

The Follow-Ups and Monitoring Practices of Stakeholders in Implementing Cooperative Learning: Three Secondary Schools of Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State in Focus

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Abstract: This study aimed at assessing the follow-ups, monitoring and practices of different stakeholders in implementing cooperative learning at secondary schools in Benishangul-Gumuz Region. The study was conducted on school directors, teachers, supervisors and students found in three Districts. Methodologically, FGD, interview and document review were employed to collect data from the participants. Different sampling techniques such as convenient, purposive, comprehensive and random sampling were employed to select samples. Accordingly, three school principals, eighteen teachers, three supervisors and thirty six students were taken as samples of the study. The study indicated that the stakeholders follow ups and monitoring on how to implement cooperative learning was not as such instrumental and supportive of the practices for the schools. Besides, the study further showed that cooperative learning calls for further attention. The study also showed that relationship between self-reflection as a group and future success in groups was not considered at all in the schools investigated in this study. As a result, in order to make the students to be more reflective about how they work as individuals and group members, they should be supported to lead their activities with plans on academic, affective and social goals for both in and off school times. In general, the actual implementation of cooperative learning was weak in the secondary schools assessed by this study.

Key words: Cooperative learning/one to-five-grouping; practice; stakeholders; follow-up; support; monitoring

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I. INTRODUCTION

Assigning students into manageable learning groups is one way to encourage positive interdependence, smooth and strong interaction, and team spirit and cooperative learning among students as well as teachers who have different potentials. According to Golub (1988) cooperative learning is both socially and intellectually involving. It invites students to build closer connections to other students, their faculty, their courses and their learning. Although the sense of one-to-five team-work is similar to cooperative learning, yet it is relatively new concept in the teaching learning setting in Ethiopia. As a result it is likely that different challenges may affect effective implementation of One-to-Five grouping in the schools. Hana (2015), stated that based on the reality in Ethiopia, there are still some problems challenging the education sector especially cooperative learning. These challenges may originate from different sources that are linked to various reasons.

As teachers, the researchers of this study have perceived various challenges that hamper the effectiveness of one to five grouping. One of the challenges is setting aside group tasks to an individual member which ultimately creates a sense of dependency on some students. Adem (2007) conducted a research on challenges and opportunities of group work, and he declared academic status differences in participation and domination as major challenges in using group work. It is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore the importance of cooperative learning. It is important that teachers understand how to embed cooperative learning into the classroom curricula to foster open communication and engagement between teachers and students, (Johnson & Johnson, 1999).

The other challenge may be due to lack of understanding of how to use this pedagogical practice in their classrooms. Bruner (1996) recognized that the difficulties teachers encounter in trying to introduce cooperative learning and argued strongly that if it is to be used successfully in classrooms, the context in which it is to be introduced needs to be prepared, students need to be taught the appropriate interactional skills, teachers need to be taught how to work with groups, and the lessons and tasks need to be well organized.

Moreover, the bodies who are concerned with the formation of the groups simply form the one-to-five networks and post on notice boards to show which groups the members are assigned to. But in a cooperative learning environment, learners are encouraged to be in the center of learning and learn together rather than form a group only. If this is done without adequate explanation about the nature as well as benefits of the group, and roles and responsibilities of each member in the groups, learners will not enjoy learning if it happens in isolation, Bruner (1996). Likewise, the importance of preparing the physical space for learning and teaching, ensuring the learning tasks, engage students in higher-order thinking, helping teachers to understand that they need to accept their role as producers of new classroom curricula and programs, and training students in the social and academic skills and making other concerning bodies be aware and facilitate the program are challenging for cooperative learning they will need to negotiate for their new learning environments. Therefore, the provision of continuous procedures for supervision and support to follow up the groups appears to be weak.

Although many researchers have found out remedies for the challenges of implementing collaborative teamwork in different instructional settings in general, one-to-five team-work is a relatively recent concept in Ethiopia; it is not well studied so far in particular. Thus, this small-scale study attempted to identify the challenges, effectiveness and prospects of implementing one-to-five teamwork of students in Bambasi, Homosha, and Menge secondary schools which are found in three woredas of Benishangul Gumuz Regional State. Accordingly, the study specifically attempted to achieve following objectives.

1.1. Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the practice of cooperative learning groups of students for teaching-learning in secondary schools;
2. To identify the challenges of implementing cooperative learning in secondary schools.
3. To investigate the extent of stakeholders involvement for effective implementation of cooperative learning for teaching-learning in secondary schools.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The term One-to-five networking is understood in Ethiopian context as a form of collaborative learning (particularly cooperative learning) in which students work in small, mixed-ability learning teams. The students in each team are responsible not only for learning the material being taught, but also for helping their teammates learn. Cooperative learning is the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning (Johnson et al., 1994). One to five cooperative learning is meant to be forum for both academic and nonacademic issues. Within these cooperative learning groups, students discuss the material to be learned with each other, help and assist each other to understand it, and encourage each other to work hard. Students complete the group task, which requires group interdependence and assessments are individually and group determined. Cooperative learning is organized and managed group work in which students work cooperatively in small groups to achieve academic as well as affective and social goals, Jacobs et al (1997)

2.2. Elements of Cooperative (one-to-five grouping) Learning

Research in the field shows cooperative learning consists of five central components. These components are positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to face interaction, interpersonal and small group skills, and group processing (Johnson & Johnson, 1999; Johnson, et al., 1994). These major components of one to five cooperative learning are discussed in the subsequent sections.

One of the essential elements of cooperative learning is the notion that student accomplishments are tied together. Group interdependence is important when team members need to work together in groups to successfully complete the assigned tasks. With group interdependence, it is possible to achieve a minimal level of functioning with weaknesses in teams, group processing, or social skills ("Cooperative Learning", n.d.). According to Sayonita G. (n.d) there are various ways to promote interdependence among the members. These are: (i) resource interdependence – resource interdependence is the practice of limiting the resources available to a team to elevate the need for collaboration. (ii) role interdependence – this is based on the concept of 'division of labor'. (iii) reward interdependence – sometimes teachers use rewards to intrinsically motivate students to work in a group. All teams in a cooperative learning classroom should have the opportunity to earn rewards. (iv) goal interdependence – this can be accomplished by assigning each group one project to complete and submit for grading; though each team member will be responsible for individual components in the project and combining together the final product. As a result, the members in the group can develop sense of positive interdependence throughout their academic engagements.

Each individual in the one to five network is expected to grasp the assigned learning and to provide his/her contribution to the team. Individual accountability is also based on the notion of equivalent participation. In true one to five group learning, every individual contributes for team's success. "There are no 'hitchhikers, those that let the group carry them along for a free ride. And there are no 'chauffeurs,' those that try to drive the

team where they want to go. Teachers must take specific actions to ensure that there are no hitchhikers or chauffeurs on a cooperative team” (“Cooperative Learning”, n.d.). Sayonita G. (n.d), suggests the following three ways to promote individual accountability. They are (i) assigning roles: assigning particular tasks to each team member could promote individual accountability. This also comes under the “division of labor”. Each individual can be assigned a discrete task and all the discrete components joined together to form the whole project of the team. (ii) Coding: in this, different colored pens or markers could be used by the team members so that each member has a different colored pen. Then everyone can identify at a glance which team members have contributed what. (iii) Quizzes and tests: formal assessment tools can be used to heighten individual accountability.

Apparently, one to five networking members think and discuss in a group. This is often referred to as reflection, debriefing, or processing. It is important for students to reflect on what went well in their groups, as well as what could be improved upon during future collaborative work. Johnson and Johnson (1999) define group processing as, “a) reflecting on a group session to describe what member actions were helpful and unhelpful and b) making decisions about what actions to continue or change” (p.85). It is presumed that mulling over what worked and what did not work will help guide groups to being increasingly productive. Hence, the rationale behind group processing is to improve the group’s ability to efficiently reach their goals.

These group processing elements can be observed in the following specific issues: (i) lesson plans-the easiest tool for implementing group processing is the lesson plan. (ii) questions–prompt and structured questions could help students to initiate discussion in a group Sayonita G. (n.d). Direct interaction is another important aspect of cooperative learning which indicates eye-to-eye contact in a group. This component insists that a substantial amount of time is arranged when students can meet with each other in person. Johnson and Johnson (1999) advice, “The discipline of using cooperative groups includes ensuring that group members meet face to face to work together to complete assignments and promote each other’s success.” The researchers reveal that it is the combination of both positive interdependence and face-to-face interaction which produce the most powerful allegiances between learners, as well as the greatest commitment to each other’s success (Johnson & Johnson, 1989).When students are close enough they share a common material and their conversations could be heard to each member of the group Sayonita G. (n.d). And to elevate face-to-face interaction in groups, building the physical environment and arranging the desks would be very important to foster face-to-face interaction.

Placing students in cooperative groups and expecting them that they work together effectively is a way for failure. Students need to be properly trained to work collectively with their peers because students do not come to class routinely prepared to work successfully with other students. Johnson and Johnson (1999) insist that students must be taught the social skills required for high-quality collaboration and be motivated to use them if cooperative groups are to be effective and positive. Due to the fact that human beings are egocentric and prone to individualistic and competitive, students must be given regular instruction on the following four different social interactions, behaviors and skills to be used while working cooperatively. They are basic cooperative skills, individual attitudes and skills, team interaction skills and team productivity skills Sayonita G. (n.d). Hence, teachers need to play an important role in developing the skills in students to carry out the cooperative learning to work in groups and be productive members.

2.3. Advantages of Cooperative Learning

The importance of cooperative learning is unquestionable. Many research literatures indicate the efficacy of cooperative learning for student learning and development (“cooperative learning”,n.d.). Some of the benefits of small-group learning in a collaborative environment are listed in the subsequent sessions.

Firstly, cooperative learning is providing the real situation for celebration of diversity. Students learn to work with all types of students coming from diversified cultures. During group interactions, students find many opportunities to reflect upon and reply to the diverse responses fellow learners bring to the questions raised, and small groups also allow students to add their perspectives to an issue based on their cultural differences. “Concepts to classroom” (n.d). Through this process, students to better understand other cultures and attitudes, and other differences. Secondly, cooperative learning is acknowledges individual differences. When questions are raised, different students will have a variety of responses. Each of these can help the group create a product that reflects a wide range of perspectives and is thus more complete and comprehensive. “Concepts to classroom” (n.d). Thirdly, students learn to relate to their peers and other learners as they work together in group enterprises. This can be especially helpful for students who have difficulty with social skills. They can benefit from structured interactions with others. Fourthly, cooperative learning is vital to actively involve students in learning. By the element of individual accountability, each member has opportunities to contribute his/her part in the group. Thereby students take more ownership of their material and to think critically about related issues when they work as a team. Sayonita G. (n.d)

Furthermore, cooperative learning creates more opportunities for personal feedback. Because there are more exchanges among students in small groups, students receive more personal feedback about their ideas and

responses.).“Concepts to Classroom” (n.d). This feedback is often not possible in large-group instruction, in which one or two students exchange ideas and the rest of the class listens. Generally, constructive cooperative-learning situations are not easy to set up. As a result, cooperative learning requires teaching the group members to work well with others by resolving inevitable conflicts.

2.4. Potential Problems of Cooperative Learning

Literatures show that cooperative learning has challenges in the implementation stage. One of the problems is lack of adequate training and awareness. Teachers feel professional pressure to use this research-based teaching strategy and try to implement cooperative learning without adequate training (“Cooperative Learning”, n.d.). This results in giving group activities to students which is labeled as “cooperative learning,” Sayonita G. (n.d). Thus students, teachers, and administrators grow dissatisfied with the results of their “cooperative learning” experience. These individuals are often “inoculated” against cooperative learning on the basis of their exposure to group work (Ibid). Another challenge is dominance of some students over the group. Few students may have leading involvement with a project to such a degree that they exclude their teammates. Contrary to this, some students may be either careless or silent to take part in the group tasks. Careful monitoring is necessary to distinguish students with such personality. As a result, it is possible to help the group to restructure their group dynamics by increasing interdependence, social skills procedures, processing, individual accountability, etc. If this fails, once again, it may be best to break up the group and let some pupil work on their own.

On the other hand, assessing group works can be challenging in the face of student preferences for full control over their individual grade. Therefore it is crucial to consider issues like teacher observations during group work, group grading for projects, students grading each other or evaluating the level of contribution made by each member to a team activities. Among others, these and other Potential Problems of may affect the implementation of Cooperative Learning in schools.

To some up, research shows that cooperative learning should be employed in combination with other classroom structures. Cooperative learning is not applicable for all learning, all of the time, nor it is appropriate for all students all of the time. Besides, students need time to think and work quietly on their own to practice and master skills. Teachers should also continually monitor the effects of cooperative learning on students’ learning and attitudes to ensure they aren’t overusing or misusing this strategy in classroom practices. This shows that teachers have irreplaceable for the proper utilization of one to five networking.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.2. Research Design

According to Dornyei (2007), qualitative studies usually have an ‘emergent’ model, which means that the design of the study remains flexible to accommodate newly emerging facts in the process of doing the research: the common objective of the different types of qualitative methods is to make sense of a set of (cultural or personal) meanings in the observed phenomena’. These meanings are necessarily ‘subjective opinions, experiences and feelings of individuals ... and ‘the explicit goal of a qualitative study is to explore the participants’ views and behavior of the situation being studied.’ Animaw (2011) also stated that more genuine understanding of beliefs and actions within challenges of some types of human behavior such as teaching can be achieved mainly through the qualitative methodology. So, the nature of this study needs qualitative methodological paradigms.

3.3. Description of the Study Area

BenishangulGumz Regional State is found in western part of Ethiopia. The region has three zones including Assosa Zone. The study areas of the present study were three secondary schools which are found in the capital towns of three districts namely Bambasi District/Woreda, Menge District/Woreda, and Homosha District/Woreda, in Bambasi, Menge and Homosha towns respectively. Accordingly, Bambasi, Homosha and Menge secondary schools were the study sites for the present study.

3.4. Participants of the Study

The participants of the study were grade ten students and teachers from three government secondary schools in Bambasi, Homosha, and Menge towns which are found in Assosa Zone. From the three secondary schools, the total number of grade ten teachers was 35 for 11 departments (11 teachers from Homosha, 11 teachers from Menge and 13 teachers from Bambasi). From these, the samples were 18 teachers within three groups of one-to-five (each teacher’s one-to-five group for focus group discussion). In the same way, the total number of grade ten students was 343 (96 students from Homosha in two sections, 103 students from Menge in two sections and 144 students from Bambasi in 3 sections). Thus, the sample grade ten students were 36 students (six groups of one-to-five groups); which were 12 students (two groups of one-to-five) students from

each school proportionally. And all directors of schools and three supervisors were parts of the research samples. Therefore, from the whole populations (390), the total number of samples was 60 (18 teachers, 3 directors, 3 supervisors and 36 students).

There are some reasons why few samples were used for the study. The significant one is that the researchers wanted to conduct continual observations in a section on three lessons with different topics to get reliable and valid data within the restricted time. The involvement of samples from different contexts of teaching is supposed to generate richer data on teachers' and students' implementation of one-to-five team-work in the various schools so that the data would be compared and contrasted more effectively. In addition, the teachers and students might have different academic background and teaching experience.

3.4. Sample and Sampling Technique

In this study, more than one sampling technique was employed. In the first case, convenience sampling was utilized. Dornyei (2007) explains convenience sampling as a type of non-probability sampling technique. It is also known as opportunity sampling. It is used in research sample type where an important criterion of sample selection in which a member of the targeted population is selected for the purpose of the study if they meet certain practical criteria, such as geographical proximity, availability at a certain time, ease accessibility or the willingness to volunteer. So, for determining the sites of the research, the researchers used this sampling technique because the study Zone is near to the researchers' residence so that it was easy to go to the schools for gathering the required data. Similarly, the schools selected for the samples were chosen by using convenience sampling technique for the sake of their accessibility. In the same way, the number of sample population for the students, teachers, the number of one-to-five groups for students and teachers were selected conveniently. And also making the number of sample teachers and students as well as the number of sections small was supposed to enable the study manageable.

In the second way, to determine the number of schools, purposive sampling technique was utilized because incorporating different schools helps the researchers to compare and contrast the data from the three schools more effectively for the study. Similarly, the grade level (grade 10) of sample students was selected by this technique; the reason is the population might be more aware of one-to-five team work than other low grade levels.

In the third way, comprehensive sampling technique was employed to take sample directors, supervisors, for interview because they were small in number.

Fourthly, the three Woredas/districts were selected by using simple random sampling technique considering more than 45% of Woredas in Assosa Zone, and one school was randomly selected for pilot study. Besides, sample departments/streams of teachers for FGD were selected by using simple random sampling technique. Similarly, this technique was used to take one sample teacher from the selected departments in each school. Then, the same technique was employed to get two sample groups of one-to-five team-work of students for FGD.

3.5. Data Gathering Instruments

Different data collection instruments such as interview, focus group discussion and document analysis were employed to collect data for the study.

3.5.1. Interview

An interview was used to get information from directors and supervisors on the challenges, effectiveness and prospects of implementing one-to-five team-work of students and teachers in teaching-learning. According to Selinger and Shohamy (1989), using interview is essential to obtain a greater depth of information, free and flexible responses and to get information concerning to feeling, attitude or emotion to certain questions that is not possible through questionnaire and observation. Accordingly, not to limit respondents' explanations, both structured and semi-structured interview were used to conduct interview with supervisors and directors. All interviewees were asked to reply on the challenges, effectiveness and prospects of one-to-five-works.

3.5.2. Focus Group Discussion

Focus Group Discussion is another instrument used in this study. FGD is obviously an economical way to gather a relatively large amount of qualitative data, and therefore focus groups are used for a variety of purposes in many different fields. Also this instrument was employed for having the experience of students and teachers about one-to-five team-work. Dornyei (2007, p.144), explains that focus group format is based on the collective experience of group brainstorming, that is, participants thinking together, inspiring and challenging, each other, reacting to the emerging issues and points. Accordingly, semi-structured questions were used for both students' and teachers' one-to-five team-work focus group discussions.

3.5.3. Document Analysis

Document analysis was conducted to triangulate the data obtained from FGD and interviews about one-to-five team work of students and teachers in the three secondary schools. The use of documentary methods refers to the analysis of documents that contain information about the phenomenon we wish to study. Besides, Payne and Payne (2004) state the documentary method as the techniques used to categorize, investigate, interpret and identify the limitations of physical sources, most commonly written documents. It is only to supplement information collected through in-depth interviews and FGD. Accordingly, documented reports about how teams were formed and minutes form meeting of one to five groups in the three schools were reviewed.

3.6. Data Collection Procedures

The interview questions for supervisors and school directors, focus group discussion questions for both teachers' and students' one-to-five groups were prepared. And the review checklists were prepared and adapted from other research works. Two teachers with their two sections and two students' one-to-five groups in the same grade level of the samples were used to conduct the FGD and observation. Specially, before the questions were addressed for the students, the questions were translated into Amharic language. In addition to this, facilitators assisted students when language and other problems occurred in the data collection process. Finally, interview was conducted for supervisors and school directors.

3.8. Methods of Data Analysis

After the data were collected and processed, further information of the processed data was looked for pattern and relations among the data groups. Then it was analyzed qualitatively using descriptive method. Consequently, first, the raw data from the students' FGD was translated into English. Next, all responses from the interview and teacher' FGD were written down, transcribed and categorized separately. Then, the analysis was made thematically. Lastly, the data from document analysis that was conducted about how one-to-five groups are formed and how activities are reported about the progress made were systematically analyzed in line with the objectives of the study. In general, the results emerging from the three data collection instruments were discussed and analyzed side by side.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study was set out with the aim of assessing the role of different stakeholders on the effectiveness and challenges of implementing one-to-five cooperative learning in secondary schools. Accordingly, the main results drawn from the study are presented and discussed in topics categorized under three main themes in line with the research objectives. These themes are further divided into sub-themes based on the nature of the results. Consequently, these results are analyzed and discussed subsequently in integrated manner.

4.1. Monitoring, Follow-ups, Evaluation and Support

Obviously, monitoring and follow-up pave the way to assess the attainment of one to five grouping goals and whether it was implemented as intended. Besides, it serves as a basis for the schools to evaluate and providing essential supports regarding one to five cooperative learning. In this regard, an attempt was made to investigate how the schools conducted monitoring, follow-ups, evaluation and support on one-to-five cooperative learning.

4.1.1. Follow-up and reporting of mentors to the concerned body

Mentoring is one of the components of cooperative learning groups. At secondary schools, the homeroom teachers are the mentors assigned to the students one to five groups with the aim of providing regular follow-up, support and reporting the activities of the groups to the concerned bodies. In this regard, the participants were asked to explain about how the mentors provide follow-up, support to the one to five groups and how the mentors report on the activities of one to five groups to the concerned bodied.

"The mentors provide regular follow-up and support to the groups because they are homeroom teachers; but the reporting schedule is every fifteen days though practically reporting happens every quarter year. (TFGD2)". "...as homeroom teachers, the mentors follow up and support students' one to five groups, yet the mentors provide reports only based on requests. (TFGD1)" "...though not strong and sustained, the mentors follow the groups. However, reporting is made when there is a need from other bodies. (TFGD3)"

Similarly, the school directors were asked to explain about how the schools follow-up and support one to five groups. The data from the interview showed that the mentors and directors follow up and support students and teachers one to five groups respectively. *"...the homeroom teachers are responsible for following up and supporting students and teachers one to five groups" (PII), (PI3)*. In contrast, the data from the directors' interview indicated that some schools use different approaches to follow up and support one to five cooperative learning groups. *"...in addition to the reports of one to five groups, the school develops checklist for follow up*

and support. Then internal supervision is conducted to see the actual implementation of one to five cooperative learning in the classroom” (PI2).

Similarly, the supervisors were requested to state about the concerns of supervision in line with one to five groups of schools. The supervisors mentioned that supervisors use observation and document checking as a means to assess the practicality of one to five grouping in the schools.

The data from supervisor interview showed that both students and teachers one to five groups were concerns of supervision the focus being on formation, implementation. “...both teachers and students groups activities are concerned in the supervision.” (SI2). Other interviewee stated that the supervision process was concerned with different stages from formation of groups to reports of the mentors.”...at first, supervision focusses about how groups are formed, gradually it concerns with the implementation and reporting” (SII).

On the other hand, the data from interviewees also revealed that consideration was given to evaluate the progress of groups and to devise mechanisms for problems encountered by the groups. “...supervision is used to see the results, successes and weaknesses of one to five groups in the schools and to see activities that should be by one to five groups” (SI3). This indicates that supervisors were conducting follow-up and support to one to five groups.

The supervisors were also asked to state about the supports provided to schools in relation to one-to-five groups. The data indicated that the supervisors provide advisory and technical support to one to five cooperative leaning. “...the District Education Office provides advisory support to schools about one to five cooperative learning grouping” (SII). “...teachers are advised to support students to do worksheets, and to provide different assignments. Similarly refreshment trainings were given to group leaders about the activities to be done by one to five groups” “SI3”. In general, the results from the interview and FGD showed that supervision was used to provide assistance for the effective implementation of one to five grouping in the schools.

In spite of that, the data from the document analysis did not show availability of documented evidences that verify the results of the interview and FGD. In this regard, the various documents of the schools crosschecked by the document analysis did not indicate the presence of such follow up and supports from the supervisors, directors and the mentors. The overall results, in general, reveal an indication for the limitations of supervision to provide follow ups and support to make one to five groups more functional.

4.1.2. Trainings and updates in relation to-one-to five grouping

With the purpose of finding out how much was done on the teachers and students to boost their understanding about one to five cooperative leaning, different questions were posed on the participants of the study. Accordingly the data emerged from the document analysis and the participants revealed that teachers and students did not receive any formal training/orientation regarding one to five grouping from any stakeholder/concerned body. “...there is no training or induction for teachers as well as for students so far about how to use one to five networks at secondary schools” (TFGD3). “No formal training/induction is given for teachers, even for the newly recruited teachers.” (TFGD2)

The school directors also confirmed that training wasn’t provided to the teachers and students about one to five cooperative learning. “The school hasn’t provided any training yet” ... (SII)

Contrary to this, some respondents from the directors’ interview stated that training is rendered to students and teachers once at the beginning of the school year. “...the school provides training once a year for teachers and students about one to five grouping.” (SI2). “The school gives orientation about one to five cooperative learning once a year especially for the students who come from grade eight to grade nine”(SI3). However, the analysis made on the documents shows that there are no available official papers or minutes that show the provision of trainings for the students and teachers. Yet, the orientations given for the students and teachers are rendered as form of direction not training. Therefore, these claims were not confirmed by the document analysis. On the other hand, the existence of suitable social environment is very crucial for effective group discussion. Therefore, students should be continuously trained and advised to adopt prosocial skills such as respecting others’ thoughts, paying attention to others, tolerating differences, disagreeing democratically and so on. However, the existence of trainings or updates that show how to promote these prosocial skills couldn’t be found and verified via the document analysis made on the schools’ official papers/discussion minutes.

The above result clearly shows that training concerning one-to-five grouping is not given for the teachers and students. Therefore, the concept, uses, challenges of one-to-five grouping and possible remedies for the problems are not properly disseminated to the major applicants of one to five cooperative learning. For that reason, it is fair to say that the proper practicality of one to five cooperative learning seems to be under question in the schools assessed by this study.

4.1.3. Mechanisms group members use to reflect on their group processes and success

As a means of monitoring, self-reflection helps the group members to see how their group is functioning and to take necessary measures. In this regard, the participants we requested to explain about how the students' reflect on their group processes and success in doing different group tasks, and how often the students do reflect on their group processes. Yet, the participants failed to state the use or application of any mechanism that encourage the students to be more reflective about how they worked as individuals and as members of a group. This shows that relationship between self-reflection as a group and future success in groups is not considered at all in the schools investigated in this study.

As a part of relatively permanent and cooperative learning groups, the members should evaluate their practices for better accomplishments. Obviously, the existing literature so far indicates that cooperative learning is more than just group work. A key difference between cooperative learning and traditional group work is that in the latter, students are asked to work in groups with no attention paid to group functioning, whereas in cooperative learning, group work is carefully prepared, planned, and monitored (Jacobs et.al, 1997; Johnson et.al, 1994).

Accordingly, the group members need to use different mechanisms to reflect on their group processes and success. However, none of the data from the participants indicated the application of mechanisms by group members to reflect on their processes and success as a group. As the members don't monitor their practices, it seems fair to conclude that cooperative learning is practiced just as traditional group in the schools.

4.1.4. Assessment of student learning during and after involvement in cooperative tasks

Regarding the assessment of students' learning during and after their involvement in a cooperative learning tasks/projects, the participants explained teachers' practices in the following manners. "...when group activities are given in the classroom, only some students reflect on the given points in form question and answer, but not for all discussions and all students." (TFGD3). "...each group may be provided with tasks, and those tasks are evaluated by the teacher; then we get similar marks as a group." (SFGD2)

Regarding the assessment of the contribution of individual students, the participants unanimously responded that teachers focus on evaluating the group assignments papers not how much the students contributed to the papers. "...teachers mainly concentrate on evaluating group assignments than assessing students' contributions. (TFGD2)"; "usually the groups are assessed using group marks with group assignments in which only voluntary students participate" (TFGD1). "...in group assignments, we submit papers and he teacher evaluates them." (SFGD3).

These results show that teachers give group assignments for students one to five groups to assess students' learning after their involvement group tasks. However, teachers, assessment was limited to evaluating the papers, not the students. As the students get only results/marks on the given group assignment, the students don't get feedback on their individual efforts and practices about what to maintain or improve. In other words, only giving the same marks to all group members seems that the teachers were not concerned on students' efforts because they don't even care about who does the assignments rather they focus mainly on what to assess or evaluate. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that teachers' assessment of group activities used to provide feedback that assist cooperative efforts.

4.2. Recognition, Promotion and Experience Sharing on Best Practices

The presence of experience sharing opportunities among schools and one to five groups paves the way for sharing and learning from each other's strength and weaknesses. Besides, recognizing and promoting the best practices regarding one-to-five cooperative learning can be used as a mechanism to disseminate accomplishments which in turn initiates other one-to-five groups. Accordingly, the practices of the schools addressed in this study are briefly highlighted in the subsequent sections.

4.2.1. Experience Sharing among one to five groups within or other schools

The participants were asked to reflect about the presence of recognition, promotion experience sharing on best practices about one to five grouping in the schools. Accordingly the supervisors were asked to make sure about the presence of disparity among schools on the accomplishments of one to five grouping. In this regard, the data from supervisors confirmed that differences existed among schools on the practices of one to five cooperative learning. "...there are differences among schools, but nothing has been done except sharing the information in discussions" (SI1, SI2). "... especially in schools that have large number of students, many one to five groups are not fully active" (SI2). This shows that if properly utilized, the schools could use experience sharing as a means to foster better practice cooperative groups

The participants were asked to explain about the availability of opportunities to observe on other one to five groups within or other schools. The participants responded that the students and teachers did not get chances to visit how other one to five groups use their groups. "...the school has not shared experiences with other schools; there is no experience sharing among one to five groups" (PI3, PI3) "...there is no chance to

observe how other one to five groups perform our school and other schools” (TFGD1; TFGD2). “...at the school level, we share different experiences, but one to five grouping is not targeted so far” (TFGD3). Similarly, the students also confirmed the absence of any opportunity for observing the practices of other one to five groups both in their school and in other schools. “We haven’t seen any group in our school let alone other schools”. (SFGD2, SFGD1, SFGD3). This shows that the one to five groups did not have opportunities to evaluate their practices and accomplishments and to learn from others for better improvement.

4.2.2. Recognition and premonition strategies schools use for best achievement

The participants were asked to reflect about if the schools had been giving recognition for one-to-five group for its best accomplishment. Additionally, the participants were asked to reflect about how best practices of one to five groups were promoted by the school. In this regard, the students and teachers who participated in the teachers’ FGD disclosed that best practices of one to five groups were not recognized and promoted by the schools. However, the data from principals’ interviews indicate that the school attempted to encourage best performing one to five groups via different means such as oral reinforcements, but the promotion aspect was totally neglected. “We pick some models from students one to five groups and we praise the orally but no promotion yet...and the school also use one to five group accomplishments as part of teachers’ efficiency” (PI1, PI2).

On the other hand, the participants also indicated that groups which performed well get recognition from the school through certification. “...at the end of the school year, we give certificate for high ranking one to five groups” (PI3). Nonetheless, there was no any evidence supporting this claim. This also contradicts with the data from the FGD, which revealed lack of recognition for best practices one to five groups.

The above results indicate that the schools are aware of the different best practices of one to five cooperative learning groups, but the attention and recognition given to those best practices seems to be insignificant. Likewise, the school communities also don’t know what would happen on groups which perform less too. Besides, the means by which the schools attempted to recognize best performing groups was not in a manner to encourage other groups to get initiation. Moreover, due to lack of promotion strategies, the school community was not aware about the existence of such activities, and what was achieved by the best performing groups. For that reason, the current practices of the schools is not encouraging and informative in recognizing and promoting best practices of cooperative leaning groups.

4.3. Factors Affecting the Effective Implementation One To Five Groups in the Schools

This study signposted the existence of many factors affecting the effective implementation of students’ and teachers’ one to five groups in in the schools. Some of the factors related to the students were less participation and attendance in group tasks and assignments, leaving group tasks for individuals, usually group leader, lack of students to be group leaders, and many students being unable to read and write, which is by far below the competency of secondary school level students. Similarly, less initiation and commitment, lesser attention, lack of follow-up and support and unresponsiveness to one to five groupings were some of the weak sides of teachers.

On the other hand, the study also revealed factors related to the classroom and number of students and furniture. Accordingly, scarcity of chairs, very exhausted and fixed desks and chairs, which are inconvenient for group activities and tasks as all group members cannot see and hear one another. In addition, the very crowded classrooms which lack adequate spaces for each group and which limits mobility of teachers to travel around, to manage the groups and to provide support were some of the environmental factors that hinder the effective implementation of one-to-five grouping in the classroom.

Moreover, several deficiencies which are related to contribution of other stakeholders for effective implementation of one-to-five cooperative learning were identified in this study. Some of the major limitations in this regard include: less attention to one to five cooperative learning in general, lack of continuous follow-up and support, deficiency of responsiveness, lack of mechanism for encouragement and promotion of best practices, lack of rules to apply on weak or impractical groups, disregarding the role of experience sharing were the main constraints in relation to the concerns of schools, supervisors and the District education offices for one to five cooperative learning.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study showed that cooperative learning hasn’t been properly utilized for the teaching-learning in secondary schools due to many challenges. Besides, the study also revealed that one-to-five cooperative leaning had promising prospects if the all stakeholders properly utilize the opportunities that are available in the schools. Specifically, the following conclusions were drawn from the present study.

Though the school community considers one-to-five cooperative learning as an important means to achieve the educational goals, this opportunity was not properly utilized to implement cooperative learning in

the secondary schools due to lack of proper follow up and support from the concerned bodies. The school leadership and other stakeholders do not give training and continuous updates for the teachers and students concerning one-to-five grouping. Therefore, the concept, uses, ways and challenges of cooperative and the possible corrective measures for the challenges were not properly disseminated to the end users. Besides, the pro-social skills students required to working with others and the mechanisms to promote those skills remain untouched. For that reason, the proper practicality of one-to-five cooperative learning is under question in the schools assessed by this study.

The role of teachers in facilitating students is a key step to bring about the desired outcomes cooperative learning, but, the commitment of teachers is still far from what is supposed to be. Besides, the follow-up, feedback and support from the concerned bodies such as the principals and supervisors were not continuous, quick and timely. Yet, the study exposed that the text book was the only guide to decide at what activities students should discuss in the cooperative groups. The students, except for assignments, did not deal with activities in their off-class hours.

The issues of monitoring, recognition, promotion and experience sharing on best practices were totally neglected. On one hand, best practices of one to five groups in the schools were not recognized as way of encouragement. On the other hand, the knowledge and skill students gained from participation in one to-five-group were not properly promoted and discriminated to other one to five groups. Besides, the groups did not have opportunities to learn from the strengths and weaknesses of other groups.

List of Abbreviations

1. **TFGD1:** teachers participated in focus group discussion at Bambasi Secondary School
2. **TFGD2:** teachers participated in focus group discussion at Menge Secondary School
3. **TFGD3:** teachers participated in focus group discussion at Homosha Secondary School
4. **PI1:** the principal participated in the interview at Bambasi Secondary School
5. **PI2:** the principal participated in the interview at Menge Secondary School
6. **PI3:** the principal participated in the interview at Homosha Secondary School
7. **SFGD1:** students participated in focus group discussion at Bambasi Secondary School
8. **SFGD2:** students participated in focus group discussion at Menge Secondary School
9. **SFGD3:** students participated in focus group discussion at Homosha Secondary School
10. **SI1:** the supervisor interviewed from Bambasi Woreda/District Education Office
11. **SI2:** the supervisor interviewed from Menge Woreda/District Education Office
12. **SI3:** the supervisor interviewed from Homosha Woreda/District Education Office

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