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## **Can Collaborative Teaching Increase Students' Motivation and Satisfaction in Learning a Third Language?**

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### **Abstract**

The pandemic has forced universities to change their teaching and learning activities. One of the teaching delivery methods being widely used is collaborative teaching. This study seeks to understand how collaborative teaching influences learners' motivation and satisfaction in learning Arabic as a third language. 466 responses were gathered from students in the largest university in Malaysia. The results of PLS-SEM suggest that learners' motivation and satisfaction can be predicted by the collaborative teaching method. Recommendations of future research and implications of the study are also provided.

**Keywords:** Arabic Language Communication; motivation; learning satisfaction; collaborative teaching approach

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### **1.0 Introduction**

In tandem with the development of technology, teaching and learning activities have drastically improved over the years. Amongst the 21st century teaching and learning activities include collaborative teaching, where students can learn from multiple instructors with different strengths and expertise. The 21st-century learners are expected to co-create content with their instructors, thus leveraging on active learning. Students are expected to master content and produce it through synthesizing, merging while evaluating subject information and resources (Berry, 2011).

In teaching and learning Arabic as a third language, the four focus is on students' ability to communicate, collaborate, and think critically and creatively. In the largest university in Malaysia, students must register for a third language for three consecutive semesters. The third language courses have long been taught conventionally until the pandemic forced all instructions to be carried virtually. Much research has studied students' satisfaction in the physical learning environment, where social interactions are abundant. However, limited research has gauged how students respond to the different delivery methods being used through virtual classes. This is particularly true for language classes that are being conducted collaboratively. Therefore, this study seeks to understand how students' satisfaction and motivation are being influenced by collaborative teaching that is being conducted online.

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## 2.0 Literature Review

### 2.1 Collaborative Teaching

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the landscape of higher education institutions worldwide. The reduction in the number of students enrollments has forced universities to conduct cost-saving exercises, including reducing the number of part-time employees. The teaching method is one of the strategies that administrators can implement in dealing with the issue of instructor shortages. In a post-pandemic world, where online and distance learning is here to stay, collaborative teaching allows an increase in the number of students allowed in a class (Abdullah, Ramli & Rafek, 2017; Bowman & Mete, 2014) without violating the safety hazard. On the other hand, for classes that can be conducted online, the sky is the limit.

In the largest university in Malaysia, collaborative teaching involves a class taught by more than one lecturer, within or between faculties. In this university, collaborative teaching and learning emphasize student-centered learning, flexibility with open and distance learning (ODL) delivery. Collaborative learning often involves blended materials – delivered synchronous or asynchronously (UiTM, 2020).

### 2.2 Student Motivation

Teaching and learning activities in class often directly impact students' motivation to learn a particular subject or course. It has been long established that interest and motivation are associated with good academic performance (Ricardo, 2017). Specifically, learners of the Arabic language have reported that motivation and interest are the drivers of their learning outcomes (Hanifal et al., 2017). Motivation plays an intricate role in language learning (Fandiño & Velandia, 2020) as it affects learners' behavior, emotion, decision-making ability, and cognitive ability (Liu, Wang & Ryan, 2016). Therefore, the magnitude of the effects is expected to be multiplied when learners are learning a third language. This is because acquiring two languages can be considered a feat for some learners, thus decreasing their resilience in their attempts to master a third one against all odds – in this case: the infamous pandemic.

### 2.3 Student Satisfaction

According to the expectancy-disconfirmation theory, individuals are satisfied if the performance of a service or product exceeds their initial expectations (Oliver, 1980). The same can be said for the students on their learning experience. Students' satisfaction can be influenced by skilled instructors (Diah et al., 2020) and delivery methods (Slavin, 2011). For learners, social presence has been one of the factors of satisfaction in the learning environment. During the COVID-19 pandemic, physical classes cannot be conducted, thus eliminating the element of social presence in learning environments. In e-learning environments, students may experience late feedback (or no feedback) from instructors, as well as the awkwardness of communicating with (virtually) strangers while working on a group project can contribute to dissatisfaction among learners (Nasir, 2020).

Although the expectancy-disconfirmation theory was formulated in the context of customers, it is also aptly used in education, where learners are considered customers of higher learning institutions. Therefore, students' satisfaction can be assessed by the service (teaching and learning activities) provided for their knowledge acquisition, compared against their initial expectations of what they think they should receive. In the new world of so many uncertainties, it is vital for universities to understand what makes their customers (students) satisfied. Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual model for this study.

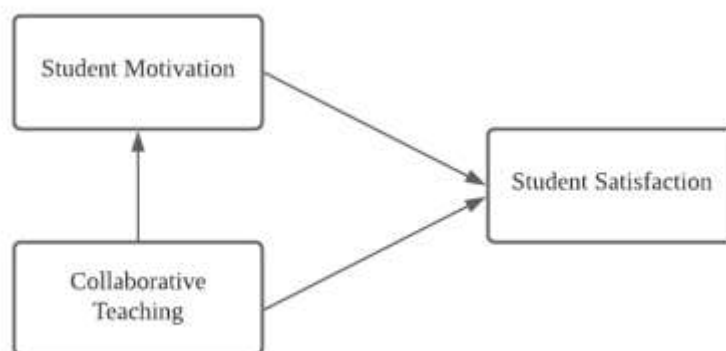


Figure 1. Conceptual Model

Based on the literature, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H1: Collaborative teaching positively influence student satisfaction.

H2: Collaborative teaching positively influence student motivation.

H3: Student motivation influences student satisfaction.

H4: Student motivation mediates the influence between collaborative teaching and student satisfaction.

### 3.0 Methodology

#### 3.1 Study Design

This study utilizes the quantitative approach where data was collected using the questionnaire method. This cross-sectional study gauged data from a sample of students who have completed the first level of Arabic as a third language option in the largest university in Malaysia. Respondents' demographic profiling was analyzed using basic statistics, with hypotheses tested using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). Using SmartPLS, the results are reported in two distinct phases: the measurement and structural models.

#### 3.1 Instrumentation

The measurement items used to measure student satisfaction, student motivation, and collaborative teaching were adapted from existing studies (Abdullah, Ramli & Rafek, 2017; Hidayat, Suhardi & Patras, 2019) and (Krismony, Parmiti & Japa, 2020). All the items use a 5-point Likert-scale with ranging from 1 – strongly disagree to 5 – strongly agree. Demographic questions such as gender, learning experience with the subject, and study field were also asked.

#### 3.2 Data Collection Procedures

Data was collected via an online survey link provided to students at the end of the semester. The link was provided to the class lecturers to be distributed to the students. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all the students have at least one semester of experience learning Arabic as a third language via the collaborative teaching method. 466 usable responses were managed to be collected for this study.

### 4.0 Findings

#### 4.1 Demographic Profile

A total of 466 students participated in this study. More than half of the respondents are female, representative of the gender imbalance in Malaysian universities. The respondents are from diverse study fields, with the most significant students (190) from the social sciences and humanities. The respondents' demographic profile is as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondents' Demographic Profile

		N	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	161	34.5
	Female	305	65.5
Learning experience (Arabic as Third Language)	1 – 3 years	311	66.7
	4 – 5 years	79	17
	> 6 years	76	16.3
Field of Study	Science	139	29.8
	Social Science	190	40.7
	Business & Management	137	29.4

#### 4.2 Measurement Model

Validating the reflective model involves examining the internal consistency using both Cronbach's Alpha (CA) and composite reliability (CR) and its convergent validity using the average variance extracted (AVE) and the outer loadings. Table 2 illustrates the results for the internal consistency and convergent validity. All three constructs recorded CA and CR scores of more than .70, beyond the minimum suggested value by Hair et al. (2019). The AVE scores exceeded the minimum threshold of .50 with outer loadings of more than .708 for each measurement item, suggesting that convergent validity has been established (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 2. Outer Loadings, CA, CR and AVE Values

Constructs	Item	Loadings	CA	CR	AVE
Student Satisfaction	SATISF1	0.789	0.909	0.932	0.733
	SATISF2	0.840			
	SATISF3	0.895			
	SATISF4	0.880			
	SATISF5	0.916			
Student Motivation	MOT1	0.806	0.935	0.947	0.691
	MOT2	0.838			
	MOT3	0.726			
	MOT4	0.879			
	MOT5	0.889			
	MOT6	0.900			
	MOT7	0.774			
	MOT8	0.823			
Collaborative Teaching	COL1	0.808	0.922	0.941	0.763
	COL2	0.890			
	COL3	0.864			
	COL4	0.891			
	COL5	0.909			

The discriminant validity for the measurement model was established through the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations. Table 3 reports the HTMT scores. Based on the results, the HTMT is well below .90, suggesting discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015).

Table 3. HTMT Values

	Student Satisfaction	Student Motivation	Collaborative Teaching
Student Satisfaction	<b>0.856</b>		
Student Motivation	0.720	<b>0.831</b>	
Collaborative Teaching	0.658	0.783	<b>0.873</b>

#### 4.3 Structural Model

The structural model was evaluated based on the scores of the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), effect size ( $f^2$ ), predictive relevance ( $Q^2$ ), and the model's path coefficient ( $\beta$ ).

##### 4.3.1 Coefficient of Determination ( $R^2$ )

The  $R^2$  value for students' satisfaction is .054, indicating that 54% of changes in the variance for student satisfaction can be attributed to both student motivation and the collaborative teaching method. Meanwhile, the  $R^2$  value for student motivation is .61, suggesting that 61% of the variance in student motivation variance can be explained by the lecturers' collaborative teaching method.

##### 4.3.2 Effect Size ( $f^2$ )

The effect size ( $f^2$ ) measures the strength of the relationships between the variables of interest. Results indicate a large effect size between collaborative teaching and student motivation ( $f^2 = 1.582$ ), and between student motivation and their satisfaction ( $f^2 = .237$ ), but only a small effect size between collaborative teaching and student motivation ( $f^2 = .050$ ).

##### 4.3.3 Predictive Relevance ( $Q^2$ )

Using the blindfolding method, results for the predictive relevance suggest that the model has sufficient predictive relevance with values of more than 0 (Hair et al., 2011), with  $Q^2$  values of 0.359 (student satisfaction) and 0.416 (student motivation).

##### 4.3.4 Path Coefficient ( $\beta$ ) and Mediation Analysis

Results of the bootstrapping method (5000 sub-samples) support H1 to H4 with a 95% confidence level ( $p < .05$ ). The indirect effect for H4 was also significant at  $p < .05$ , suggesting that mediation has occurred. Table 4 shows the results of the path analysis.

Table 4. Path Analysis

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	P-value	T-value	Result
H1 Collaborative Teaching → Student Satisfaction	0.243	0.000	4.201	Accepted
H2 Collaborative Teaching → Student Motivation	0.783	0.000	32.957	Accepted
H3 Student Motivation → Student Satisfaction	0.529	0.000	9.100	Accepted
H4 Collaborative Teaching → Student Motivation → Student Satisfaction	0.414	0.000	8.935	Accepted

## 5.0 Discussion

### 5.1 Collaborative Teaching on Student Motivation and Satisfaction

The findings suggest that the collaborative teaching method influences students' motivation and satisfaction in learning Arabic as a third language. In facing issues such as the shortage of qualified instructors, collaborative teaching methods can optimize the ratio of instructors per student. Despite the benefits of the collaborative teaching method, its implementation must be handled wisely to fulfill the learning outcomes. Furthermore, administrators must tread carefully in determining the number of students per instructor, and this is to ensure students have an equal chance to receive feedback on their performance and ensure the instructors are not burdened by an excessive workload.

In the post-pandemic world, where online and distance learning is no longer a thing of the future, collaborative teaching methods can be used to leverage instructors' different skills and expertise fully. Instructors can work collaboratively in curating teaching and learning activities suited for the course outcomes, harnessing their expertise on specific topics, teaching styles, and teaching activities. In working together, instructors who teach the same course can be divided into several production teams: synchronous lectures, asynchronous materials, and assessments.

On another note, continuous quality improvement needs to be conducted to improve teaching and learning activities. When asked about the number of assessments, a majority (84%) of the respondents agree that the number of assessments given and its context is an integral factor for their motivation and satisfaction, suggesting that communication between instructors is one of the most integral factors in ensuring the success of collaborative teaching.

## 6.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

The findings of this study shed light on how collaborative teaching methods can boost students' motivation and learning satisfaction. Being motivated and satisfied can trigger positive domino effects such as better performance, retention, and word of mouth, thus paving ways for future research to be conducted on the effects of students' motivation and satisfaction. Students often perceive university-required subjects as being more accessible than subjects from their core disciplines. Despite having a large sample size, this study only focuses on learners of Arabic as a third language. Future studies could investigate students' perceptions and how collaborative teaching methods influence their satisfaction and motivation when delivering other subjects.

## 7.0 Paper Contribution to the Related Field of Study

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant disruption to the teaching and learning activities in higher learning institutions. The findings of this study provide insight into how third language learners, specifically the Arabic language, perceive collaborative teaching. Despite being new to the collaborative teaching methods, today's generation of students seemed to be taking it quite well. As reported in the study, the third language instructors' collaborative teaching method influenced students' motivation and satisfaction. Universities are encouraged to explore this delivery method as it predicts students' motivation and satisfaction and can assist universities with optimizing resources such as staffing and costs.

## 8.0 Acknowledgement

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