

Students' Perception of Using Group Work Method in English Class: A Gender-Based Comparative Study at a Senior High School in North Minahasa

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Abstract: This study investigated students' perceptions of the benefits of group work in English classes, their level of preference for this learning method, and how frequently teachers apply it during instruction. It also examined whether students' perceptions differ significantly based on gender. A descriptive and comparative research design was employed, using a questionnaire adapted from Daba et al (2017), as well as Hung and Mai (2020). A convenience sampling technique was used to select 77 eleventh-grade students (31 male and 46 female) from a private high school in North Minahasa, Indonesia. The findings indicate that students generally view group work positively and recognize its benefits in English learning. In addition, students reported a high preference for using group work in class, and teachers were found to implement the method at a high level. The study also revealed a significant gender difference: male students showed a stronger preference for group work and participated more actively than female students. This difference was statistically significant ($t(75) = -3.67, p < .001$) and represented a medium-to-large effect (Cohen's $d = 0.78$). Based on these results, teachers are encouraged to consider gender-related participation patterns when applying group work strategies. Practically, the findings suggest that teachers should adopt gender-responsive grouping practices, such as balanced role assignment and structured turn-taking, so that both male and female students participate and benefit equally from collaborative English learning. Future research is recommended to explore additional factors influencing group work effectiveness and its impact on students' English proficiency.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the essential things in the learning process is how students can be active in class. For that reason, the method used by the teacher is one of the important things in determining the success of a learning process (Lestari, 2017). One of the methods is group work which is believed to help students be active in the learning process. As Lanka and Demise (2020) claimed, group work can strengthen the interaction of students. Group work can also help students to be brave in expressing their opinions. As Abdullah (2016) stated, group work provides opportunities for each student to be involved in all activities, including speaking. Furthermore, nowadays, schools and academic institutions have used group work as a learning method. This is also supported by Al-Masri (2018) in his research which stated that until now, group work method is crucial, and many schools use it. This is because it

provides numerous benefits for the learning process, and this method can also be used in English classes. Moreover, Hung and Mai (2020) also added that students positively respond to group work. Therefore, it can be concluded that group work is a widely used method because it is believed to make students more active in the learning process.

Group work is one of the learning methods that can encourage students to succeed in learning. However, this learning method has various drawbacks, primarily in English class. To begin with, in implementing group work in English classes, it was found that there was a lack of participation, contribution and reduced focus on learning (Chiriac, 2014). As found by Afriyani and Solusia (2022) in the tenth-grade English class of SMAN 10 Padang, during the implementation of the group work method, there were still students who did not actively participate in the group. In addition, Mallipa (2018) in his research at the University of Papua showed that some students did not want to participate in group work. Similarly, Situmorang (2021) in his study at SMA 17 August 1945 found that some students did not participate in group work, proving to be the most significant obstacle in the implementation of group work method. Furthermore, when making observations at the school, the researchers found out that the group work method was already implemented in English classes. In English learning activities, when the group work method was implemented, it was found that most students were active throughout the learning process. However, some students did not follow the lesson well. In fact, some did not participate or discuss with their other friends, and some just kept quiet and did nothing. Therefore, lack of participation seems to be a major problem when the group work method is implemented in the class.

The results of previous studies show that group work can facilitate or hinder the learning process. For this reason, the researchers were interested in conducting this study to find out students' perceptions of the use of group work in English classes. The researcher was intrigued to do this research at a private high school in North Minahasa because group work has been implemented there. In addition, the researcher was interested in whether there is a significant difference in students' perceptions of group work in English class by gender, since previous researchers obtained different results. It was deemed essential to conduct this study because previous studies were done at the university level and high school levels outside of North Minahasa. The urgency of this study lies in the persistent classroom problem of unequal participation during group work despite its widespread use; understanding how students themselves perceive the method, and whether these perceptions differ by gender, is a necessary first step toward addressing that problem. The novelty of the present study is therefore twofold. First, it examines three perception dimensions together, namely the benefits of, preference for, and teacher implementation of group work, within a single under-researched setting (a senior high school in North Minahasa). Second, whereas prior gender-based studies report inconsistent findings, this study contributes new comparative evidence on gender differences in perceptions of group work in an Indonesian EFL context, which has rarely been investigated.

This study aimed to determine the students' perceptions of the benefits of the group work method in English class, the level of students' preference for the group work method, and the level of the teacher's implementation of the group work method. In addition, this study also aimed to determine whether there is a significant difference in students' perception of using group work based on gender. The research questions of this study are: What is the students' perception of the benefits of the group work method in English class? What is the level of students' preference for the group work method? What is the level of teachers' implementation of the group work method? Is there any

significant difference in students' perception of using the group work method in English class based on gender?

The results of this study are expected to provide benefits to readers. The first is for students. This research is expected to provide information for students to increase their active participation to learn English in a class by using group work activities where they can work together with their friends. Secondly, this research is expected to add insights and information for teachers regarding students' perceptions of using group work in English classes so that they can determine the appropriate activities for students. Third, this research is expected to contribute valuable insights and information specifically for the school to become a guideline for improving students learning in class using the group work method. Then fourth, this research is expected to provide useful information for other researchers interested in conducting similar research. Fifth, for the researcher herself, it is hoped that this research can help the researcher to get more information and insights into group work method in class. Finally, this research is expected to be a reference for implementing group work in English class.

Perception is the process by which a person receives, recognizes, and interprets information from the environment through the senses, and then responds to it in a positive or negative way (Fitri, 2016; Safitri, 2021). In the context of group work, perception therefore refers to how students interpret their experiences of the method and form favorable or unfavorable judgments about it (Desma, 2015). Because these judgments grow out of what students see, hear, and feel during instruction (Kirjakovski, 2023), they are central to understanding whether group work supports or undermines learning.

This study is framed by Bandura's social learning theory, which holds that much human behavior is acquired by observing and imitating others within a social environment (Bandura, 1977). Group work fits this view because it requires students to learn together, observe their peers, and construct knowledge through interaction rather than in isolation. The quality of that interaction, however, depends on how well teachers structure and support the activity (Van Leeuwen & Janssen, 2019); when students see group work implemented effectively, they are more likely to perceive it positively and to engage with it (Lesilolo, 2019).

Group work is a collaborative learning method that allows students to work with others. As Situmorang (2021) remarked, group work is where more than one individual works together to complete a task by communicating and interacting. Compared to working alone, they can exchange ideas through group discussions. In addition, Cohen and Lotan (2014) also added that group work keeps students equally involved in their work. Hence, students do not work individually but work together, especially in terms of completing a task. Moreover, Agustian (2018) also explained that students can share their ideas and solve problems when working together. For instance, when one group member is having trouble, they learn to help each other. Furthermore, as Top Hat (2022) described, group work allows students to share roles and responsibilities and collect their knowledge and skills. Therefore, it can be concluded that the teacher uses the group work method to help students be active in the learning process by collaborating with their classmates in carrying out a task by exchanging ideas, discussing, interacting, and communicating. This is important in the learning process so that it can help students succeed in learning.

Relating the group work method to Bandura's theory of social learning, it is vital that teachers are aware of how students learn and imitate from their environment. Van Leeuwen and Janssen (2019)

suggest that collaborative learning benefits from careful teacher planning and instructional support, as structured group activities can enhance the quality of interaction and learning outcomes. For instance, when students see the teacher implement the group work method well, they will have a good perception and follow the learning process. Moreover, Morris (2019) described experiential learning as a process in which learners actively engage in real-life experiences, reflect on them, and apply what they have learned. This cycle of engagement and reflection supports deeper understanding and contributes to the development of skills and behavior. Thus, teachers can consider using group work in the learning environment to help students learn the lesson successfully. There are several important elements regarding group work method that need to be known. Daba et al. (2017) and Hung and Mai (2020) cited in Afriyani and Solusia (2023) elaborated that the components of group work method include the benefits of the group method, students' preferences of group method, teacher implementation of group work method, and factors hindering group work method.

Research consistently reports that group work benefits learners in four overlapping ways. Linguistically, it increases the quantity and quality of language practice and gives students, especially in English classes, more opportunities to speak (Blair, in Abdullah, 2016; Daba et al., 2017). Socially, it develops communication skills, exposes students to multiple points of view, and teaches them to collaborate with and respect others (Afriyani & Solusia, 2022; William, n.d.). Affectively, the intimacy of a small group helps shy or weaker students feel more confident and stay motivated, because peers can explain material they do not yet understand (Badache, 2011; Alfares, 2017). Cognitively, groups tend to view a problem from a wider range of perspectives and generate more solutions than individuals working alone (Badache, 2011). In short, group work is widely regarded as a method that makes students more active and supports their success in learning.

Preference refers to liking one thing more than another (Cambridge Dictionary). In this study, students' preferences concern the extent to which they favor group work over other ways of learning English. Prior research suggests that many students prefer working in groups: they report feeling more comfortable and motivated, and they believe collaboration helps them complete tasks and achieve better results than working individually (Afriyani & Solusia, 2022; Taqi & Al-Nouh, 2014). In implementing group work method in English class, teachers must pay attention to what things must be done. As Ellis and Holmes cited in Situmorang (2021), five steps must be carried out in implementing the group work method. This includes preparing group work, designing group work activities, introducing group work activities, monitoring group assignments, and completing group assignments. The teacher needs to provide clear instructions such as how group work will be carried out and the scoring system.

Perceptions between men and women may differ. Astalini et al. (2022) believed that gender is one of the factors that can make individuals have different perceptions. Furthermore, several studies have shown differences in perceptions between male and female students. For instance, research from Utami and Yonanda (2020) shows that male and female students have different ways of thinking. Furthermore, when teachers teach, females tend to absorb information faster than males. Males tend to pay less attention to learning. Then, a study by Amelia (2017) shows that during in-class activities, male students participate more actively in discussions where they are more active in asking and answering questions in class than female students. Meanwhile, female students were more active in listening activities in class than male students. The same study by Aguillon et al. (2020) shows that

boys are more active in giving opinions in class than girls. Therefore it can be concluded that male and female students have different perceptions, especially in class learning activities.

Several recent studies report that students perceive group work positively in English classes. Janna (2019) surveyed eleventh-grade students at MA Muallimin Muhammadiyah Makassar with a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire and found that almost all participants (96.67%) rated group work in the “very good” or “good” category. Similarly, Afriyani and Solusia (2022), using a descriptive quantitative design with tenth-grade students at SMAN 10 Padang, found that students positively perceived group work activities, with the teacher’s implementation of the method receiving the highest rating. Situmorang (2021) reported the same pattern among tenth- and eleventh-grade students at SMA 17 Agustus 1945 Jakarta, where about 79.67% considered group work advantageous, indicating a positive effect on students’ learning habits and attitudes.

Findings on gender, however, are mixed. Mohamad et al. (2020), studying 299 students’ attitudes and motivation toward student-centred (group-based) learning activities, found no significant difference between male and female students. In contrast, Kasumi and Xhemaili (2023), surveying tenth- and eleventh-grade EFL students, found a significant gender difference, with female students reporting higher perceptions of collaborative and participatory learning than males. These conflicting results are what motivate the present study’s gender comparison. Overall, the reviewed studies resemble the present one in examining group work, mostly through quantitative, descriptive designs at the high school level; they differ in that they were conducted outside North Minahasa, some at the university level, and none examined the benefits, students’ preference, and the teacher’s implementation of group work together in a single study at a private high school.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study was quantitative. This research is called quantitative because the report’s results use statistical and numerical data. Watson (2015) stated that quantitative research is a method concerned with systematically investigating social phenomena, using statistical or numerical data. This study used descriptive method. This descriptive method aimed to determine the students’ perception of using group work method in English class, students’ preference of group work method and teacher’s implementation of group work method. Descriptive research aims to describe a population, situation, or phenomenon accurately and systematically (McCombes, 2022). Thus, the research method used was descriptive.

Furthermore, the comparative method determined whether significant differences exist in students’ perceptions of using the group work method in English class based on gender. Harvey (2012) stated that the comparative method compares situations, groups, cultures, or anything similar but different. Moreover, Kettenbach (2022) also stated that the comparative method is frequently used to discover patterns of similarity and difference and explain continuity and change. Therefore, the researcher chose descriptive and comparative methods to assist in analyzing and answering the research questions.

Respondents in this study were grade 11 students at one of the schools in North Minahasa. Specifically, they were students in grade 11 Science classes, consisting of three sections: Science 2, Science 3, and Science 4. Each class had around 29 to 31 students. However, after the questionnaires were distributed, some students were not present in class. For this reason, the number of respondents

found from each class was 27 students for the Science 2 class, 28 students for the Science 3 class, and 22 students for the Science 4 class. Thus, the total number of students was 77. More specifically, there were 31 male students and 46 female students. Ruxton (2006) claimed that in testing, whether there are differences in the mean and t-test used, different sample sizes do not cause problems for the t-test.

The researcher distributed the questionnaires in two days. On the first day, the researchers prepared 61 questionnaires, which were divided into 31 questionnaires for Science 2 students and 30 questionnaires for Science 3. For Science 2, there were only 27 respondents, while Science 3 only had 28 respondents out of 30 respondents. Then, on the second day, the researcher prepared 30 questionnaires for students of Science 4 and only got 22 respondents. Thus, there were 77 questionnaires distributed and 77 were retrieved and valid to be used.

In this study, the convenience sampling method was used to collect data. As stated by Nikolopoulou (2022), "Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling method where units are selected for inclusion in the sample" (p.1). Moreover, samples were taken based on the convenience of researchers who were seen as suitable and willing to be a source of data from research by researchers (Sari & Ratnaningsih, 2020). Therefore, this study used convenience sampling method. Convenience sampling was chosen for practical reasons. The study had to be carried out within the limited time allocated by the school and within intact, already-formed grade-11 Science classes that could not be reorganized for research purposes. These classes were directly accessible to the researchers and consisted of students who had genuinely experienced learning through group work, making them an appropriate and readily available source of data for describing students' perceptions. While this approach limits the statistical generalizability of the findings, it was suitable for the study's descriptive and comparative aims.

Furthermore, in selecting respondents, the researcher first made sure that the respondents were students who had experienced learning in group work. Based on observations and interviews with the grade 11 English teachers at school, group work method has been implemented in the class. Thus, because the researcher wanted to know students' perceptions about the use of group work methods in class based on gender, the researcher added questions about their gender to the questionnaire where they circled one of the options based on their gender. This was done to make it easier for the researcher to obtain data on students' perceptions of the use of group work method based on gender.

In collecting data, the researcher used a questionnaire about students' perception of group work method in the English class, adapted from Daba et al. (2017) and Hung and Mai (2020). Items number 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, and 25 are adapted items from Daba et al. (2017). Meanwhile, Items number 1, 2, 4, 5, 13, and 14 are items adapted from Hung and Mai (2020). The questionnaire items consisted of four indicators. The original questionnaire items can be seen in Table 3.2. The first part is the benefits of a group work method which consists of 9 items, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9. The second part concerns the preferences of a group work method composed of 3 items, 10, 11, and 12. The third part concerns the teacher's implementation of a group work method consisting of 7 items, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19. Another section on factors hindering group work method consists of 6 items, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, and 25. A questionnaire design using a Likert Scale style will be used to collect data. For the questionnaire items, respondents must choose from one of the five choices: 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Agree), and 5 (Strongly Agree).

The questionnaire items have been translated from English to Bahasa Indonesia to help the respondents better understand the questionnaire items. The researcher herself translated the questionnaire under the guidance of the advisor. In addition, before the researcher distributed the questionnaire, three English teachers helped with the expert validation before conducting the pilot study.

After expert validation, item number 7 namely 'Kerja kelompok mengajarkan saya untuk menghargai perasaan, pendapat, dan ide orang lain' is divided into 3 statements namely 'Kerja kelompok mengajarkan saya untuk menghargai perasaan orang lain', 'Kerja kelompok mengajarkan saya untuk menghargai pendapat orang lain' and, 'Kerja kelompok mengajarkan saya untuk menghargai ide orang lain'. Item number 9 namely 'Kerja kelompok membantu saya mengembangkan keterampilan berpikir dan harga diri saya' is divided into two statements namely 'Kerja kelompok membantu saya mengembangkan keterampilan berpikir saya' and 'Kerja kelompok membantu saya mengembangkan harga diri saya'. Item number 11 namely 'Saya lebih suka bekerja dalam kelompok karena skor yang lebih tinggi' was divided into two statements namely 'Saya lebih suka bekerja dalam kelompok daripada bekerja secara individu' and 'Saya suka kerja kelompok karena membantu saya mendapatkan nilai yang lebih tinggi'. Thus, before the pilot study, the total items of the questionnaire was 30.

Table 1. Students' Perception on Group Work Method in English Class Before Pilot Study

Statements	Item Number
The benefits of group work activity	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12
The students' preference of group work activity	13,14,15,16
The teacher's implementation of group work activity	17,18,19,20,21,22,23,24
The factors hindering group work activity	25,26,27,28,29,30

Daba et al. (2017) and Hung and Mai (2020)

Before conducting the research, the researchers conducted a pilot study to assess the instrument's validity and reliability. As stated by In (2017), a pilot study needs to be carried out to reflect all learning procedures and validate the feasibility of learning by assessing the test instruments used for measurement in learning. For this reason, the researchers selected respondents from class 11 Social Studies and class 11 Science 1. To make sure the researchers have enough respondents for the pilot study; the researchers used two classes of grade 11. Thus, the total number of students is 37, comprising 12 from the Social Studies class and 25 from the Science 1 class.

The researchers first analyzed the questionnaire items to determine whether the questionnaire questions were valid or invalid. Validity and reliability tests were used. The measuring instrument used can be said to be valid if the item significance is <0.05 (Janna & Herianto, 2021). Meanwhile, reliability is the degree of consistency shown by a measurement tool in yielding similar results across repeated applications, commonly assessed through the internal consistency of its questionnaire items (Taherdoost, 2016). Accordingly, the questionnaire items were translated and then validated by three English teachers before being distributed to students; a pilot study was conducted to check the validity and reliability of the instrument. The validity test showed that of the 30 items piloted, 22 had significance values below 0.05 and were therefore retained as valid, while 8 had significance values of 0.05 or higher and were considered invalid. The invalid items included all six items of the "factors hindering group work" subscale together with two further items. For this reason, the entire "factors

hindering group work” subscale was removed after the pilot study, and the instrument used in the actual research was reduced from 30 items across four indicators to 22 items across three indicators, namely the benefits of, students’ preference for, and teachers’ implementation of group work (see Table 2). Consequently, this study reports findings only for these three retained dimensions.

Furthermore, the researchers used Cronbach's Alpha to measure the reliability of the instrument. According to Tavakol and Dennick (2011), Cronbach's alpha is a widely used measure of internal consistency that helps determine whether an instrument reliably measures a construct. If a variable shows a Cronbach's alpha value of > 0.60 , it means that the measuring instrument is reliable in measuring. Based on the results from the data collected in the pilot study, the reliability score was 0.867 rounded to 0.87. Thus, these items are reliable for use in real research because their value is greater than 0.60.

Table 2. Number of Statements in Each Subscale of Students’ Perception of Using Group Work Method in English Class After the Pilot Study

Statements	Item Number
The benefits of group work method	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12
The students’ preference of group work method	13,14,15,16
The teacher’s implementation of group work method	17,18,19,20,21,22
Total	22

The researchers have analyzed the data using statistical tools. To answer research questions one to three, the researchers have used MEAN to find out students' perceptions about the benefits of using group work methods in English class, the level of students' preferences in using the group work method in English class, and the level of teacher's implementation of the group work method in English class. Then, to answer research question number four, this study used comparative analysis, namely the t-test, to find out significant differences in students' perceptions of using the group work method in English class based on gender. Before the independent-samples t-test was interpreted, its underlying assumptions were checked. The two gender groups were independent, and the perception scores were treated as interval data derived from the Likert-scale items. Homogeneity of variance was examined using Levene's test, which was not significant ($F = 1.257$, $p = .266 > 0.05$); the assumption of equal variances was therefore met, and the equal-variances row of the t-test (see Table 6) was used to interpret the result. Effect size was additionally calculated using Cohen's d to indicate the practical magnitude of the gender difference.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The first research question was addressed using descriptive statistics. The mean score for the benefits of using the group work method in English class was 4.11 (see Table 3). Based on the data interpretation, students' perceptions of the group work method fall within the range of 3.50–4.49. This finding indicates that students agreed that they gained benefits from the use of the group work method in English class. For example, the group work method teaches students to be able to respect the opinions of others.

Table 3. Mean Score of Benefits of Using Group Work Method in English Class

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Benefits of Group Work	77	3.25	4.92	4.11	.32985
Valid N (listwise)	77				

Source: Primary Data

The second research question was examined using descriptive analysis. The mean score for students' preference toward using the group work method in English class was 3.76 (see Table 4). According to the data interpretation, students' preference for the group work method is within the range of 3.50–4.49. The results indicate that students had a high preference for the use of the group work method in English class. For example, students like to use the group work method because it helps them get higher grades.

Table 4. Mean Score of Preference on Using Group Work Method in English Class

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Preference of Group Work	77	1.25	5.00	3.76	.77257
Valid N (listwise)	77				

The mean scores of students' perceptions of the group work method in English class according to gender are presented in Table 5. There were 31 male and 46 female respondents. The findings revealed that the mean score for male students was 4.26, higher than that for female students (3.93).

Table 5. Mean score based on gender

	Gender	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean
Students' Perceptions	Male	31	4.268	.30623	.04515
	Female	46	3.938	.48338	.08682

Based on the interpretation guidelines, a significance value below 0.05 (as indicated by Sig.). (2-tailed) or p-value, signifies a statistically significant difference. Table 6 shows that an independent-samples t-test was conducted to address this research question. The results revealed a significant difference in students' perceptions of the group work method in English class, with p-values of 0.000 and 0.002, both below 0.05. Therefore, male and female students differed significantly in their perceptions of the group work method. Because Levene's test was not significant ($F = 1.257$, $p = .266$), the equal-variances result was interpreted, $t(75) = -3.67$, $p < .001$. To assess the practical magnitude of this difference, an effect size was computed using Cohen's d , yielding $d = 0.78$, which represents a medium-to-large effect. This indicates that the gender difference is not only statistically significant but

also substantial in practical terms: male students' perceptions of the group work method were, on average, almost four-fifths of a standard deviation more positive than those of female students.

Table 6. Difference on students' perception based on gender

		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-table)
Students' Perceptions	Equal Variances	1.257	.266	-.3.666	75	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			-.3.368	46.171	.002

Discussion

The findings showed that students agreed that they gained benefits from the use of the group work method in English class. One benefit perceived by students was the opportunity to learn to respect others' opinions. Johnson et al. (2014) proposed that when group work is properly structured, it promotes active discussion, idea sharing, and exposure to diverse perspectives, while also improving academic achievement through positive interdependence and meaningful peer interaction. Through group work activities, students are given opportunities to develop respect for the views of others while working toward shared goals.

Similarly, Janna (2019) found that 60% of students at MA Muallimin Muhammadiyah Makassar strongly agreed that the group work method was beneficial because it helped them appreciate other people's opinions. This may be because group work allows students to express their ideas and listen to their peers' perspectives. In addition, Fitri (2016) reported that students learned to respect different viewpoints through discussions with their group members during group work activities. Therefore, students' positive perceptions of the benefits of group work may be related to their experiences of learning to respect others' opinions while completing tasks collaboratively.

Additionally, the findings indicated that students had a high preference for the group work method in English class, with a mean score of 3.76. One possible explanation for this result is that students perceive group work as a learning approach that can improve their academic achievement. According to Slavin (2014), students participating in group work receive recognition not only for group performance but also for their individual contributions. This combination of group and individual assessment may increase students' motivation to engage in collaborative learning activities.

The present finding is supported by Janna (2019), who reported that students' academic performance improved after the implementation of group work in English learning. The study showed that 96.67% of students achieved very good and good performance categories, while only 3.33% remained in the moderate category. Similarly, Situmorang (2022) found that students demonstrated a high preference for the group work method, with an overall score of 94.67. One of the reasons identified was that group work enabled students to achieve higher scores. These findings suggest that students may favor group work because they associate it with improved learning outcomes and academic success.

Moreover, the findings demonstrated a significant difference between male and female students' perceptions of the group work method. Male students reported a higher mean score (4.26) than female

students (3.93), indicating more positive perceptions toward the use of group work in English class. The independent samples t-test further confirmed that this difference was statistically significant.

This result is in agreement with Joo (2017), who also found significant gender differences in students' perceptions of group work. The consistency of these findings suggests that gender may influence how students perceive and respond to collaborative learning activities. As a result, male and female students may differ in their experiences and attitudes toward the implementation of the group work method in English language learning. The effect size (Cohen's $d = 0.78$) indicates that this gender difference is practically meaningful and not merely a statistical artifact of sample size. This finding can be interpreted through Bandura's social learning theory, which frames learning as a product of observation, modeling, and reinforcement within a social environment. In group work, learning depends heavily on how willing students are to observe, imitate, and reinforce one another's contributions. If male students in this setting participate and speak more readily, as reported by Amelia (2017) and Aguillon et al. (2020), they gain more opportunities to model and be reinforced for active behaviors, which may, in turn, strengthen their positive perception of the method. Female students, who in these same studies tended to participate more through listening, may experience fewer of these visible reinforcement opportunities, which could partly explain their comparatively lower perception scores. From this perspective, the observed gender gap is less about ability and more about differing patterns of social participation and reinforcement during collaborative tasks, suggesting that teachers can narrow the gap by deliberately structuring roles so that every member observes, contributes, and is reinforced.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that students at one of the high schools in North Minahasa prefer to use the group work method in their English class, as they recognize its benefits and strongly prefer it. Furthermore, they perceive that group work method is implemented in their English class. Thus, based on the problems identified, the reasons for the lack of participation of the students during group work is not because they do not like group work method, but because of other factors. Because the subscale measuring the factors that hinder group work was found invalid and removed after the pilot study, the present data cannot identify these factors directly. The specific causes of low participation, therefore, remain beyond the scope of this study and are noted here only as possibilities to be examined in future research, rather than as conclusions drawn from the data. Lastly, male and female students have different perceptions of group work method. It was found that male students preferred the group work method compared to female students and they also believed that the group work method could help them participate more actively in discussions compared to female students.

Several recommendations are given based on the findings and conclusions of this study. First, it is suggested that the teacher can continue to use the group work method in learning English because students agree that the use of the group work method brings benefits to the students themselves where they can work together, participate, discuss, and express their opinions so they can learn to respect each other. opinion of each member. Furthermore, it is suggested that teachers continue to implement the group work method with a variety of new group work activities that can help students learn English well. Lastly, because this research only measured students' perceptions, it is suggested

to other researchers who are interested in conducting similar research to use different methods, namely qualitative methods or conduct experimental research to see whether the group work method is really good or effective to be used in English class. Also, future researchers may try to conduct similar study in different places and at different educational levels to see if there is significant difference in students' perceptions of the use of group work methods and furthermore try to see what factors are related to group work method and how group work method can improve students' English skills. In practical terms, because the gender difference was both significant and of medium-to-large magnitude, teachers are advised to apply gender-responsive group work strategies, for example, assigning rotating roles, setting clear individual accountability within each group, and using structured turn-taking, so that female students are given equal opportunities to contribute and are not overshadowed by more vocal peers. This study also has several limitations that should be acknowledged. It relied solely on students' self-reported perceptions collected through a questionnaire, was conducted in a single senior high school using a convenience sample of 77 grade-11 Science students and excluded the "factors hindering group work" dimension after the pilot study; these limitations restrict the generalizability of the findings. Accordingly, future research could employ larger and more representative samples across multiple schools and grade levels, combine questionnaires with classroom observation and interviews to capture actual participation behavior, re-develop and validate a reliable instrument for measuring the factors that hinder group work, and use experimental designs to test whether the method directly improves students' English proficiency.

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