

## Students' Perceptions About The Importance of Group Study in The Tertiary Educational Institutions of Bangladesh

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**Abstract:** This study is grounded in the need to shift from teacher-centered to student-centered learning approaches in tertiary education, particularly in Bangladesh, where collaborative learning remains underutilized. The research aims to examine students' perceptions of the importance of group study in supporting their academic development. A mixed-method design was employed, involving 80 first-year honors students from an Islamic college affiliated with Bangladesh National University. Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, observations, and focus group discussions to ensure comprehensive and reliable findings. The results reveal that most students perceive group study positively, as it enhances their understanding, engagement, communication skills, and overall academic performance. However, several challenges were identified, including unequal participation and limited organizational skills among some group members. These findings suggest that structured and well-managed group study can significantly improve student-centered learning practices. The study contributes to the development of collaborative learning strategies in higher education and highlights the importance of institutional support, effective facilitation, and student readiness in optimizing the benefits of group study for academic success.

**Keywords:** Group Study; Students' Academic Development; Student-Centered Learning

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## INTRODUCTION

Several tactics can be employed to enhance the education system, particularly in the context of student-centered learning (Ahmed & Kumalasari, 2023; da Silva Santiago et al., 2023; Nasiha et al., 2023). These strategies include peer observation (Arif et al., 2023; Rahman, 2023), group study (Darmayanti et al., 2023a; Pradana & Uthman, 2023), classroom observation (Mubarok et al., 2023; Zahroh, Rachmawati, et al., 2023), and group monitoring (Karim & Zoker, 2023; Winson et al., 2023), among others (Schabas, 2023). According to educational literature, a prevalent approach to learning in Bangladesh is teacher-centered, wherein students actively engaging in the learning process can acquire a more profound comprehension of the taught subject and effectively apply their knowledge in examinations and professional settings.

The process of enhancing and cultivating student knowledge can be achieved through the modification of individual student characteristics (Berry, 2022; Strijker, 2020). Numerous learning styles exist (Fang, 2020; Gutiérrez, 2017). Group study is often regarded as an effective approach students use to attain their academic objectives (Andersen, 2021; Liew, 2022). This study examines the significance of collaborative learning in attaining academic success in higher education. Group learning has emerged as a contemporary approach to enhancing teacher professional development and promoting student academic accomplishment (Forsyth, 2021). The primary subject of this essay pertains to the increasing need for group learning and the associated difficulties encountered when adopting this educational approach inside the tertiary education system of Bangladesh. This article examines group learning in Islamic education, specifically exploring its sequential stages and their connection to students' ongoing professional development and academic success.

The majority of students possess a preference for visual learning, but the predominant approach to teaching in college is centralized (Liu, 2021; van Langen, 2021). The teacher assumes the primary role in the classroom (Fauzan, Hasbiyallah, & Fikri, 2022; Ge, 2020; Hapriadi & Arifin, 2023; Sabukunze, 2023). According to the study conducted by RMfelder in 1988, The utilization of this particular pedagogical approach poses a hindrance to the academic performance of students, hence exerting a negative impact on subsequent generations. When the instructional methods employed in a classroom fail to align with students' preferred learning styles, they may experience boredom, disgust, and discomfort. Consequently, their level of engagement and attentiveness towards the subject matter diminishes, resulting in subpar performance on tests and final assessments. This phenomenon is a significant contributing element to the decline of the education system and the subsequent negative consequences that the nation may endure. Several potential factors can contribute to the development of a nation. According to RM Felder's study conducted in 1988, nonconformity might result in the complete expulsion of pupils from educational institutions such as schools and colleges.

The initial domain readily exhibits the adverse consequences stemming from incongruous learning styles. According to Charkins (1985), the significance of group learning can be comprehended through two economic factors. Charkins

presents two findings as follows: The negative correlation between teaching styles and learning styles is reflected in the inverse relationship with student accomplishment in the field of economics. Furthermore, there is a negative correlation between the disparity in teaching and learning styles and students' views towards economics. These two surveys demonstrate a favorable interest in the instructional and learning approaches employed within educational establishments. Educators must be aware of the disparity between their instructional methods and the diverse learning styles of their students. Subsequently, favorable outcomes will be realized regarding student advancement and national development.

The potential disparity between teaching and learning styles can be effectively addressed by implementing several learning models within the classroom setting. Learning can enhance the comprehension of concepts and optimize the efficacy of the learning model's outcomes when executed, such as cooperative learning.

Cooperative learning is often associated with the practice of dividing students into groups. Group learning in the classroom facilitates the teachers' ability to manage the learning process effectively, enhances their capacity to coordinate instructional activities, and enables them to assess students' aptitude for collaborative teamwork. This statement underscores the merits of cooperative learning as a pedagogical approach, wherein students collaborate and collectively address challenges, fostering a conducive environment for enhancing academic performance. Cooperative learning is an instructional approach wherein students collaborate to address problems that foster their development as competent and productive members of society, enhancing their potential as valuable human capital for the nation. (Slavin, 1991) Group formation plays a pivotal role in this particular style, as it emerges as the foremost influential component facilitating collaborative problem-solving among students. This particular research methodology may benefit from placing greater emphasis on positive indicators of student success. For instance, it may consider incorporating extensive self-selection from groups instead of using random selection without providing a rationale for this approach (1995). According to his assertion, this particular methodology is expected to influence pupils' academic performance significantly.

Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that the attainment of academic success among students in a group learning setting hinges upon the individual comprehension of assigned tasks by each member. An important aspect to consider in this assignment pertains to the selection or formation of groups. Group formation is a subject that elicits both positive and negative assertions, including those about self-formation and random selection. Nevertheless, the study above by Kayes (2005) suggests that utilizing blended learning styles might significantly enhance students' academic performance. Empirical evidence indicates that establishing heterogeneous groupings yields superior outcomes compared to homogeneous ones. In his study, Wolfe (1977) investigated both homogeneous and heterogeneous groups (Hasanah, In'am, et al., 2022; Vidyastuti et al., 2018). Mixed learning styles encompass the potential for

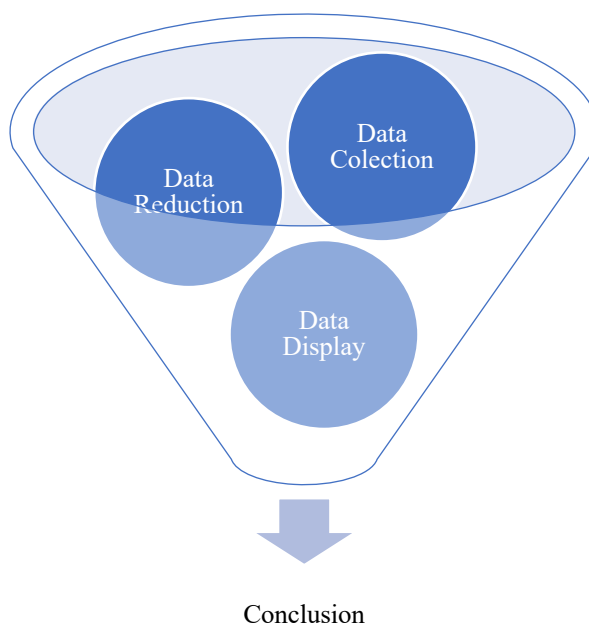
enhanced academic achievement achieved through collaborative group work or individual study. According to scholarly researchers, heterogeneous group learning has been found to offer several advantages over homogeneous group learning. Heterogeneous group learning involves including individuals with diverse backgrounds, skills, and abilities, resulting in a rich and dynamic learning environment. This approach emphasizes the formulation of group work that incorporates several perspectives and fosters the achievement of meaningful goals (Wolfe, 1977). In conclusion, a study by Halstead (2002) examined the degree of enthusiasm towards collaborative learning among university students and compared it to the level of interest observed among the research community (Astuti et al., 2023; Sugianto et al., 2017).

Numerous scholarly investigations have explored the phenomenon of group learning and its relationship to learning styles within the context of cooperative learning. This study examines the various learning styles exhibited by students in the context of cooperative learning. Additionally, it explores the behaviors that manifest during discussion activities, among other related aspects. This study aims to examine the efficacy of group talks in cooperative learning, specifically focusing on groups comprising individuals with diverse learning styles. What is the respective function of each student in the conversation, and what are the assigned tasks of each member within the group?

Based on the background information above, the objective of this study is to ascertain the significance of collaborative learning within the context of Islamic higher education. This study examines students' perceptions of the significance of collaborative learning. The objective of this study is to investigate the implementation of various group learning formats in the tertiary education system of Bangladesh, using insights from existing literature. The primary objective of this study is to investigate the significance of group learning in the context of student learning. The study examines the perspectives of students regarding the practice of group learning. The present study aims to investigate the prevailing group study practices among students, as well as identify the primary component that significantly contributes to the effectiveness of group learning in the context of student education.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

The significance of research methodology cannot be overstated, as it constitutes a fundamental component of any research endeavor. The outcomes and discoveries of research are contingent upon the chosen research methodology (Abidin et al., 2023; Darmayanti et al., 2023b). This article explores the utilization of both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. The study's research strategy is illustrated in Figure 1.



**Figure 1. methodology employed in this study (Hasanah, Syaifuddin, et al., 2022)**

The research design depicted in Figure 1 is derived from the specific objectives and demands of this study. The researcher employed a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies to ascertain the efficacy of group learning. Furthermore, it is essential to consider the perceptions of pupils. In this context, researchers have opted for both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. Conversely, to uphold the integrity of the study findings, it is imperative to gather data that is both legitimate and dependable, hence enhancing the overall efficacy of the piece.

Moreover, the study's demographic and sampling methods comprised a sample of four-year honors students attending Islamic colleges affiliated with Bangladesh National University. The researcher opted to include individuals enrolled in the first-year session of the academic year 2018-2019. Data was obtained from a sample of 80 first-year students by the researchers. The data was gathered during scheduled instructional periods, with the active and voluntary participation of all pupils.

Next, let us get into the topic of research instruments. The present study utilizes three research instruments, namely questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions, and observations, which are commonly employed in both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. Finally, the data will be analyzed using data collection via a questionnaire. A total of 80 students responded to the questions. The responses to the inquiries exhibit variability among individual students (Fikri et al., 2023).

## **RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The researcher witnessed five classes within the Department of Religious Sciences, led by a faculty member at an Islamic college. Upon careful inspection, the researcher recognized that the group work was executed proficiently. The engagement of all pupils in the discourse and articulating their viewpoints

regarding the designated subject matter is facilitated by the teacher assuming the role of a moderator. The researcher also observed that certain challenges arose due to the implementation of group work in religious studies courses. The significance of class observation lies in the student's inclination toward engaging in collaborative activities within their educational setting. In addition to the good aspects, it is important to acknowledge certain unfavorable occurrences in the classroom setting (Chye, 2020; Xie, 2021). Specifically, it has been seen that pupils lacking organizational skills may exhibit disruptive behavior, thereby impeding the progress of collaborative group work. Nevertheless, the researcher's observations indicated that most pupils were keenly interested in engaging actively in group tasks.

The researcher collected data from his coworkers through conducting interviews. The participants responded to the researchers by asserting that within the contemporary academic landscape, collaborative work holds paramount significance in fostering students' academic growth. One of his colleagues made a remark indicating that students have the potential to cultivate their latent abilities through cognitive readiness. Based on empirical data (Nasrullah, 2020), academics have established that engaging in collaborative group work within academic settings yields tangible improvements in academic success and fosters positive growth in students' total skill development (Williams, 2021; Zahroh, Maghfiroh, et al., 2023).

Another discovery made was that students made attempts to articulate their perspectives to comprehend the central issue (Hidaka, 2020; Louisiana, 2020), although they needed a greater level of familiarity with the discourse. Consequently, they needed to engage in further practice to surmount the issue. The researcher conducted interviews to get data from one of their teachers, recognizing the significance of group work. The teacher, in agreement with the researcher, implemented a group presentation system in their classroom.

Through observations and focus group talks, the researcher has acquired pertinent material that may serve as a persuasive tool to advocate for the implementation or authorization of group work across all educational institutions (Beilharz, 2021; Saqr, 2020). The implementation of effective group work has the potential to enhance the academic outcomes of students at the postsecondary level. Based on the data gathered from students and instructors within my department, it was unanimously observed that teachers and students willingly embraced the implementation of collaborative group work methodologies inside their respective classrooms. It is widely held that implementing group work is the most effective approach for fostering academic outcomes. Moreover, it is argued that cultivating academic accomplishment in religious studies classes is contingent upon constructive engagement in group work activities.

The students enrolled in my religious studies course had a high level of enthusiasm toward engaging in the interview process, as it marked their inaugural experience with such a task. Consequently, they openly and articulately conveyed their perspectives. I analyzed the participants' affective states and nonverbal cues on their expressed desire for interviews to be

incorporated into the curriculum at the onset of the course to facilitate the integration of group work within the classroom setting. Upon informing them of the scheduled interview time, they exhibited a favorable disposition toward participating in the interview session. During the interview process, data is gathered using questionnaires. This method allows for eliciting responses about group work, enabling the identification of unexpected expressions and interests. Consequently, participants are consistently motivated to engage in these interviews actively.

The majority of my students have a high level of obedience, yet there are a few who consistently arrive late or are frequently missing from class. Consequently, these kids exhibit a reduced level of engagement and enthusiasm towards group work activities. The primary outcome of my project is that a significant number of students have a strong inclination toward engaging in collaborative group work. In light of a series of unfavorable encounters, it became apparent to me, via examining data derived from focus groups and interviews conducted with students and colleagues, that there are numerous constructive approaches to implementing group work within the context of my religious studies courses. Organizing post-group presentations and awarding prizes to the most outstanding groups and presenters can be a highly productive strategy for sustaining the favorable momentum of collaborative endeavors. In the context of my religious studies course, students have a keen interest in the collaborative aspects of the curriculum (Chogani, 2020; Ruokonen & Ruismäki, 2016). This assertion is derived from my empirical observations of the fifth class observations conducted by my colleagues.

By systematically gathering empirical evidence that substantiates my ability to accomplish the assigned assignment in its entirety successfully. According to a colleague, the incorporation of group work in religious studies programs is expected to yield a good impact on both individual student outcomes and institutional performance (Kantor, 2019; Rauf, 2023). The study of religious science holds significant importance in Bangladesh, as it provides a foundation for societal development. Collaborative efforts, such as group work, enable the collection and exchange of data and information among individuals, thereby contributing to the nation's advancement. One of the pupils articulated his perspectives in a manner reminiscent of. Based on the discourse, it may be posited that collaborative efforts are among the most effective means to foster scholastic accomplishments. Furthermore, the total outcome is expected to be satisfactory.

This study proposes several recommendations aimed at enhancing students' academic advancement in the field of religious studies (Cholil, 2022; Daheri, 2023; Haris & Cahyadi, 2021). College administrators must recognize the favorable influence of collaborative assignments on students' academic performance, fostering meaningful and constructive outcomes. To enhance collaborative efforts within the classroom setting, it is imperative to possess proficient time management skills. The consideration of infrastructure development is crucial. It is vital to enhance students' awareness to improve their proficiency in group work methodologies. The cultivation of a positive mindset

is crucial for facilitating enhanced academic development. It is imperative for educators across many disciplines to collectively provide their perspectives on the principles and strategies that underpin successful and efficient collaborative endeavors. The visibility of true academic achievement might be realized when professors collaborate toward its attainment.

The college's principal holds a significant role as a key stakeholder in facilitating group work within my religious studies class (Hariyadi et al., 2023; Safitri et al., 2022; Widiyantari et al., 2022). Therefore, the positive endorsement of the principal is expected to enhance the effectiveness of this endeavor. In the realm of higher education, it is widely recognized that the principal, second only to the governing body in non-governmental institutions, holds significant authority to implement initiatives aimed at enhancing the educational experience of students inside their respective institutions.

The governing body constitutes an integral component of a non-governmental organization. The potential to alter the entire situation is inherent in their meetings (Laila et al., 2023; Manasikana et al., 2023). Therefore, to initiate the implementation of this particular learning method, it is imperative to persuade the governing body. Institutions can effectively utilize group study if they recognize its necessity. This intervention is expected to facilitate pupils in attaining their academic outcomes.

The role of government in shaping the education system of any nation is a vital determinant. If individuals embrace this particular approach to learning within a supportive environment, the outcomes will become evident. Religious political parties can potentially exert a constructive influence on a nation. Similar to other nations, Bangladesh is expected to see favorable outcomes with the implementation of efficient collaborative efforts. The students within my academic cohort are keenly interested in acquiring knowledge using novel pedagogical approaches, such as collaborative group work. Upon receiving the interview notification, individuals displayed a strong inclination to actively engage in responding to the interview questions. Ultimately, the individuals were able to effectively articulate their perspectives on the implementation of collaborative methodologies within the context of religious studies courses. The user's interests provide me with valuable support in effectively accomplishing the job.

## **CONCLUSION**

In higher education, group work is crucial. Bangladeshi higher education needs group effort. I asked students and teachers about group work's benefits in religious studies class. I showed them that group work boosts student progress. I succeed at work. Many students wish to change their study habits with group work. They liked this strategy and helped me. Conclude that implementing this system will boost student academic performance. Students, instructors, and administration must collaborate for this effective strategy. All parties working together yields good results. Since this takes time, it will work in other classes if I can do it in religious studies. Finally, this project will assist in improving my religious studies lessons for better academic results. Students can easily gather

enough data for the final assignment with research questions. College officials took this initiative positively, helping me get my pupils clear and positive results for higher academic performance. This learning technique should be promoted for academic success. The project concludes that group study is one of the best approaches to improving students' academic performance. All stakeholders must collaborate to attain this goal. Can attain our aims and focus on national development by working together.

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