line with previous research findings from the literature, such as the significance of utilizing important aspects of positive learning environments when creating collaborative tasks. From the view point of the teacher, we organized group activities in a certain order to draw on students' past knowledge because we firmly believe in constructivist concepts.(Lee & Yang, 2023). In this study participants exhibited a range of demographic characteristics across multiple categories. More than half of the participants (57%) were female and 42% were aged 30-40 years and (57%) of the participants have teaching experience more than 5 years and (57%) of the participants were graduated and rest of the participants have masters and above qualification. Similarly in a study conducted in 2025 where the female participants were (48.1%) and male were (51.9%) moreover the qualification fell into various categories (37.9%) study subject were graduated and (43.2%) were masters and above (Y. Ali, Khan, Mustafa, Hussain, & Akhter, 2025).These findings parallel with those of earlier research, where a comparable that cooperative learnisng techniques were successfully implemented and that student engagement and collaboration had risen. Since cooperative tasks need less motor skill, some practitioners think that implementing a Cooperative Learning program can inspire students to be more motivated (Hortigüela Alcalá, Hernando Garijo, Pérez-Pueyo, & Fernández-Río, 2019).

In the present research the nursing instructor stated that cooperative learning not only improving the academic performance, but fosters the development of critical social skills, which are vital for future healthcare workers. Another study findings showed that the instructors' perception of CL as an comprehensive pedagogics that allowed all children to "shine" was a conclusive finding for the development of social and emotional skills (Y. Ali, Khan, Fatima, et al., 2025; Bjørke & Mordal Moen, 2020).These results are in line with other studies that examined the effects of Cooperative Learning use on students' academic performance and critical thinking results in favor of cooperative learning, which allows instructors to focus on what works best for our students(Ismail & Al Allaq, 2019). The educators have recognized the advantages of peer interaction in cooperative learning, which allows students to engage with peers and get a deeper comprehension of the material, similarly one more study emphasized the importance of their growth in listening to one another, exhibiting respect and compassion, exchanging ideas, and debating and ultimately reaching a consensus on their different decisions (Casey, MacPhail, Larsson, & Quennerstedt, 2021).In the current study findings revealed that cooperative learning leading to a deeper understanding of the course material in favor of aforementioned results Azad

et al identified that Active learning is when a teacher stops a lesson to help students with a particular issue or task to better grasp a subject. (Al Mamun, Azad, Al Mamun, & Boyle, 2022).in this study participants exposed that Cooperative learning has been incredibly effective in fostering active participation and collaboration among students correspondingly ,it has been demonstrated that nursing students' technical and evaluation abilities improve when they participate in cooperative learning situations that integrate academic and clinical practice views (Cheng, Hung, Chen, Liou, & Chu, 2024).

Conclusion

The conclusions of this study make available valued understandings into the impact of cooperative learning in nursing education from the perspectives of instructors. Despite the challenges, cooperative learning is perceived as an effective instructional approach for promoting student engagement, critical thinking and teamwork skills development. The themes identified through thematic analysis provide a foundation for further research and inform the development of effective strategies for implementing cooperative learning in nursing curricula. By leveraging the identified benefits and implementing recommended best practices, nursing educators can enhance the quality of nursing education and better prepare students for the demands of contemporary healthcare practice.

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