Learners' Perceptions of Relatedness, Existence and Growth in Group-Based Language Learning: A Quantitative Study

Asma' Ammar[1], Nazratul Aini Ramli[2]*, Fikhriah Khamarudin[3], Ainaa Mardhiah Zaharuddin[4], Siti Nurfiza Abdul Alahdad[5], Noor Hanim Rahmat[6]

[1, 3, 4, 5, 6] Akademi Pengajian Bahasa, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam, Malaysia

[2]Akademi Pengajian Bahasa, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Kampus Dungun, Terengganu

***Corresponding Author**

DOI: https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.101000703

Received: 25 October 2026; Accepted: 30 October 2026; Published: 16 November 2026

ABSTRACT

Group work plays an important role in language learning by providing opportunities for social interaction, which can foster learners' motivation and engagement. However, understanding how learners perceive their psychological needs in collaborative learning environments requires further attention. This study examined learners' perceptions of key psychological needs in group-based language learning, the relationships among these needs, and potential differences across student clusters. A quantitative approach was adopted, using a structured questionnaire comprising several sections measured on a five-point Likert scale. The instrument was adapted from existing needs-based measures, and data were collected from 157 language students through convenience sampling. The findings show that learners generally held positive perceptions of relatedness, existence and growth needs in group learning. Significant positive relationships were identified between relatedness and existence, as well as between relatedness and growth. However, no statistically significant differences were observed across academic clusters. Overall, the findings suggest that learners' psychological needs deserve consideration when designing group work activities for language learning. They also offer useful pedagogical insights into how collaborative learning environments can be made more supportive and engaging.

Keywords: Group work, language learning, psychological needs, relatedness, existence needs, growth needs, collaborative learning.

INTRODUCTION

Background of Study

Group work is generally seen as beneficial for both students and teachers, especially in language learning. Learning in groups allows students to interact with peers and practise important skills such as communication and teamwork, which are also valued in the workplace. Previous studies have shown that students who engage in group work often achieve better academic results, feel more satisfied with their learning experience and are more likely to stay in their courses.

In the context of speaking anxiety, lecturers have suggested the use of pair work and group work as ways to help students feel more comfortable when using the language in class, alongside creating a supportive environment and giving positive feedback (Özdemir & Seçkin, 2025). Regular group work can inspire students to participate more actively, which is closely linked to higher motivation and engagement. When students work together, they develop a clear understanding of the lesson and foster writing and communication skills (Light, 2001). Group work also assists students in the development of social skills and greater awareness of diverse backgrounds, cultures and perspectives (Payne, Monl-Turner, Smith & Sumter, 2006).

Research has also indicated that group work can influence students' motivation where positive group experiences can support learners' commitment. Nguyen (2023) reported that students tend to stay in a course when they engage positively with their peers.

However, group work is full of challenges. Wright, Irving, Pereira and Staggs (2024) stated that even though group work can motivate students to contribute, it may put pressure on them because they are terrified of letting down their peers. Similarly, Burke (2011) pointed out that group work encourages active learning. But issues such as imbalanced participation may occur when certain students carry more workload than others.

The participation of students in the group work relates to psychological needs that are closely related to motivation. Alderfer's ERG theory in 1969 states that there are three basic needs at the center of human behavior, namely existence, relatedness and growth. In cooperative language learning, existence means satisfaction and confidence in the learning process. Relatedness means social interaction and the sense of belonging among members of the group. Growth, meanwhile, includes skill improvement and student performance. Of the three needs, relatedness has a significant effect on students' active participation in group work.

Statement of Problem

Previous studies have reported that group work benefits students. Özdemir & Seçkin (2025), Light (2001) and Payne et al. (2006) highlighted that through group work, students experience lower anxiety levels as well as stronger motivation and participation in language learning within a supportive learning environment. Group work that is associated with student interaction improves communication skills and fosters language proficiency. All this leads to better learning outcomes.

Nevertheless, the success of group work is not always consistent across learning contexts. Some research has identified issues such as unequal participation, peer pressure and decreasing motivation when group work is poorly managed (Burke, 2011; Wright et al., 2024). Nguyen (2023) suggests that group work can benefit students, but only under the right conditions. Effective course design can measure excellent group work. As a result, the task was successfully completed within the target time, with overall student engagement and continuous awareness from the teachers. Group work can be particularly effective during motivation loss and among students. These results show that students' group work experiences can differ and may not necessarily promote successful learning outcomes.

Meanwhile, from the motivational aspect, this difficulty can be interpreted using ERG theory. This theory is perceived from the existence, relatedness and growth aspect (Alderfer, 1969). Social interaction and group dynamics rarely align. When students are facing difficulty, they tend to lose their sense of relatedness. Likewise, it happened to their learning motivation and active participation.

Previous studies also discussed the social and motivational aspect in collaborative learning, specifically in interaction between students and their psychological needs. Therefore, this study aims to explore students' perception of relatedness, existence and growth in group work for language learning and the relationship between these needs.

Objective of the Study and Research Questions

This study is done to explore relatedness and other needs in language learning. Specifically, this study is done to answer the following questions;

1- How do learners perceive their need for relatedness in group work for language learning?

2- How do learners perceive their need for existence in group work for language learning?

3- How do learners perceive their need for growth in group work for language learning?

4- Is there a relationship between need for relatedness and existence in group work for language learning?

(H1- There is no relationship between need for relatedness and existence in group work for language learning)

5- Is there a relationship between need for relatedness and growth in group work for language learning?

(H2-There is no relationship between need for relatedness and growth in group work for language learning)

6- Is there a significant difference for all types of needs in language learning across clusters?

(H3-There is no significant difference in the three types of needs across clusters)

LITERATURE REVI

Theoretical Framework of the Study

ERG Theory of Motivation (Alderfer, 1969) and Learning Motivation

One of the most critical factors that influence the engagement, persistence and success of students in school is motivation. Alderfer's ERG Theory (1969) In an attempt to understand what motivates people, Alderfer combined Maslow's hierarchy of needs (five levels) into three main categories: Existence, Relatedness and Growth. ERG theory allows that people can work on more than one need at the same time and acknowledges that when people get frustrated with higher level needs they may focus on lower level needs (Alderfer, 1972). This adaptability makes ERG theory a very good lens to use to look at learning motivation as it can accommodate the fact that students' needs change over time and are situational (Latham & Pinder, 2005; Deci & Ryan, 2017).

Existential needs are related to the basic physiological and material needs for survival and welfare. In academic settings, such requirements include access to adequate learning resources, safe and enjoyable learning environments, and well-structured schedules that promote learning habits. Empirical studies indicate that the satisfaction of existence needs significantly influences student engagement and motivation. For instance, in the matter of values in basic material requirement to learning, a study on high secondary school students in Lampung province, Indonesia found that values, expectancy and affective component should be strongly considered in the learning strategies to encourage motivation for learning in which the value component is the best predictor (Hariri et al., 2021). This showed that the basic psychological needs and safety related needs are still the main concern of students in committing to their studies. (Harith et al., 2022).

Relatedness needs to involve social connections, interpersonal relationships and a sense of belonging. Research suggests that students who experience strong social support and positive interactions with peers and instructors exhibit higher levels of motivation and engagement (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Having an interpersonal relationship with the instructors gives the students a sense of relatedness in learning. (Harith et al., 2022). Collaborative learning strategies such as group projects, peer feedback and mentorship programs effectively address relatedness needs and contribute to greater participation and persistence (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 2014). Within the ERG framework, fulfillment of relatedness needs can also compensate for unmet growth needs, demonstrating the theory's emphasis on the flexibility and adaptability of motivational processes (Alderfer, 1972).

Growth needs relate to the desire for personal development, skill mastery and self-actualization. Students motivated by growth need are actively seeking challenging tasks and opportunities for intellectual and creative development. Studies have shown that the students exhibited great intrinsic and extrinsic goal orientations and high task value beliefs indicating that they view learning as a personal and socially significant experience. When students realise the benefits and fun in academic activities, they tend to become preoccupied and work harder. (Abd Rahman et al., 2025). Supporting student autonomy helps them in developing responsibility and self-motivation for learning. It is imperative for the students to know what is expected of them, how they will be graded and what kind of support is available for them. (Ismail et al., 2023).

A core strength of ERG theory is its recognition of the interplay among needs. Students may shift focus between needs depending on contextual challenges or frustration. For example, students struggling with self-

directed learning tasks (growth) may prioritize peer support or structured guidance (relatedness and existence) to sustain motivation. Recent research emphasizes that effective instructional design should take into account all three types of needs simultaneously, to ensure that students have sufficient resources, social support and opportunities for skill development. (Ryan & Deci, 2020; Abu Hasan et al., 2023; Hambali et al., 2025). Overall, the research suggests that ERG theory is a useful and flexible way to think about what motivates people to learn. Teachers can take into account students' existence, relatedness and growth needs in an effort to help students in many different ways. Relatedness and growth are more important in creating deep engagement and motivation, although existence is important in getting people to participate.

Tuckman's Stages of Group Work (Tuckman, 1965)

Bruce Tuckman proposed a theory of group development through a series of stages. This theory is often used in educational settings to understand group work interaction. There are five stages of group development in this theory, which are forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning. The first stage is forming, where all group members meet each other, introduce themselves and begin to understand the group's purpose. The leader has an important role in this stage to ensure all the group members know their respective roles. Next, when the group members start working together, they move into the storming stage. During this stage, they may face conflicts, as each group member has different opinions, personalities and working styles. These conflicts can be advantageous for the students since they are required to practice open communication and negotiation skills among themselves. (Rahmat, 2021)

When group members begin resolving the conflicts and start to develop trust, the group enters the next stage, which is the norming stage. During this stage, group members improve collaboration, better understand their roles, and establish norms. They also become less reliant on the leader as everyone can contribute and work towards the goal. (Nor & Che Hassan, 2025) The following stage is performing. In this stage, group members are functioning at a high level of effectiveness, which enhances the task activities. The team is expected to work as a unified entity and focus on achieving the goals. (Zulkifli et al., 2025) The final stage known as the adjourning stage, occurs when the task is completed. This phase emphasizes reflection, evaluation and emotional transition where students may experience different feelings, which are sad as the group disengages and happy for their achievement. (Lotriet et al., 2025)

Past Studies

It is well established that numerous studies have investigated students' motivation and engagement in group work within Arabic language learning, particularly examining how collaborative tasks influence participation, confidence, and language proficiency. For instance, Rasit and Ismail (2025) reported a significant correlation between students' motivation and their achievement in Arabic language learning among secondary religious school students in Malaysia. The study involved 200 students, with data collected via questionnaires and classroom observations. The findings suggest that well-structured, meaningful group work activities can effectively enhance students' engagement, motivation, and overall language-learning outcomes.

In addition, a study by Yusri et al. (2025) involved 455 samples, while for qualitative data, 13 interviews with respondents were conducted. The selection of respondents was based on their previous experience with Arabic and the faculty they had. The study found that students' intrinsic motivation was high. It also found statistically significant differences in this motivation among several groups of students with different prior experiences. The study also has several implications in the classroom. Therefore, he suggested that students at UiTM should be segregated according to their previous experience. If not, additional Arabic classes should be offered for less experienced students before they enrol in the actual Arabic classroom to bridge the gap. Another alternative is to start activities that bring together students of varying experience levels in one group to create a collaborative environment and bridge the motivation gap between them.

The findings indicate that students' motivation and engagement in Arabic language group work are strongly influenced by the sense of relatedness among group members. According to Rasit and Ismail (2024), students' motivation was moderately high, and a significant relationship between motivation and learning achievement was observed, highlighting that social support and peer interaction play a key role in enhancing academic outcomes. Similarly, Ghazali Yusri et al. (2025) found that intrinsic motivation increased when students

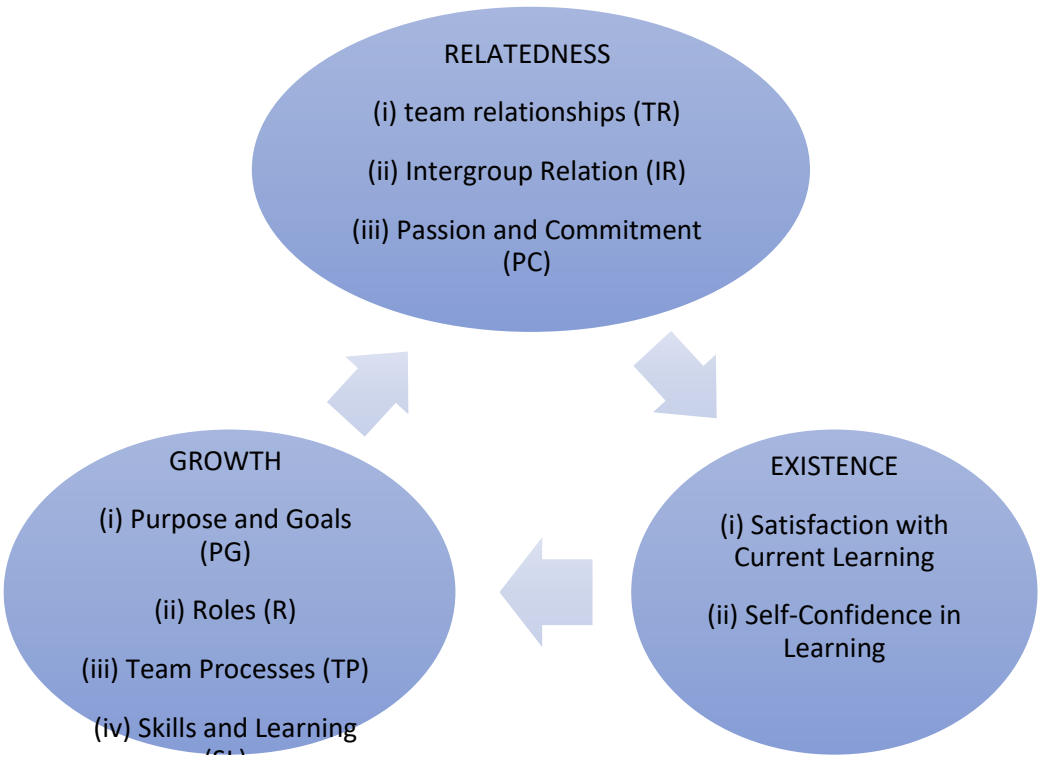
participated in collaborative activities that fostered positive interaction and social connection, demonstrating that a cooperative environment encourages meaningful engagement and confidence. Together, these studies suggest that relatedness within group work not only enhances students' intrinsic motivation but also positively affects language learning outcomes, as students who feel connected and supported are more likely to participate actively, communicate effectively, and commit to group goals.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the study. This study examines how learners perceive group work in language learning. Group activities during interaction benefit learners in many ways. According to Rahmat (2020), in addition to completing the group task, learners gain knowledge and improve their problem-solving and communication skills. Why is this so? According to Tuckman (1965), team members go through different stages in group work. The initial stage is the forming stage. The second stage is the storming stage, where team members may disagree or brainstorm to share their ideas. This is an interesting stage in which learners practice their problem-solving, communication, and negotiation skills. The fourth stage is the performing stage. This is the stage at which the members have decided to present the task's outcome. The last stage is adjourning, where the team members disperse.

The chosen anchor for this framework is Alderfer's (1969) ERG theory of motivation for people at work. However, this theory of motivation is used to represent learners' motivation. The theory states that people are motivated by three main needs; the need for existence, relatedness and growth. The types of needs are used to represent variables for this study. To begin with, the variable relatedness is supported by Bateman's, et.al (2002) (i) team relationships (TR), (ii) intergroup relation (IR) and (iii) passion and commitment (PC). Next, the variable existence is supported by the constructs by Studnicka (2023) such as (i) satisfaction. With current learning and (ii) self-confidence in learning. Lastly, the variable growth is supported by constructs by Bateman, et al. (2002) such as (i) purpose and goals (PG), (ii) roles (R), (iii) team processes (TP) and (iv) skills and learning (SL). Are these needs related to one another? This study also investigates if there is a relationship between relatedness and the other needs.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study: The Influence of Relatedness in Group Work for Language Learning



METHODOLOGY

This quantitative study is done to explore relatedness in group work for language learning. A convenient sample of 157 participants responded to the survey. The instrument used is a 5 Likert-scale survey and is rooted in Alderfer (1969), Studnicka (2023) and Bateman et.at. (2002) to reveal the variables in table 3 below. Table 1 below shows the categories used for the Likert scale; 1 is for Strongly Disagree, 2 is for Disagree, 3 is for Undecided, 4 is for Agree and 5 is for Strongly Agree.

Table 1. Likert Scale Use

1	Strongly Disagree
2	Disagree
3	Neutral
4	Agree
5	Strongly Agree

Table 2. Distribution of Items in the Survey

SECTION	TYPES OF NEED IN ERG	CONSTRUCT	ITEM	TOT ITEM	CRONBACH ALPHA
B	EXISTENCE	Satisfaction with Current Learning	5	13	0.946
		Self-Confidence in Learning	8		
C	GROWTH	Purpose and Goals (PG)	3	12	0.965
		Roles (R)	3		
		Team Processes (TP)	3		
		Skills and Learning (SL)	3		
D	RELATEDNESS	Team Relationships (TR)	4	10	0.954
		Intergroup Relations (IR)	3		
		Passion and Commitment (PC)	3		
				35	0.981

Table 2 presents the distribution of the items of the survey instrument which was developed to examine the psychological needs of learners in group work for language learning is presented. The instrument is comprised of a total of 35 items and is divided into three main sections. The answers to Existence needs are handled in Section B, comprising 13 items related to satisfaction with present learning (5 items) and self-confidence in learning (8 items), which is found to have high reliability with the Cronbach's Alpha of .946. Section C is Growth needs with 12 items distributed evenly (3 items each) across four constructs, purpose and goals, roles, team processes and skills, and learning, and has a Cronbach's alpha of .965. The Relatedness needs items are examined in Section D, with team relationship items (4 items), intergroup relationship items (3 items), and passion/commitment items (3 items) all having a Cronbach's alpha of .954. The overall Cronbach's alpha of .981 for the instrument suggests that the instrument is a valid tool to measure learners' psychological needs in group-based language learning situation (Alderfer, 1969).

Table 3. Reliability Levels, Cronbach’s Alpha Ranges, and Their Interpretations

Reliability Level	Cronbach’s Alpha range	Interpretation
Excellent	0.9 and above	Indicates very high internal consistency
Good	0.80-0.89	Reflects strong internal consistency
Acceptable	0.70-0.79	Indicates acceptable internal

		consistency
Questionable	0.60-0.69	Reflects questionable internal consistency
Poor	Below 0.6	Indicates poor internal consistency

To determine the internal reliability of the instrument, reliability analysis was conducted. Table 3 above shows the distribution and interpretation of Cronbach Alpha range. According to Ahmad, et al. (2024), Cronbach Alpha scores between 0.7 and 0.9 are considered acceptable to excellent. Table 2 also shows the reliability of the survey. The analysis shows a Cronbach alpha of .946 for Existence, .965 for Growth, .954 for Relatedness. The overall Cronbach Alpha for all 35 items is .981; thus, revealing a good reliability of the instrument chosen/used. Further analysis using SPSS is done to present findings to answer the research questions for this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Analysis

According to Ziegenfuss, et.al (2021), researchers report demographic data in percentages to establish sample representatives and allow for generalizability to a larger population. The report also provides an overview of participants' characteristics. Percentages offer a clear and understandable picture of the sample makeup.

Table 4. Percentage for Demographic Profile

Question	Demographic Profile	Categories	Percentage (%)
1	Gender	Male	23%
		Female	77%
3	Cluster	Science & Technology	36%
		Social Sciences & Humanities	64%

Table 4 shows the percentage distribution of respondents' demographic profiles. In terms of gender, 23% of the respondents are male, while 77% are female. Regarding cluster distribution, most respondents 64% are from the Social Sciences and Humanities cluster, followed by 36% from the Science and Technology cluster.

Descriptive Statistics

Why is there a need to report the mean and standard deviation? According to Vetter (2017), Mean (M) represents the average, or centre of a data set. Standard deviation (SD) indicates the typical distance of individual observations from the mean which shows the data's variability or spread. A low SD means the data points are clustered close to the mean whole a high. SD indicates they are more spread out. It is good to have a high SD.

Findings for Relatedness

This section presents data to answer research question 1- How do learners perceive their need for relatedness in group work for language learning?? In the context of this study, this is measured by (i) team relationships, (ii) intergroup relations and (iii) passion and commitment (PC).

Table 5. Mean for Team Relationships (TR)

ITEM	Mean	SD
TRQ1 Team members appreciate one another's unique capabilities.	4.25	0.61
TRQ2 Team members are effective listeners.	4.24	0.62
TRQ3 Communication in our group is open and honest.	4.27	0.63
TRQ4 Members of our team trust each other.	4.23	0.64

Table 5 presents the mean scores for Team Relationship. The highest mean score was reported for Item 3 (M = 4.27, SD = 0.63), suggesting that students communicate openly and honestly in their group, followed by Item 1 (M = 4.25, SD = 0.61) indicating that team members appreciate one another's unique capabilities. The lowest mean score was observed for Item 4 (M = 4.23, SD = 0.64), suggesting that students trust one another among their team members.

Table 6. Mean for Intergroup Relations (IR)

ITEM	Mean	SD
IRQ1 We are able to resolve conflicts with other teams collaboratively.	4.2	0.64
IRQ2 We communicate effectively with other groups.	4.19	0.65
IRQ3 Our collaborations with other teams are productive, worthwhile, and yield good results.	4.2	0.63

Table 6 presents the mean scores for Intergroup Relations (IR). The highest mean score was observed for Item 1 (M = 4.20, SD = 0.64) and Item 3 (M = 4.20, SD = 0.63). Item 1 indicates that students are able to resolve conflicts with other teams collaboratively, while Item 3 suggests that collaborations among team members are productive, worthwhile and yield good results. The lowest mean was recorded for Item 2 (M = 4.19, SD = 0.65), which reflects that the students communicate effectively with other groups.

Table 7. Mean for Passion and Commitment (PC)

ITEM	Mean	SD
PCQ1 Working on our team inspires people to do their best.	4.27	0.61
PCQ2 People are proud to be part of our team.	4.19	0.64
PCQ3 My team is proud of its accomplishments and optimistic about our work.	4.25	0.61

With reference to Table 7, the highest mean was recorded for Item 1 (M =4.27, SD=0.61) where students are inspired to do their best by working on their team. The second highest mean was recorded for Item 3 (M=4.25, SD=0.61), indicating that the team is proud of its accomplishments and optimistic about its work. The lowest mean score was observed for Item 2 (M = 4.19, SD = 0.64) which showed that people are proud to be part of the team.

Findings for Existence

This section presents data to answer research question 2- How do learners perceive their need for existence in group work for language learning?? In the context of this study, this is measured by (i) Satisfaction with current learning and (ii) self-confidence in learning.

Table 8. Mean for Satisfaction with Current Learning (CL)

ITEM	Mean	SD
CLQ1 The methods used in this role-play/activity were supportive and effective	4.11	0.62
CLQ2 The role-play/activity provided me with a variety of educational materials and activities to support my learning.	4.09	0.66
CLQ3 I liked the way my instructor taught me the role play /activity	4.28	0.69
CLQ4 The teaching materials used in this role-play/activity were motivating and helped me learn.	4.15	0.65
CLQ5 The way my instructor taught the role play/activity was appropriate to my way of learning.	4.26	0.62

With reference to Table 8, the highest mean was recorded for CLQ3 (M =4.28, SD=0.69) and the second highest mean was recorded for CLQ5 (M=4.26, SD=0.62), indicating the students liked the way used by the

instructor in mastering roleplay activity and the teaching approach was aligned with their learning styles. High mean scores were also observed for CLQ4 (M=4.15, SD=0.65), CLQ1 (M=4.11, SD=0.62) and CLQ2 (M=4.09, SD=0.66), suggesting that the methods and teaching materials utilized by the instructors in roleplay activity were supportive, effective and motivating in the students' learning. Overall, the results indicate a high level of satisfaction with current learning through roleplay, with mean scores ranging from 4.09 to 4.28.

Table 9. Mean for Self-Confidence in Learning (L)

ITEM	Mean	SD
LQ1 I am confident that I am mastering the class role-play/activity presented to me by my instructors.	3.78	0.75
LQ2 I am confident that this role-play/activity covered the essential content necessary to master the material in the curriculum.	3.96	0.66
LQ3 I am confident that I am developing the skills and gaining the required knowledge from this role play/activity to perform the necessary tasks in my course	3.95	0.67
LQ4 My instructors used a variety of helpful resources to teach this role play/activity	4.17	0.65
LQ5 It is my responsibility as a student to learn what I need during role play /activity classes.	4.31	0.62
LQ6 I know how to get help when I do not understand the concepts in the role play/activity.	4.16	0.59
LQ7 I know how to use role play exercises to learn the critical/key aspects of this course.	4.04	0.68
LQ8 It is the instructor's responsibility to show me what I need to learn during the role-play/activity class.	4.13	0.69

With reference to Table 9, the highest mean was recorded for LQ5 (M=4.31, SD=0.62), showing that students strongly perceived that it is their responsibility to learn what do they need in roleplay activity. The following highest mean scores were recorded for LQ4 (M=4.17, SD=0.65) and LQ6 (M=4.16, SD=0.59), indicating that the students agree that their instructors used helpful resources in teaching roleplay and they can seek help if they do not understand the activity. The lowest score was recorded for LQ1 (M=3.78, SD = 0.75), suggesting that some students may have the confidence in mastering the roleplay activity while some may require additional time and effort to master it.

Findings for Growth

This section presents data to answer research question 3- How do learners perceive their need for growth in group work for language learning?

In the context of this study, this is measured by (i) purpose and goals (PG), (ii) roles (R), (iii) team processes (TP) and (iv) skills and learning (SL).

Table 10. Mean for Purpose and Goals (PG)

ITEM	Mean	SD
PGQ1 Our team has a meaningful, shared purpose.	4.22	0.62
PGQ2 We are strongly committed to a shared mission.	4.26	0.59
PGQ3 We set and meet challenging goals.	4.21	0.61

Table 10 shows that respondents have a positive view of the Purpose and Goals construct. The highest mean score was for PGQ2 (4.26), followed by PGQ1 (4.22) and PGQ3 (4.21). These results indicate that the team has a shared, meaningful purpose, is highly committed, and can set and achieve challenging goals, which supports effective teamwork.

Table 11. Mean for Roles (R)

ITEM	Mean	SD
RQ1 Team members clearly understand their roles.	4.25	0.58
RQ2 When an individual's role changes, an intentional effort is made to clarify it for everyone on the team.	4.19	0.61
RQ3 Everyone values what each member contributes to the team	4.28	0.6

Table 11 shows that respondents have a positive perception of team roles, with mean scores of 4.28, 4.25, and 4.19 for RQ3, RQ1, and RQ2, respectively. These findings indicate that team members understand their roles, value each other's contributions, and clarify role changes effectively, reflecting strong role awareness and effective teamwork.

Table 12. Mean for Team Processes (TP)

ITEM	Mean	SD
TPQ1 We address and resolve issues quickly.	4.17	0.66
TPQ2 Our team works with a great deal of flexibility to adapt to changing needs.	4.22	0.63
TPQ3 When we choose consensus decision-making, we do it effectively.	4.24	0.63

Table 12 shows that respondents have a positive perception of team effectiveness, with mean scores of TPQ3 = 4.24, TPQ2 = 4.22, and TPQ1 = 4.17. This reflects the team's ability to reach consensus, adapt to change, and address issues effectively, while also demonstrating high levels of cooperation and strong interpersonal relationships within the group.

Table 13. Mean for Skills and Learning (SL)

ITEM	Mean	SD
SLQ1 We have the skills we need to do our jobs effectively.	4.16	0.6
SQL2 We view everything, even mistakes, as opportunities for learning and growth	4.24	0.64
SLQ3 Team members embrace continuous improvement as a way of life.	4.28	0.61

Table 13 shows high mean scores for Skills and Learning. The highest mean score (4.28) indicates that respondents value continuous improvement. They also see mistakes as opportunities to learn. The lowest mean score (4.16) shows that respondents have the skills needed to perform their tasks effectively.

Exploratory Statistics

According to He (2024), correlation is a statistical technique that shows how strongly two variables are related to each other or the degree of association between the two. It's a common tool for describing simple relationships without making a statement about cause and effect. To determine if there is a significant association in the mean scores between relatedness and existence, data is analyzed using SPSS for correlations. Results are presented separately in table 14 below.

Findings for Relationship between need for relatedness and existence

This section presents data to answer research question 4- Is there a relationship between need for relatedness and existence in group work for language learning?

(H1- There is no relationship between need for relatedness and existence in group work for language learning)

Table 14. Correlation between relatedness and existence

		RELATEDNESS	EXISTENCY
RELATEDNESS	Pearson (Correlation	1	.811**
	Sig (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	157	157
EXISTENCY	Pearson (Correlation	.811**	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	157	157

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 14 shows there is an association between relatedness and existence. Correlation analysis shows that there is a high significant association between relatedness and existence (r=.811**) and (p=.000). According to He (2024), coefficient is significant at the .05 level and positive correlation is measured on a 0.1 to 1.0 scale. Weak positive correlation would be in the range of 0.1 to 0.3, moderate positive correlation from 0.3 to 0.5, and strong positive correlation from 0.5 to 1.0. This means that there is also a strong positive relationship between relatedness and existence. Null hypothesis is rejected.

Findings for Relationship between Need for relatedness and growth

This section presents data to answer research question 5- Is there a relationship between need for relatedness and growth in group work for language learning?

(H2-There is no relationship between need for relatedness and growth in group work for language learning)

Table 15. Correlation between relatedness and growth

		RELATEDNESS	GROWTH
RELATEDNESS	Pearson (Correlation	1	.924**
	Sig (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	157	157
GRPWTH	Pearson (Correlation	.924**	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	157	157

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 15 shows there is an association between relatedness and growth. Correlation analysis shows that there is a high significant association between relatedness and growth (r=.924**) and (p=.000). According to He (2024), coefficient is significant at the .05 level and positive correlation is measured on a 0.1 to 1.0 scale. Weak positive correlation would be in the range of 0.1 to 0.3, moderate positive correlation from 0.3 to 0.5, and strong positive correlation from 0.5 to 1.0. This means that there is also a strong positive relationship between relatedness and growth. Null hypothesis is rejected.

Inferential Statistics (significant difference)

According to He (2024), there are three main functions of a T-test and ANOVA. Firstly, both are done to compare means. This test is also done to determine if the average scores (mean) or values of two groups, or one group against a known value, are different enough to be considered statistically meaningful and are not just due to random chance. Secondly, T-test and ANOVA are done to test hypotheses. Researchers use t-tests and ANOVA to test hypotheses about means, such as whether a new treatment significantly impacts a variable or if there's a difference in performance between two distinct groups. Lastly, T-test and ANOVA are done to identify significant differences. The output of a t-test provides a p-value (significance value). If this p-value is below a predetermined threshold (often 0.05), it indicates a statistically significant difference, allowing researchers to draw conclusions about the populations from which their samples were drawn.

Findings on Differences in the Three Types of Needs across Clusters

This section presents the findings for Research Question 6: Is there a significant difference in all three types of needs in language learning across clusters?

(H3: There is no significant difference in the three types of needs across clusters.)

Table 16. T test for all factors across Clusters

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
						Significance		Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	One-Sided p	Two-Sided p	Difference	Difference	Lower	Upper
EXISTENCE	Equal variances assumed	2.070	.152	.598	155	.276	.551	.05115	.08560	-.11794	.22025
	Equal variances not assumed			.629	131.649	.265	.530	.05115	.08127	-.10962	.21192
GROWTH	Equal variances assumed	.434	.511	1.098	155	.137	.274	.09562	.08707	-.07637	.26762
	Equal variances not assumed			1.138	125.977	.129	.257	.09562	.08402	-.07065	.26189
RELATEDNESS	Equal variances assumed	.483	.488	1.037	155	.151	.301	.09146	.08816	-.08269	.26561
	Equal variances not assumed			1.080	127.556	.141	.282	.09146	.08469	-.07612	.25904

With reference to table 16, a T-test was conducted to examine the effects of all types of needs in language learning on clusters. The analysis shows there is no significant difference between existence (F=2.070, p=0.551), growth (F=0.434, p=0.274), and relatedness (F=0.483, p=0.301) across clusters. Hence, the null hypothesis is not rejected, as no statistically significant differences were found across the academic clusters.

DISCUSSION

This study investigated learners' perceptions of relatedness, existence and growth needs in group work for language learning, the relationships among these needs, and differences across academic clusters. Overall, the findings indicate that learners had positive perceptions of psychological needs in group-based learning. Relatedness was reflected in positive team relationships, interaction and commitment, while existence and growth were reflected in satisfaction with learning activities, self-confidence, goal setting, role clarity and skill development. The findings provide insights into how these psychological needs are perceived within collaborative language learning environments.

Research Question 1: How do learners perceive their need for relatedness in group work for language learning?

The findings indicate that learners generally perceived relatedness positively through team relationships, intergroup relations, and passion and commitment. Positive interactions, open communication and mutual appreciation were reflected in their responses. These findings highlight the importance of social connections and a sense of belonging in group-based language learning. This is consistent with Ryan and Deci's (2020) discussion of the role of social relationships in motivation and engagement.

Research Question 2: How do learners perceive their need for existence in group work for language learning?

The findings indicate that learners generally reported positive perceptions of their current learning experiences and self-confidence in learning. Appropriate instructional support, learning materials and teaching approaches were among the aspects reflected in their responses. However, the comparatively lower mean score for confidence in mastering role-play activities (M = 3.78) suggests that some learners may require additional

guidance and support. These findings are consistent with Hariri et al. (2021) and Harith et al. (2022), who highlighted the importance of supportive learning environments and guidance in students' learning experiences.

Research Question 3: How do learners perceive their need for growth in group work for language learning?

The findings show positive perceptions of growth needs, particularly in relation to shared goals, role clarity,team processes and skills development. Learners recognised the importance of shared responsibilities and continuous improvement in group activities. These findings are consistent with Abd Rahman et al. (2025), who discussed the role of perceived learning value in learners' motivation. Within the ERG framework, growth needs reflect learners' perceptions of opportunities for personal and skill development.

Research Question 4: Is there a relationship between need for relatedness and existence in group work for language learning?

The findings revealed a strong positive relationship between relatedness and existence ($r = .811$, $p < .001$). This suggests that learners who reported stronger relatedness also tended to report more positive perceptions of existence needs. The finding is consistent with Alderfer's (1972) ERG theory, which recognises that different needs may operate simultaneously and are interrelated.

Research Question 5: Is there a relationship between need for relatedness and growth in group work for language learning?

A very strong positive relationship was found between relatedness and growth ($r = .924$, $p < .001$). This indicates that higher relatedness scores were associated with higher growth scores among the respondents. The finding is consistent with the ERG framework, which recognises the interconnected nature of existence, relatedness and growth needs. However, this association does not establish a causal relationship between these needs.

Research Question 6: Is there a significant difference for all types of needs in language learning across clusters?

The analysis revealed no statistically significant differences in existence, growth and relatedness scores between the Science and Technology and Social Sciences and Humanities clusters. This suggests that the respondents from both academic clusters reported comparable perceptions of these psychological needs in group-based language learning. Nevertheless, the findings should be interpreted within the context of the sample and study design.

From the perspective of Tuckman's (1965) group development model, the positive perceptions of teamwork, communication and shared responsibilities may be discussed in relation to the stages of group development. Tuckman's model describes how groups develop through forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning. In the context of group work for language learning, these stages provide a theoretical perspective for understanding how learners interact, manage differences, establish shared responsibilities and work towards common goals. This is consistent with Johnson, Johnson, and Smith's (2014) findings on the role of structured group work in fostering trust, cooperation and task performance. However, the present study did not directly examine the progression of groups through these stages. Therefore, Tuckman's model provides a theoretical perspective for understanding group dynamics rather than an empirically established finding of this study. Overall, the findings highlight the relevance of relatedness, existence and growth needs in understanding learners' perceptions of group work in language learning. The positive associations between relatedness and the other two needs provide further insights into the interconnected nature of psychological needs within the ERG framework. Relatedness emerges as an important aspect of group-based language learning, particularly in terms of social interaction, mutual support and a sense of belonging.

The findings also offer pedagogical considerations for planning supportive collaborative learning activities. Lecturers may consider providing opportunities for positive social interaction, clear task responsibilities, appropriate instructional support and continuous skill development to address learners' relatedness, existence

and growth needs. These considerations may contribute to a more supportive and engaging learning environment. Overall, the findings are consistent with the theoretical perspectives of ERG theory and Tuckman's group development model in understanding learners' psychological needs in group-based language learning.

CONCLUSION

Based on Alderfer's ERG Theory of Motivation and Tuckman's stages of group development, this study highlights the relevance of relatedness, existence and growth needs in group work for language learning. The findings indicate that learners generally had positive perceptions of these psychological needs, with significant positive relationships between relatedness and existence, as well as between relatedness and growth. These findings provide insights into the interconnected nature of psychological needs in collaborative language learning environments. The study also contributes to the existing literature by examining learners' perceptions of motivational needs in group-based language learning.

Study Implications

The findings have implications for understanding learners' psychological needs and planning group work activities in language learning. The positive perceptions of social interaction, learning support and opportunities for personal development highlight the importance of considering relatedness, existence and growth needs in collaborative learning environments. The findings offer insights for theoretical understanding and classroom practices, particularly in creating supportive learning environments that encourage participation, interaction and continuous development.

Theoretical Implications

The findings provide support for the relevance of ERG theory in understanding learners' psychological needs in group work for language learning. The positive relationships between relatedness and existence, as well as relatedness and growth, highlight the interconnected nature of these needs within the ERG framework. This suggests that learners' social connections, learning experiences and opportunities for personal development are relevant considerations when examining psychological needs in collaborative language learning contexts.

Pedagogical Implications

Lecturers should consider designing group activities that address learners' relatedness, existence and growth needs. To support relatedness, activities can encourage positive interaction, open communication, mutual appreciation and shared responsibilities among group members. For existence needs, lecturers can provide appropriate learning materials, clear instructions and guidance to support learners' confidence in completing group tasks. Meanwhile, growth needs can be addressed through meaningful group objectives, clearly defined roles, opportunities for skill development and continuous feedback. These practices may help create a more supportive and engaging environment for collaborative language learning.

Future Research

Future studies may examine learners' psychological needs across different language proficiency levels and academic disciplines. Qualitative or mixed-method approaches could provide a deeper understanding of learners' experiences and interactions during group work. Longitudinal studies would also offer opportunities to examine how learners' psychological needs change over time in collaborative learning contexts. Additionally, future research could investigate other learning approaches, such as peer mentoring and cooperative learning, to further explore their relationships with learners' motivation and engagement.

REFERENCES

1. Abd Rahman, A. B. W., bin Samsun Baharun, M. N. A., Isa, A. A. M., Maromar, F., Hibaoui, A., & Rahmat, N. H. (2025). Investigating the Influence of Value in Learnersâ€™ Motivation to Learn. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Applied Science*, *9*(24), 414-425.

2. Abu Hasan, N., Temyati, Z., Kamarudin, M. F., & Susanto, P. (2024). Neo Adult Learners' Instructional Learning Model in Higher Learning Education. *International Journal of e-Learning and Higher Education (IJELHE), 19*(3), 41-48. https://doi.org/10.24191/ijelhe.v19n3.1933
3. Ahmad, N., Alias, F.A., Hamat, M., & Mohamed, S.A. (2024) Reliability Analysis: Application of Cronbach's Alpha in Research Instruments. SIG: e-L earning@CS, 114-119. https://appspenang.uitm.edu.my/sigcs/
4. Alderfer, C. P. (1972). *Existence, relatedness, and growth: Human needs in organizational settings.* New York, NY: Free Press.
5. Alderfer, C.P. (1969) An Empirical Test of a New Theory of Human Needs. Organizational Behavior and Human Performance, 4, 142-175. https://doi.org/10.1016/0030-5073(69)90004-X
6. Bateman, B., Colin Wilson, F., Bingham, D. (2002) Team effectiveness-development of an audit questionnaire. Journal of Management Development, 21(3), 215-226.
7. Burke, A. S. (2011). Group Work: How to Use Groups Effectively. *The Journal of Effective Teaching, 11*, 87-95.
8. Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2017). Self-determination theory: Basic psychological needs in motivation, development, and wellness. Guilford Publications.
9. Hambali, N., Muhamad, S. H. A., Noh, N., Alias, A. N., & Rahmat, N. H. (2025). Exploring The Influence of Existence, Relatedness and Growth On Learner's Motivation. Asian Journal of Social Science Research, 7(1), 104–124. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15804199
10. Hariri, H., Karwan, D. H., Haenilah, E. Y., Rini, R., & Suparman, U. (2021). Motivation and learning strategies: Student motivation affects student learning strategies. European Journal of Educational Research, 10(1), 39-49. https://doi.org/10.12973/eu-jer.10.1.39
11. Harith, N. H. M., Zain, Z. M., Yusof, R., Lokman, A., Batau, M. F. A., & Rahmat, N. H. (2022). Exploring Classroom Motivation Using Alderfer's Theory. International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 12(10), 1365 – 1385. DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v12-i10/15009
12. He, L. (2024) The Application of SPSS Correlation Analysis in the Study if Precision Teaching of English in Universities. Applied Mathematics and Nonlinear Science, 9(1), 1-13. http://dx.doi.org/10.2478/amns-2024-1371
13. Ismail, T. N. T., Vadeveloo, T., Zafifa, N., Kamarunzaman, R. Y., Aziz, F. M. M., & Rahmat, N. H. (2023). Exploring Motivation for Learning Through Aldefer's Theory. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 13*(2), 149-167. DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v13-i2/14453
14. Jeno, L. M., Raaheim, A., Kristensen, S. M., Kristensen, K. D., Hole, T. N., Haugland, M. J., & Mæland, S. (2017). The Relative Effect of Team-Based Learning on Motivation and Learning: A Self-Determination Theory Perspective. *CBE-Life Sciences Education, 16*(4), ar59. https://doi.org/10.1187/cbe.17-03-0055
15. Johnson, D. W., Johnson, R. T., & Smith, K. A. (2014). Cooperative learning: Improving university instruction by basing practice on validated theory. Journal on Excellence in University Teaching, 25(3–4), 85–118.
16. Latham, G. P., & Pinder, C. C. (2005). Work motivation theory and research at the dawn of the twenty-first century. Annual Review of Psychology, 56, 485–516. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.55.090902.142105
17. Light, R.J. (2001). *Making the Most of College: Students Speak their Minds*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
18. Lotriet, M., Pienaar, M., & Erasmus, H.E. 2025. Group Dynamics: Tuckman's Stages of Group Development in Small-Group Tutorials. Educational resources (unpublished). Department for Education Innovation, University of Pretoria.
19. Nguyen, H., Gijlers, H., & Pisoni, G. (2023). Identifying struggling teams in online challenge-based learning. *Higher Education, Skills and Work-Based Learning, 13*(2), 233-248. https://doi.org/10.1108/HESWBL-06-2022-0131
20. Nor, N. H. M., & Che Hassan, N. S. I. (2025). From forming to performing: Analysing group collaboration using Tuckman's model. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science, 9*(9), 8362–8375. https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.909000683

21. Özdemir, O., & Seçkin, H., (2025). Exploring foreign language anxiety in higher education: Multifaceted insights into causes, impacts, and coping strategies. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, vol.11. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2025.101364
22. Payne, B. K., Monl-Turner, E., Smith, D., & Sumter, D. (2006). Improving group work: voices of students. *Education*, 126 (3), 441-448.
23. Rahmat, N. H., Aripin, N., Razlan, Z., Arepin, M., Mohandas, E.S., & Sim, M.S. (2021). Analysing the cadence of group conflicts across gender during online learning. *European Journal of Open Education and E-learning Studies*, *6*(2), 57–73. https://doi.org/10.46827/ejoe.v6i2.3849
24. Rahmat, N.H. (2020) Conflict Resolution Strategies in Class Discussions. International Journal of Education, 12(3), 49-66. https://www.macrothink.org/journal/index.php/ije/article/view/16914
25. Rasit, N., & Ismail, Z. (2024). *Relationship between motivation and students' Arabic language learning outcomes in Malaysian religious secondary schools*. *Al-Azkiyaa – International Journal of Language and Education, 3*(1), 25–38. https://doi.org/10.33102/alazkiyaa93
26. Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2020). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation from a self-determination theory perspective. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 61*, 101860. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2020.101860
27. Studnicka, K., Zarzycka, D., and Zalewski, J. (2023) Student satisfaction and self-confidence in learning scale (SSCL)-reliability and validity test of the Polish version. Signa Vitae. 2023; 19(5): 104-111. doi: 10.22514/sv.2023.069.
28. Tuckman, B. (1965). Developmental Sequence in Small Groups. Psychological Bulletin, 63, 384-399. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0022100
29. Vetter, T.R. (2017) Descriptive Statistics: Reporting the Answers to the 5 Basic Questions of Who, What, Why, When, Where, and a Sixth, so What? Anesth Analg, 12595), 1797-1802. https://doi.org/10.1213/ane.0000000000002471
30. Wright, A. L., Irving, G. L., Pereira, S., & Staggs, J. (2024). An instructional innovation that embeds group learning in case teaching: The table case method. *Journal of Management Education*, 48(3), 526–563. https://doi.org/10.1177/10525629231216642
31. Yusri, G., Yusoff, M. S. A., Sardi, J., Abdul Majid, M. A., Isa, A. A., & Puas, B. (2025). *Intrinsic motivation among Arabic language students*. *Journal of Creative Practices in Language Learning and Teaching, 13*(2), 66–77. Retrieved from https://journal.uitm.edu.my/ojs/index.php/CPLT/article/view/8163
32. Ziegenfuss, J. Y., Casey A. E., Jennifer M. D., Meghan M. J., Thomas E. K, and Marna, C. (202) Impact of Demographic Survey Questions on Response Rate and Measurement: A Randomized Experiment. *Survey Practice* 14 (1), https://doi.org/10.29115/SP-2021-0010.
33. Zulkifli, N., Johari, N., Roselan, S., Aminuddin, A., Rosli, H., & Rahmat, N. (2025). A study of the relationship between all stages of group work in Tuckman's model. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, *15*(4). https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v15-i4/25009