
**TEACHERS' COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGIES AND
LEARNERS' DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL SKILL**

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the teachers' cooperative learning strategies and the status of learners' development of social skill in the Second Congressional District of Iloilo, Philippines, for the School Year 2025-2026. The respondents were the 172 randomly selected pre-school teachers from the population of 301. They were classified according to their age, educational attainment, position, length of service, and school size. This study utilized descriptive research. The data-gathering instrument was developed by the researcher based on theories and literature. This was subjected to a validation and reliability test and was found valid and reliable. Frequency count, percentage, mean, t-Test, Analysis of Variance (F-test), and Single Regression Analysis were used in interpreting the data gathered. The data collected from this study were tallied and analyzed through the Special Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Software. The level of significance was set at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that the teachers were using peer learning to foster inclusivity and social growth of learners, and emphasized structured peer interaction and social interdependence. They also assessed that their learners' social skills were in advanced development. Finally, the cooperative learning strategies of teachers significantly influenced the development of social skills among their learners.

KEYWORDS: cooperative learning strategies, learners' social skill.**INTRODUCTION**

Early childhood is a critical stage for cultivating social skills such as cooperation, sharing, communication, empathy, and conflict resolution, skills essential for lifelong learning and interpersonal functioning. Educators play a key role in this developmental phase by designing experiences that foster social interaction among preschool learners. Cooperative learning

strategies, where children work collaboratively in small, structured groups to achieve shared goals, have been shown to support both academic and social development. These strategies promote active peer interaction, positive interdependence, and individual accountability, creating environments conducive to social skills acquisition.

According to Pangantihon et al. (2024), in their study on cooperative learning in primary pupils in Cagayan de Oro City, strategies such as peer support were moderately positively correlated with overall student well-being

A 2024 case study by Mingoa et al., based at De La Salle University, which examined Filipino preschool teachers' understanding and promotion of social-emotional competencies, including resilience in children aged 4–6, underlined teachers' central role in fostering social-emotional growth.

Despite the recognized benefits of cooperative learning, limited research has explored its application in preschool settings, particularly in the Philippine context. Social skills are essential in early childhood development, and teachers play a key role in nurturing them through effective strategies like cooperative learning. While widely used in education, the impact of these strategies on preschoolers' social development remains underexplored, especially in the Second Congressional District of Iloilo.

In the Second Congressional District of Iloilo, there is a lack of localized studies examining how teachers implement these strategies and whether they effectively enhance children's social behaviors, such as cooperation, empathy, and communication. Furthermore, current research rarely includes observable learner outcomes, relying mostly on teacher reports. The present investigation aims to examine how cooperative learning strategies relate to the social skills of preschool learners, providing insights that can improve teaching practices and early childhood programs in the local context.

This study, therefore, aims to address these gaps by investigating the relationship between cooperative learning strategies and the development of social skills among preschool learners in this specific setting.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to determine the teachers' cooperative learning strategies and learners' development of social skills in the Second Congressional District, Province of Iloilo, Philippines, for the School Year 2025-2026.

Specifically, the study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What are the teachers' cooperative learning strategies when taken as a whole and when classified according to age, educational attainment, position, length of service, and school size?
2. What is the status of learners' development of social skills as assessed by the respondents when taken as a whole and when classified according to age, educational attainment, position, length of service, and school size?
3. Are there significant differences in the teachers' cooperative learning strategies when classified according to age, educational attainment, position, length of service, and school size?
4. Are there significant differences in the status of learners' development of social skills as assessed by the respondents when classified according to age, educational attainment, position, length of service, and school size?
5. Do the teachers' cooperative learning strategies significantly influence learners' development of social skills?

METHODS

The study utilized a descriptive research design to determine the teachers' cooperative learning strategies and the development of social skills among preschool learners in the Second Congressional District of Iloilo, Philippines, during the School Year 2025–2026. The respondents consisted of 172 randomly selected preschool teachers from a total population of 301 teachers across different municipalities in the district, classified according to age, educational attainment, position, length of service, and school size. A researcher-made questionnaire composed of three parts was used to gather data on respondents' profiles, teachers' cooperative learning strategies, and the development of preschool learners' social skills. Mean ranges and descriptive interpretations were employed to assess the extent of cooperative learning strategies and the level of learners' social skill development. The instrument underwent validation through expert evaluation and reliability testing, yielding Cronbach alpha values of .842 for cooperative learning strategies and .937 for social skill development, indicating that the questionnaire was reliable. Data gathering was conducted after securing permissions from school authorities, and the responses were encoded, tabulated, and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Statistical tools such as frequency count, percentage, mean, t-test, analysis of variance (ANOVA), and single regression analysis were utilized to analyze the data and determine significant differences and influence among the variables studied.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Teachers' cooperative learning strategies, when taken as a whole

Table 1 presents the teachers' cooperative learning strategies when taken as a whole. The results revealed that the teachers employed all items in the data-gathering instrument. The cooperative learning strategy, which ranks first, was used to foster the inclusivity and social-emotional growth of learners (2.56). This was followed by assigning learners to work in small, diverse groups, and observing and reinforcing positive group behavior (2.54). The learning strategy that ranks the least, although still mostly employed by teachers, was encouraging peer tutoring or mentoring among learners (M=2.46). This means that the teachers emphasized structured peer interaction and social interdependence.

This is supported by the findings of Al-Mehsin, S. A. (2022), in the study on "Effectiveness of Cooperative Learning Strategies in Developing Social Skills among Kindergarten Children" which found that significant improvements in cooperation, assertiveness, and impulse control among participants were observed. Students exhibited more frequent helping behaviors, improved classroom participation, and better peer conflict resolution. Teachers reported a more inclusive and dynamic classroom environment. The results validate cooperative learning as an effective tool for fostering foundational social competencies in early childhood education.

Table 1. Teachers' cooperative learning strategies, when taken as a whole.

As a teacher, I....	Mean	Description	Rank
Use peer learning to foster inclusivity and social-emotional growth.	2.56	Mostly employed	1
Assign learners to work in small, diverse groups.	2.54	Mostly employed	2.5
Observe and reinforce positive group behaviors (e.g., sharing, turn-taking).	2.54	Mostly employed	2.5
Assess group performance and provide feedback.	2.53	Mostly employed	4
Use structured cooperative learning activities (e.g., Jigsaw, Think-Pair-Share).	2.52	Mostly employed	6
Rotate group members regularly to encourage peer interaction.	2.52	Mostly employed	6
Integrate group dynamics into both academic and non-academic tasks.	2.52	Mostly employed	6
Teach learners how to work with others effectively.	2.51	Mostly employed	8
Assign specific roles to each group member during tasks.	2.50	Mostly employed	9.5
Adapt group activities to fit learners' individual needs.	2.50	Mostly	9.5

		employed	
Allow time for learners to reflect on their group experience	2.49	Mostly employed	12
Promote equal participation from all group members.	2.49	Mostly employed	12
Provide clear goals and tasks for each group activity.	2.49	Mostly employed	12
Monitor group dynamics and offer guidance when necessary.	2.47	Mostly employed	14
Encourage peer tutoring or mentoring among learners.	2.46	Mostly employed	15

Legend: 2.34 – 3.00 Mostly employed (ME) 1.67-2.33 Employed (E) 1.00 -1.66 Least employed (LE).

Table 2 presents the teachers' cooperative learning strategies when classified according to age, educational attainment, position, length of service, and school size. The results revealed that across variables, the preschool teachers mostly employed the cooperative learning strategies identified in the data-gathering instrument. This means that regardless of the classifications, the teachers emphasized structured peer interaction and social interdependence.

Table 2. Teachers' cooperative learning strategies, when classified according to age, educational attainment, position, length of service, and school size.

Variables		Mean	Description
Age	35 & below	2.51	Mostly employed
	36 & above	2.50	Mostly employed
Educational Attainment	Bachelor	2.42	Mostly employed
	Masters	2.62	Mostly employed
Position	Teacher 1-III	2.41	Mostly employed
	Master 1-11	2.62	Mostly employed
Length of Service	11 years & up	2.52	Mostly employed
	1 to years	2.50	Mostly employed
School Size	Small	2.51	Mostly employed
	Medium	2.52	Mostly employed
	Large	2.50	Mostly employed

Legend: 2.34 – 3.00 Mostly employed (ME) 1.67-2.33 Employed (E) 1.00 -1.66 Least employed (LE)

Learners' development of social skills, as assessed by the respondents, when taken as a whole

Table 3 presents the learners' development of social skills as assessed by the respondents when taken as a whole. The results revealed that the teachers assessed the learners' social skill was in *advanced development* (M=4.22). This means that the learners demonstrate very strong and consistent development in their social skills. They assessed that the learners could initiate conversations with peers and adults (M=4.34). They also assist their classmates and teachers in doing classroom tasks (M=4.31). They also offered help to classmates when needed and resolved conflicts with peers using words (M=4.27). A recent study by Huifang Li et al. (2025) found that cooperative learning strategies significantly improved students' motivation to learn while reducing feelings of alienation in classroom settings. The study emphasized that active collaboration encourages learners to participate more confidently and meaningfully.

Table 3. Learners' Development of Social Skills as assessed by the respondents when taken as a whole.

As a teacher, my learners'...	Mean	Description
Initiate conversations with peers and adults.	4.34	Advanced development
Assist classmates and teachers in doing classroom tasks.	4.31	Advanced development
Offer help to classmates when needed.	4.27	Advanced development
Resolve conflicts with peers using words.	4.27	Advanced development
Talk politely.	4.24	Advanced development
Wait patiently for their turn in games or conversations.	4.24	Advanced development
Follow classroom rules and routines consistently.	4.23	Advanced development
Invite peers to join in play or classroom activities.	4.23	Advanced development
Take turns without being reminded.	4.22	Advanced development
Share toys or materials during group activities.	4.22	Advanced development
Accept guidance or correction from the teacher without resistance.	4.20	Adequate development
Share instructional materials during class activities.	4.18	Adequate development
Show empathy toward peers who are upset or hurt.	4.14	Adequate development
Listen attentively when others are speaking.	4.12	Adequate development

Cooperate during group tasks or play.	4.10	Adequate development
Total	4.22	Advanced development

Legend: 4.21-5.00 Advanced Development (AD) 3.41-4.20 Adequate Development (AD) 2.61-3.40 Developing (D) 1.81-2.60 Emerging (E) 1.00 – 1.80 Needs improvement (NI)

Table 4 presents the learners' development of social skills as assessed by the respondents when classified according to age, educational attainment, position, length of service, and school size. The results revealed that across classifications of the respondents, they assessed that the learners had advanced development of social skills. This means that the learners demonstrate very strong and consistent development in their social skills. Teachers with master's degrees had the highest mean ($M=4.40$), followed by Master Teacher 1-II positions ($M=4.39$).

The results can be explained by the findings in the study of Ilga et al. (2023), which evaluated the effect of interactive educational games on preschoolers' development of social skills, including cooperation, empathy, and verbal communication. Results showed that participants in the experimental group exhibited significantly higher levels of social competence compared to those in the control group ($p < 0.01$). Observational data and teacher assessments confirmed improvements in prosocial behaviors such as turn-taking, helping peers, and expressing emotions appropriately, thereby highlighting the effectiveness of play-based interventions in early childhood education.

Likewise, Loy et al. (2024) conducted a comprehensive literature review analyzing how educational toy design contributes to the development of social skills among preschool children. Their review synthesized findings from multiple studies and identified key toy characteristics, such as role-play elements, group-based functionality, and socio-interactive prompts, that support the cultivation of empathy, cooperation, and shared problem-solving.

Table 4. Learners' development of social skills as assessed by the respondents when classified according to age, educational attainment, position, length of service, and school size.

Variables		Mean	Description
Age	35 & below	4.23	Advanced development
	36 & above	4.21	Advanced development
Educational Attainment	Bachelor	4.07	Adequate development
	Masters	4.40	Advanced development
Position	Teacher 1-III	4.06	Adequate development
	Master Teacher 1-11	4.39	Advanced development
Length of Service	11 years & up	4.23	Advanced development
	1 to years	4.21	Advanced development
School Size	Small	4.23	Advanced development
	Medium	4.23	Advanced development
	Large	4.20	Advanced development

Legend: 4.21-5.00 Advanced Development (AD) 3.41-4.20 Adequate Development (AD) 2.61-3.40 Developing (D) 1.81-2.60 Emerging (E) 1.00 – 1.80 Needs improvement (NI)

Significant Differences in teachers' cooperative learning strategies when classified according to age, educational attainment, position, length of service, and school size

Table 5 presents the significant differences in the teachers' cooperative learning strategies when classified according to age, educational attainment, position, and length of service. The results revealed that significant differences existed in the teachers' cooperative learning strategies when classified according to educational attainment ($t=6.512, p=.000$), and position ($t=5.315, p=.000$). Therefore, the hypothesis that there are no significant differences in teachers' cooperative learning strategies when classified according to educational attainment and position is rejected. This means that the cooperative learning strategies used by teachers differed when their educational attainment and position were considered. Those with master's degrees and master's teacher I-II positions had attained a higher level of education and training, which may have equipped them with various strategies in teaching. This made a difference in their choice of cooperative learning strategies.

However, no significant differences were noted in the cooperative learning strategies of teachers when classified according to age ($t=1.259, p=0.713$), and length of service ($t=1.255, p=0.631$). Therefore, the hypothesis that there are no significant differences in the cooperative learning strategies of teachers when classified according to age and length of service was not rejected. This means that the cooperative learning strategies of teachers were similar when their age and length of service were considered.

Recent studies show that cooperative learning significantly enhances academic performance. Shifang Tang and colleagues (2021) conducted a research synthesis on cooperative, collaborative, and peer-tutoring strategies among elementary English learners and found that cooperative learning improved reading comprehension, reading fluency, and phonemic awareness. Their findings suggest that structured peer interaction strengthens both literacy and academic outcomes.

Table 5. Differences in Teachers' Cooperative Learning Strategies when classified according to age, educational attainment, position, and length of service.

Variables		mean	t-value	p-value	remarks
Age	35 & below	2.51	1.259	0.713	Not significant
	36 & above	2.50			
Educational Attainment	Bachelor	2.42	6.512	0.000	Significant
	Masters	2.62			
Position	Teacher 1-III	2.41	5.315	0.000	Significant
	Master 1-11	2.62			
Length of Service	11 years & up	2.52	1.255	0.631	Not significant
	1 to years	2.50			

Table 6 presents the significant differences in the teachers' cooperative learning strategies when classified according to school size. The result showed that there were no significant differences in the teachers' cooperative learning strategies when classified according to school size ($F=0.159$, $p=0.853$). Therefore, the hypothesis that there are no significant differences in the teachers' cooperative learning strategies when classified according to school size was not rejected. This means that the cooperative learning strategies of teachers did not differ when their school size was considered. Regardless of the school size, be it small, medium, or large, the cooperative learning strategies of teachers were similar.

Table 6. Differences in the teachers' cooperative learning strategies when classified according to school size.

Source of Variation	Sum Squares	df	Mean Square	F value	p-value	Remarks
Between Groups	0.003	2	0.001	0.159	0.853	Not significant
Within Groups	0.858	104	0.008			
Total	0.861	106				

Significant differences in the learners' development of social skill as assessed by teachers when classified according to age, educational attainment, position, length of service, and school size

Table 7 presents the significant differences in the learners' development of social skills as assessed by the respondents when classified according to age, educational attainment, position, and length of service. The results showed that there were significant differences in the learners' development of social skill as assessed by the respondents when classified according to educational attainment ($t=5.298$, $p=.000$), and position ($t=9.635$, $p=.000$). Therefore, the null hypothesis that there are no significant differences in the learners' development of social skill as assessed by the respondents when classified according to educational attainment and position was rejected. This means that the assessments of teachers on the development of learners' social skills vary significantly when their educational attainment and position are considered.

However, there were no significant differences in the learners' development of social skills as assessed by the respondents when classified according to school age ($t=1.452$, $p=0.572$), and length of service ($t=1.242$, $p=0.609$). Therefore, the null hypothesis that there are no significant differences in the learners' development of social skills as assessed by the respondents when classified according to age and length of service was not rejected. This means that the assessments of teachers on the development of learners' social skills did not vary significantly or were similar regardless of these classifications.

Table 7. Differences in the learners' development of social skills as assessed by the respondents, when classified according to age, educational attainment, position, and length of service

Profile		mean	t-value	p-value	remarks
Age	35 & below	4.23	1.452	0.572	Not significant
	36 & above	4.21			
Educational Attainment	Bachelor	4.07	5.298	0.000	Significant
	Masters	4.40			
Position	Teacher 1-III	4.06	9.635	0.000	Significant
	Master 1-11	4.39			
Length of Service	11 years & up	4.23	1.242	0.609	Not significant
	1 to years	4.21			

Table 8 presents significant differences in learners' development of social skills, as assessed by respondents, when classified by school size. The results showed no significant differences in learners' development of social skills, as assessed by the respondents, when classified by

school size ($F=0.119$, $p=0.888$). Therefore, the hypothesis that there are no significant differences in the learners' development of social skills as assessed by the respondents when classified according to school size was not rejected.

This means that teachers' assessments of the development of learners' social skills were similar regardless of whether they belonged to small, medium, or large schools. Assessment is an internal process that would require cognitive evaluation of something that may not be determined by the size of the school where the teachers are teaching.

Table 8. Differences in the learners' development of social skills as assessed by the respondents when classified according to school size.

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	p-value	Remarks
Between Groups	0.006	2	0.003	0.119	0.888	Not significant
Within Groups	2.598	104	0.025			
Total	2.604	106				

Significant influence of teachers' cooperative learning strategies on the learners' development of social skills

Table 9 shows the significant influence of the teachers' cooperative learning strategies on learners' development of social skills. Results of the multiple regression on the teachers' cooperative learning skill as predictor variables and learners' development of social skill as independent variable indicate an R^2 of .878, implying that 87% of the variation in learners' development of social skill is explained by the teachers' cooperative learning strategies. The remaining 13% can be attributed to other factors, such as home environment and learner variables.

As shown in Table 9, the Beta value for the teachers' cooperative learning strategies is less than the p-value ($\beta = 1.608$, $p = .000 > .05$). This indicates that the cooperative learning strategies of teachers significantly influence the learners' development of social skills. Hence, the null hypothesis that teachers' cooperative learning strategies do not significantly influence learners' development of social skills is rejected.

This result confirms the findings in the study of Al-Mehsin, S. A. (2022), which revealed statistically significant improvements in cooperation, assertiveness, and impulse control among participants exposed to cooperative learning. Students exhibited more frequent helping behaviors, improved classroom participation, and better peer conflict resolution.

Teachers reported a more inclusive and dynamic classroom environment. The results validate cooperative learning as an effective tool for fostering foundational social competencies in early childhood education.

Table 9. Significant influence of teachers' cooperative learning strategies on the learners' development of social skill.

Variable	r	r ²	F	sig	SEB	Beta	t	sig
Cooperative Learning Strategies	0.937	0.878	754.76	0.000	0.059	1.608	27.473	0.000

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, the following conclusions are formulated:

1. The preschool teachers in the Second Congressional District, Province of Iloilo, emphasized structured peer interaction and social interdependence in their classroom strategies.
2. The teachers assessed that the learners demonstrate very strong and consistent development in their social skills.
3. The teachers' cooperative learning strategies vary when their educational attainment and position are considered. However, when their age, length of service, and school size were considered, their cooperative learning strategies did not differ.
4. The assessments of teachers of their learners' development of social skills are different when their educational attainment and position are considered. However, their assessments are the same when their age, length of service, and school size are looked into.
5. The cooperative learning strategies employed by teachers significantly influence the development of their learners' social skills.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were formulated based on the findings of the study:

Department of Education (DepEd) Officials may formulate national and regional policies that would develop and refine existing policies related to early childhood education, emphasizing the integration of cooperative learning strategies that promote holistic learner development.

Curriculum Planners may design learner-centered and socially enriching preschool curricula that embed cooperative learning as a fundamental approach to skill development.

School Heads may design programs and activities that will support the implementation of effective teaching strategies through monitoring, coaching, and providing relevant in-service training for preschool teachers.

Preschool Teachers can refer to the findings as a guide to employ practical strategies to enhance social interaction among learners and create a classroom environment that promotes cooperation, inclusivity, and social-emotional growth.

Parents may be encouraged to reinforce cooperative behavior at home and support school programs that cultivate the social skills of their children. They can start by exposing their children to cooperative activities at home and in the community.

Learners may be encouraged by helping them interact positively with peers and develop essential interpersonal skills early on.

The Researcher may inform DepEd officials of the findings of this study and can disseminate the same to other stakeholders with the intent of contributing to the field of early childhood education and child development.

Future Researchers may refer to the findings of this study as a source of related literature in future research endeavors. They may replicate the study in other school settings, including variables such as home and community involvement.

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