

An Investigation of Group Work through McClelland's Theory

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ABSTRACT

Collaborative group work is commonly practiced nowadays, and it enhances cognitive engagement among students and their social interaction. However, the outcomes often vary due to individual motivation. Motivation plays an important role in successful language learning. This study aims to explore group work using McClelland's theory, which addresses the need for power, achievement and affiliation, as well as the relationship between these motivational needs. This quantitative study used a survey that consists of four sections as the instrument, which is adapted from McClelland (1987), Studnicka (2023) and Bateman et al. (2002). The participants in this study were 157 students from a public university. The findings show that students perceived high levels of power, achievement and affiliation in group work activities, particularly roleplay. In addition, there are strong correlations between these three types of needs, suggesting that they are closely interconnected. This study offers pedagogical insights for instructors to design language activities in group work settings to address students' motivational needs.

Keywords: Group work, McClelland's theory, collaborative learning

INTRODUCTION

Background of Study

Collaborative group work, wherein students engage with one another, is an essential and even mandatory component of higher education credentials. It is where students take control of their own learning experiences by doing classroom learning tasks and exercises collaboratively (Ulla & Perales, 2021). Research has shown that effective group work enhances students' cognitive engagement and social interaction, yet outcomes often vary due to differences in individual motivation and interpersonal dynamics (Johnson et al., 2014). Motivation influences how individuals contribute, communicate and persist in group tasks. Among the motivational frameworks frequently applied to understand human behavior in achievement-oriented contexts is McClelland's Theory of Needs, which emphasizes learned social motives as key drivers of performance. Investigating group work through this theoretical lens offers a deeper understanding of how individual motivational needs shape group dynamics and outcomes.

McClelland's Theory of Needs is a well-known psychological theory used to explain intrinsic motivation. This theory suggests that human behavior is motivated by three main needs: the need for achievement, the need for power and the need for affiliation. The Need for Achievement displays a person's drive to succeed and perform well. McClelland's research showed that those with a strong desire for accomplishment usually do better than those with a moderate or low need for achievement. The need for power refers to the desire to influence and dominate other people. The Need for Affiliation identifies people who actively value forming and sustaining social ties and who like being part of a group (Osemeke & Adegboyega, 2017).

Statement of Problem

Group work is widely employed in higher education as a pedagogical strategy to promote active learning, critical thinking and collaborative skills essential for academic and professional success. Its appeal may arise from the perception that it provides instructors with an efficient method to facilitate collaborative learning among students. Studies indicate that both students and instructors hold positive attitudes toward group work, valuing clear structure and leadership in its early stages, recognizing its effectiveness in overcoming challenges over time. (Zulkifli et al., 2025; Ulla & Perales, 2021; Hung & Mai, 2020; Johnson et al., 2014). For example, Ulla and Perales (2021), who conducted a study on group work in the Task-Based Learning framework in Thailand, revealed that students believed that performing in-class tasks and activities in groups could help them develop and improve their English language skills, as it allowed them to work collaboratively with their classmates. Similarly, Hung and Mai (2020), explored teachers' perceptions of the implementation of group work in Vietnam and found that Vietnamese instructors recognized the importance of group work in their classrooms to enhance students' academic performance. They believed that utilising group work would offer students opportunities to practice the language, develop their speaking skills and alleviate their speaking anxiety.

Despite the widespread adoption of group work in higher education, issues such as unequal contribution, lack of engagement and ineffective collaboration continue to challenge instructors and students. Recent research confirms that motivation is a central determinant of students' engagement in collaborative learning, influencing not only participation but also academic outcomes and group dynamics (Wei, 2024). Although group work has been widely investigated in educational and organisational settings, most existing studies focus primarily on general outcomes, such as collaboration effectiveness or academic performance, rather than on the motivational mechanisms that drive participation. While structural factors such as task design and assessment methods have been extensively studied, less attention has been given to the motivational needs that drive students' behaviour within groups. Motivation plays a crucial role in determining levels of participation, responsibility sharing and persistence in group-based tasks, making it a critical factor in understanding group work effectiveness. McClelland's Theory of Needs, specifically the needs for achievement, affiliation and power, has been widely applied to understand individual motivation, but its use to explain differences in how individuals engage and behave within group work remains underdeveloped.

Recent research on digital peer collaboration in educational contexts highlights this theoretical shortfall by showing that while the needs for achievement and affiliation significantly influence students' intentions to collaborate, the role of the need for power in group context is ambiguous and may vary between student populations (e.g., part-time vs full-time learners), suggesting that motivational dynamics in group work are more complex than traditionally assumed (Rodjanatham and Badir, 2025). Future research, therefore, is encouraged to go beyond general motivational constructs and systematically investigate how each of McClelland's three needs uniquely affects group interactions, roles and engagement patterns across different contexts and participant groups (e.g., online vs in-person, varied disciplines). Hence, this study aims to address that gap by investigating group work from the perspective of McClelland's (1965) Theory of Needs.

Objective of the Study and Research Questions

This study is done to explore group work using McClelland's theory. Specifically, this study is done to answer the following questions;

- How do learners perceive the need for power in group work for language learning?
- How do learners perceive the need for achievement in group work in language learning?
- How do learners perceive the need for affiliation in group work in language learning?
- Is there a relationship between all types of needs in group work for language learning?

(H1- There is no relationship between all types of needs in group work for language learning)

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework of the Study

- McClelland Theory of Motivation and Learning a Language

Motivation has long been recognized as a central factor in successful learning, particularly in contexts that require sustained effort such as foreign or third language acquisition. Within classical motivation theories, McClelland's Theory of Needs offers a useful framework for examining students' experiences in group-based learning. Developed in the field of educational and organisational psychology, the theory explains motivation through three learned needs, namely the need for achievement, the need for affiliation and the need for power (McClelland, 1987).

Understanding what motivates students to learn a language is especially important when instruction occurs in groups. From McClelland's perspective, students are guided by differing motivational needs that influence how they participate, interact and respond to group tasks. These needs develop through social experience and may be shaped by classroom practices, making the theory suitable for exploring students' perceptions of group work. By linking individual motivation, patterns of behaviour, and the learning environment, McClelland's theory provides a basis for understanding how group work influences language-learning outcomes. Understanding what drives students to learn a language is particularly important in group learning contexts. From McClelland's perspective, students differ in the strength of their motivational needs, and these differences influence how they approach tasks, interact with peers and respond to learning environments (McClelland, 1987). In language-learning settings, such needs shape students' engagement, persistence and participation during group activities. These motivational needs develop through social experience and may be shaped by classroom practices. Group work can therefore be viewed as a social learning context in which students' motivational needs are either supported or constrained, influencing language learning outcomes.

To explain these motivational differences, McClelland's Theory of Needs focuses on three main types of motivation that guide students' behaviour during group activities. The need for achievement refers to an individual's desire to perform tasks well, meet standards and experience a sense of accomplishment. Students with high need for achievement tend to prefer tasks that involve clear goals, feedback and personal responsibility (McClelland, 1987). In language learning, this need is reflected in students who actively seek improvement in accuracy, fluency, or task performance. Group work can support achievement-oriented students when roles are clearly defined and when outcomes allow individual contribution to be recognized. Research has shown that structured group tasks encourage goal-oriented behaviour and increase task persistence, particularly in challenging learning contexts such as learning a new language system (Oxford, 1997).

The need for affiliation refers to the desire to form positive relationships, gain acceptance and avoid social rejection. This need is especially relevant in language classrooms, where communication anxiety and fear of negative evaluation often affect student participation. Students with a strong need for affiliation are more likely to feel comfortable engaging in pair or group discussions, as these settings reduce pressure and create a supportive social environment (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). Group work allows students to practice language in low-risk situations, where peer support can reduce anxiety and increase willingness to communicate. From McClelland's perspective, such social interaction satisfies affiliative needs and sustains motivation over time.

The need for power involves the desire to influence others, assume leadership roles or gain recognition within a group. In educational settings, this need does not necessarily carry a negative meaning. McClelland (1987) distinguishes between personal power and socialised power, the latter referring to leadership that supports group goals. In group-based language tasks, students with a higher need for power may naturally assume roles such as discussion leaders or coordinators. When appropriately guided, this can enhance group organisation and task completion. However, without a clear structure, power needs may dominate interaction and limit equal participation, highlighting the importance of teacher guidance in group work design.

When applied to language learning, McClelland's theory offers a lens for understanding why students respond differently to group work activities. Language learning is not only a cognitive process but also a social one, requiring interaction, risk-taking and sustained effort. Group work provides opportunities for students to meet achievement goals, build social connections, and exercise leadership in meaningful ways. Studies in communicative language teaching consistently show that well-managed group activities increase student engagement, interactional output and motivation (Richards, 2006; Johnson et al., 2014).

When Arabic is learned as a third language, McClelland's theory becomes increasingly significant in explaining how motivational needs shape learners' attitudes and learning outcomes. Students often face unfamiliar scripts, sound systems and grammatical structures, which may reduce confidence and increase learning anxiety. Group work can act as a motivational support system, where affiliative needs reduce isolation, achievement needs drive effort and guided power roles promote responsibility. By grounding the investigation of group work in McClelland's Theory of Motivation, this study positions motivation as a socially shaped factor that interacts closely with classroom practices.

In summary, McClelland's theory is useful for understanding how group work functions in language learning classrooms. The theory explains how students' motivational needs influence their behaviour and participation during group activities within a specific learning environment. Among these needs, affiliation is particularly important because a positive, supportive social atmosphere can encourage students to interact more actively and use the language with greater confidence.

Overall, McClelland's framework enables this study to view group work not only as a teaching method but also as a learning environment that influences student motivation. By applying this framework, the study examines how feelings of connection within a group influence students' participation, interaction and persistence in language learning.

- Social Constructivism and Group Interaction

Aside from McClelland's Theory, Vygotsky (1978) introduced Social Constructivism and Group Interaction Theory, which highlight the advantages of collaborative learning. According to this theory, learning happens through socio-cultural interactions that powerfully affect individuals' cognitive development and learning abilities. Vygotsky points out that learning does not take place individually but is influenced by social interaction within specific cultural and environmental contexts. Schunk (2012) describes that knowledge is built through ongoing communication, discussion and collaboration. Consistent with this view, group interaction becomes a vital space for learning, particularly in foreign language education. Through group interaction, students manage to share ideas and experiences, exchange ideas and experiences at the same time, enhance their language skills through group activities. Thus, this theory conceptualizes learning begins in the social world before it becomes individual.

Central to understanding how social interaction facilitates learning is Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). A key idea in Social Constructivism and Group Interaction Theory is peer learning, which is academically conceptualized as the Zone of Proximal Development. ZPD refers to the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem-solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1978). Learning is considered most effective within this zone, rather than when tasks are either too simple or excessively challenging. ZPD becomes active in group interaction as students work with peers and receive guidance from teachers without being provided with direct solutions. Group interaction gradually and systematically improves students' performance through social support. Studies in second language acquisition have demonstrated the effectiveness of peer collaboration within the ZPD. Language development is a process that varies across students, across proficiency levels and across concepts or skills to be learned when expert feedback is provided within students' ZPDs (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994). This process reflects a student-centered learning approach in which students develop autonomy while being guided by instructors. Through group interaction, students complete tasks beyond their individual capabilities with peer and instructor assistance. Mahn (2015) highlights that effective teaching within the ZPD demands

instructors to acknowledge that each student possesses a unique set of abilities and capacities shaped by their own distinct zone of proximal development.

Building upon the concept of ZPD, another crucial element in facilitating effective learning within this zone is scaffolding. Scaffolding is closely related to the ZPD and refers to a technique for adjusting the level of instructional support provided to learners (Alkhudiry, 2022). In practice, teachers or more knowledgeable peers offer temporary support to assist students in completing tasks that are beyond their individual capabilities. This support is gradually reduced as students develop higher proficiency. Within group interaction, scaffolding often occurs naturally through collaboration and communication, allowing students to construct understanding in a gradual and meaningful way. In the context of foreign language acquisition, scaffolding allows students to complete tasks with more assured, rely less on the teacher, and foster independent learning once the temporary support is removed.

Along with ZPD and scaffolding, the basic role of language in the learning process is also emphasized in Vygotsky's theory. Vygotsky believed that language is the primary tool of thought in Social Constructivism. Language fulfils the communication purpose but still facilitates cognitive processes, comprehension and knowledge construction. Knowledge acquisition takes place through social interactions driven by language. Students use language in discussions, dialogues, inquiries and collaborative activities in group learning sessions. Peer interaction enables students to engage diverse perspectives, correct errors and deepen comprehension. Through these processes, knowledge eventually changes from a social construct to an assimilated component of individual understanding as students' meaning-making. This peer interaction boosts students' confidence in communication, promotes active engagement and maintains the supportive aspect of learning.

Past Studies

- Past Studies on Learning Motivation for Language Learning

Numerous studies have investigated students' motivation and engagement in group work during 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 a sample of 200 students, with data collected via questionnaires and classroom observations. The findings suggest that well-structured and meaningful group work can effectively enhance students' engagement, motivation, and overall language-learning outcomes.

In addition, a mixed-methods study by Yusri et al. (2025) included a sample of 455 participants and was supported by qualitative data from 13 respondent interviews. The selection of respondents was based on their prior experience with the Arabic language and their respective academic faculties. The study found that students' intrinsic motivation was high, with statistically significant differences observed across groups with varying levels of prior experience. Based on these findings, the authors suggested that students at UiTM should be grouped according to their prior experience. If this is not feasible, additional Arabic classes should be offered to less experienced students before they enrol in regular classes to bridge the knowledge gap. Another alternative is to form mixed-experience groups, encouraging students to work together in a collaborative environment that bridges the motivation gap between them.

Overall, the literature indicates that students' motivation and engagement in Arabic language group work are strongly influenced by a sense of relatedness among group members. According to Rasit and Ismail (2025), students exhibited moderately high motivation, and a significant relationship existed between motivation and learning achievement, highlighting that social support and peer interaction play a key role in enhancing academic outcomes. Similarly, Yusri et al. (2025) found that intrinsic motivation increased among students who participated in collaborative activities that fostered positive interactions and social connections, 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. Students who feel connected and supported are more likely to participate actively, communicate effectively, and commit to group goals.

- Past Studies on Group Work for Language Learning

Many studies on group work for language learning related to higher education have been done. For example, Ulla and Perales (2021) examined the use of group work and task-based learning (TBL) in improving the speaking skills of 106 first-year Thai university EFL students over a 12-week period. Data was collected through surveys and students' oral performance scores. The findings revealed that although students were unfamiliar with group work, they responded positively to it and perceived collaborative classroom tasks as beneficial for enhancing their English proficiency. The study contributes to pedagogical knowledge by highlighting the value of collaborative learning and group-based instruction in EFL classrooms and by offering implications for the development of instructional tools. Similarly, Saiful Azam et al. (2024) explored group dynamics in English language learning using a quantitative survey based on Tuckman's group development model with 110 respondents. Their findings emphasised challenges related to trust in the early stage, the importance of leadership in the second stage and the establishment of effective procedures in later stages, while also identifying areas for improvement in the final stage. The study recommends further research into individual differences, longitudinal perspectives, technology integration and reflective practices to strengthen collaborative language learning.

In addition, Norhafizan et al. (2024) investigated students' perceptions of the Forming and Storming phases of group work, focusing on conflict emergence and resolution within teams. Using a questionnaire distributed to 59 respondents, the study found that while the Forming phase is characterized by structure and acceptance, conflicts in the Storming phase may prevent some groups from progressing further. The authors highlighted educational implications such as clear role distribution, goal setting and expectation management. It suggested future research on factors influencing successful group development. Complementing this, Subramaniam et al. (2025) examined online group work through the perspective of connectivism theory using a quantitative survey involving 180 students. Their findings demonstrated strong relationships among autonomy, openness, connectedness and diversity in online collaborative settings. The study proposes a framework to guide instructors in designing effective online group activities, emphasizing intentional instructional design that supports meaningful and connected learning experiences.

These studies indicate that for group work to effectively facilitate student learning, a fundamental shift is required. It must evolve beyond an informal, ad hoc activity into a meticulously designed pedagogical framework. This framework should actively foster student autonomy, integrate diverse perspectives and provide explicit guidance to navigate the inherent psychological challenges of team development, thereby optimizing collaborative outcomes.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

Figure 1 below reveals the conceptual framework of the study. This study explores students' satisfaction and self-confidence in group work. Group work has been accepted as an important tool for learning. Besides completing group tasks, learners gained confidence in problem-solving skills and communication skills (Rahmat et al., 2021). The concept of this study is rooted in McClelland's (1987) theory of motivation. In the context of this study, McClelland's (1987) theory is used for learning motivation. He states that motivation depends on three types of needs such as need for power, achievement and affiliation. The three types of needs in the theory are merged with Studnicka's (2023) constructs of students' satisfaction and Bateman et al. (2002) factors for group work.

To begin with, with reference to figure 1 below, the variable labelled as 'power' is supported by two constructs by Studnicka (2023) and they are (i) satisfaction with current learning and (ii) self-confidence in learning. Next, the variable, labelled as 'achievement' is supported by the 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). Lastly, the variable 'affiliation' is supported by constructs by Bateman et al. (2002) such as (i) team relationships, (ii) intergroup relations (IR) and (iii) passion and commitment (PC).

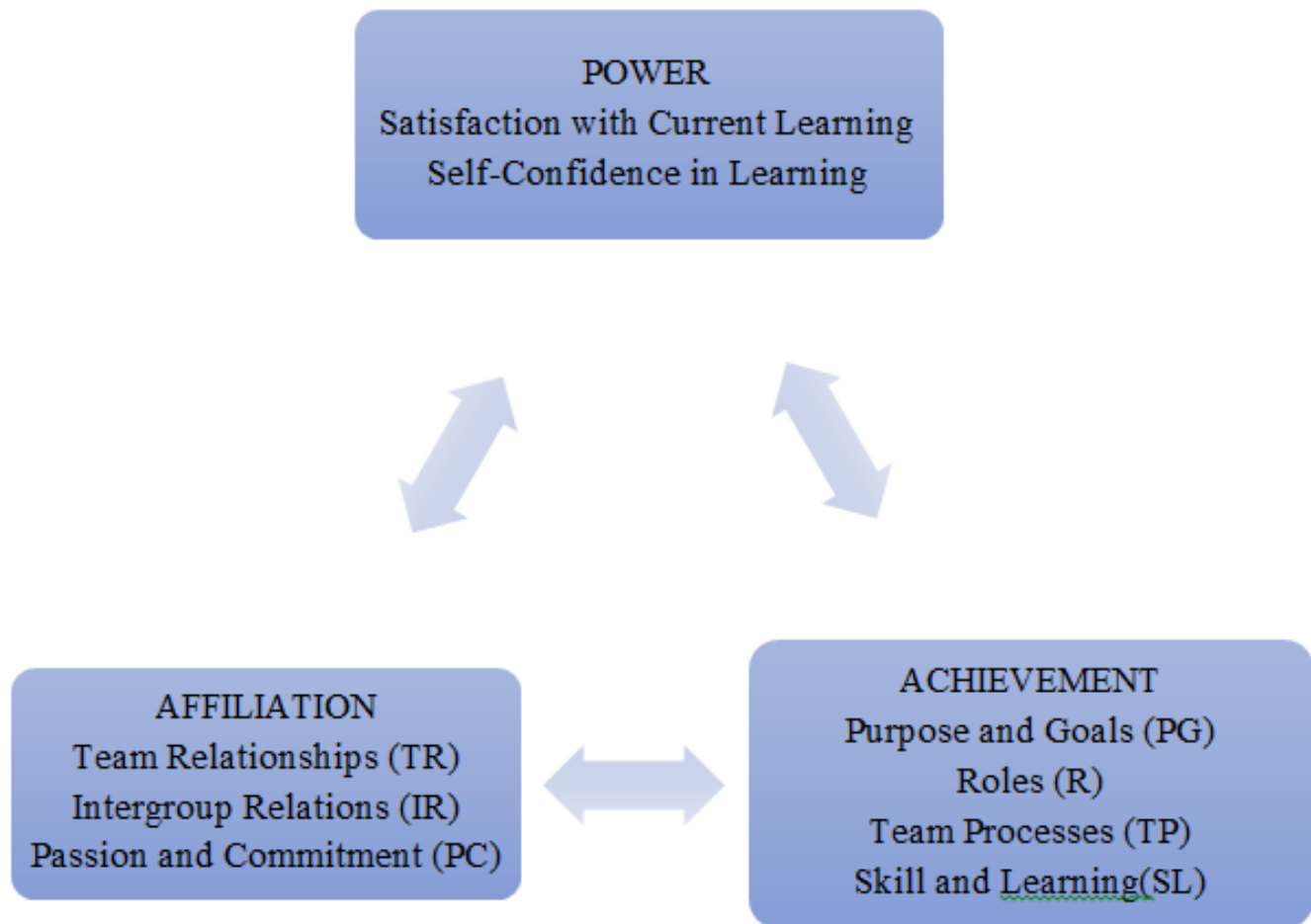


Figure 1- Conceptual Framework of the Study Group work using McClelland's Motivation Theory.

METHODOLOGY

This quantitative study is done to explore group work using McClelland's theory. A convenient sample of 157 participants responded to the survey. The instrument used is a 5 Likert-scale survey and is rooted from McClelland's (1987), Studnicka (2023) and Bateman et al. (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 (VARIABLE)	CONSTRUCT	ITEM	TOT ITEMS	CRONBACH ALPHA
B	Power	Satisfaction with Current Learning	5	13	.946
		Self-Confidence in Learning	8		

C	Achievement	Purpose and Goals (PG)	3	12	.965
		Roles (R)	3		
		Team Processes (TP)	3		
		Skills and Learning (SL)	3		
D	Affiliation	Team Relationships (TR)	4	10	.954
		Intergroup Relations (IR)	3		
		Passion and Commitment (PC)	3		
				35	.981

Table 2 shows the distribution of items in the survey. This survey is adapted from McClelland's (1987), Studnicka (2023) and Bateman et al. (2002). The survey consist of 35 items, which are divided into three main sections, and each section represents one type of motivational need. Section B focuses on the Need for Power, which indicates students' desire to feel competent in a learning situation. There are two constructs in this section, which are Satisfaction with Current Learning, which is measured by 5 items and Self-Confidence in Learning, which is measured by 8 items. The total number of items in section B is 15. Next, section C examines the Need for Achievement, which refers to the students' motivation to achieve goals. This section consists of four constructs that have three items each, which are Purpose and Goals, Roles, Teams Processes, Skills and Learning. The total number of items in section C is 12. Finally, section D addresses the Need for Affiliation, which relates to the students' motivational drive to feel a sense of belonging to a group. This section has three constructs, which are Team Relationships, which is measured by 4 items, Intergroup Relations, which is measured by 3 items and lastly, Passion and Commitment, which is measured by 3 items. So, the total number of items in section D is 10.

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

In order to determine the internal reliability of the instrument, reliability analysis is done. Table 3 above shows the distribution and interpretation of Cronbach Alpha range. According to Ahmad et al. (2024), Cronbach Alpha scores between 0.7 to 0.9 is considered acceptable to excellent.

Table 2 also shows the reliability of the survey. The analysis shows a Cronbach alpha of .946 for Power, .965 for Achievement, .954 for Affiliation. 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.

FINDINGS

Demographic Analysis

According to Zienefuss 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%

As presented in Table 4, the demographic profile of the respondents shows a clear dominance of female participants, who recorded the highest percentage at 77%, while male respondents constituted the lowest proportion at 23%. In terms of academic clusters, students from the Social Sciences and Humanities represented the larger group with 64%, followed by those from the Science and Technology cluster at 36%. Overall, the findings indicate that the study was mainly represented by female respondents and students from non-science disciplines, suggesting that perspectives on group work within this study were more strongly influenced by participants from the social sciences and humanities background.

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 while a high SD indicates they are more spread out. It is good to have a high SD.

Findings for Need for Power

This section presents data to answer research question 1- How do learners perceive the need for power 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 5- 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 promote 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

Table 5 presents the mean scores for Satisfaction with Current Learning (CL). The highest mean score was reported for Item 3 ($M = 4.28$, $SD = 0.69$), suggesting that students were satisfied with the way the role-play activities were taught. The second highest mean was found for Item 5 ($M = 4.26$, $SD = 0.62$), indicating that the instructors' teaching approach was appropriate for students' learning preferences. In contrast, the lowest

mean score was observed for Item 1 ($M = 4.11$, $SD = 0.62$), suggesting that students perceived the teaching methods as comparatively less effective.

Table 6- 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 covered 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

Table 6 presents the mean scores for Self-Confidence in Learning (L). The highest mean score was observed for Item 5 ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 0.62$), indicating that students clearly understand their responsibility in learning during role-play activities. The second highest mean was recorded for Item 4 ($M = 4.17$, $SD = 0.65$), which reflects the instructors' effective use of various teaching resources in conducting the role-play activities. The lowest mean score was for Item 1 ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 0.75$), indicating that students were less confident in mastering the role-play activities presented in class.

Findings for Keyword Need for Achievement

This section presents data to answer research question 2- How do learners perceive the need for achievement in group work in 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 7- 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 7 indicates that the Purpose and Goals construct is highly pronounced among respondents. Specifically, the highest mean score recorded for PGQ2 ($M = 4.26$, $SD = 0.59$) reflects a robust commitment to a shared mission, followed closely by PGQ1 ($M = 4.22$, $SD = 0.62$), underscoring a well-defined and meaningful shared purpose. Additionally, PGQ3 ($M = 4.21$, $SD = 0.61$) reflects respondents' perceived capacity to set and attain challenging goals. Collectively, these findings empirically confirm that clarity of purpose and shared goals

significantly reinforce relatedness, thereby enhancing the efficacy of collaborative work in language learning contexts, particularly in Arabic education.

Table 8- 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	0.60

Table 8 shows that the Roles construct is rated highly by respondents. The highest mean for RQ3 ($M = 4.28$, $SD = 0.60$) indicates that team members value each other's contributions, reflecting strong relatedness and aligning with McClelland's need for affiliation. RQ1 ($M = 4.25$, $SD = 0.58$) shows that team members clearly understand their roles, while RQ2 ($M = 4.19$, $SD = 0.61$) demonstrates that role changes are intentionally clarified. These results suggest that clear role definitions and mutual appreciation enhance interpersonal connections, strengthen relatedness, and foster effective collaboration in group work. In language learning, particularly Arabic, this promotes active participation, confident communication, and commitment to group goals, consistent with McClelland's assertion that fulfilling the affiliation needs drives both individual and collective achievement.

Table 9- Mean for Team Processes (TP)

ITEM	Mean	SD
TPQ1 We address and resolve issues quickly.	4.17	0.66
TPQ2 Our team operates with considerable 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 9 shows the overall assessment for the Team Processes (TP) construct is exceptionally high and highly consistent, as evidenced by all items achieving mean scores above 4.15 and low standard deviations (SD) ranging between 0.63 and 0.66; specifically, TPQ3 ("When we choose consensus decision-making, we do it effectively") emerged as the most prominent attribute with the highest mean of 4.24 and the lowest SD of 0.63, followed closely by TPQ2 regarding the team's considerable flexibility to adapt to changing needs (Mean = 4.22, $SD = 0.63$), and TPQ1 focusing on the ability to address and resolve emerging issues promptly (Mean = 4.17, $SD = 0.66$), collectively reflecting a responsive, highly adaptable, and consensus-driven team dynamic

Table 10- Mean for Skills and Learning (SL)

ITEM	Mean	SD
SLQ1 We possess the skills needed to perform our jobs effectively.	4.16	0.60
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

The findings addressing the research question on learners' perceptions regarding the need for achievement in group work indicate a highly pronounced level of Skills and Learning (SL). As presented in Table 10, all items within the SL construct consistently surpassed the high threshold, led by SLQ3 ($M = 4.28$, $SD = 0.61$) concerning continuous improvement, followed by SLQ2 ($M = 4.24$, $SD = 0.64$) regarding learning from mistakes, and SLQ1 ($M = 4.16$, $SD = 0.60$) on task competence. These outcomes empirically demonstrate that

collaborative group work in language learning effectively fosters robust skill acquisition, cultivates a growth mindset, and sustains achievement-oriented engagement among learners.

Findings for Need for Affiliation

This section presents data to answer research question 3: How do learners perceive the need for affiliation in group work in 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 11- 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 11 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 12- Mean for Intergroup Relations (IR)

ITEM	Mean	SD
IRQ1 We are able to resolve conflicts with other teams collaboratively.	4.20	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.	4.20	0.63

As shown in Table 12, the findings indicate a strong level of intergroup relations among the participants. The highest mean was shared by the ability to resolve conflicts collaboratively (IRQ1) and the perception that collaborations with other teams are productive and meaningful (IRQ3), both recording a mean of 4.20 ($SD = 0.64$ and 0.63 , respectively). This suggests that respondents perceived intergroup interactions as constructive and goal-oriented. The second highest mean was observed for effective communication with other groups (IRQ2), with a mean of 4.19 ($SD = 0.65$), indicating a consistently high level of communicative engagement across teams. Overall, the results reflect positive and well-functioning intergroup dynamics within the learning environment.

Table 13- 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

Table 13 shows that passion and commitment among group members were reported at a high level. The highest mean was recorded for the item indicating that working in the team inspires members to do their best (PCQ1), with a mean of 4.27 (SD = 0.61), highlighting strong motivational influence within the group. This was closely followed by team pride and optimism about group achievements (PCQ3), which obtained a mean of 4.25 (SD = 0.61). The lowest mean, though still high, was observed for the sense of pride in being part of the team (PCQ2) at 4.19 (SD = 0.64). Collectively, these findings suggest a high level of intrinsic motivation and commitment among group members, reflecting a positive and cohesive team environment.

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. This section presents data to answer research questions on correlation.

Findings for the Relationship between all types of needs in group work for language learning

This section presents data to answer research question 4- Is there a relationship between all types of needs in group work for language learning?

To determine if there is a significant association in the mean scores between all types of needs in group work for language learning, data is analyzed using SPSS for correlations. Results are presented separately in table 14 below.

Table 14- Correlation between all types of needs in group work

		POWER	ACHIEVEMENT	AFFILIATION
POWER	Pearson (Correlation	1	844**	811**
	Sig (2-tailed)		<.001	<.001
	N	157	157	157
ACHIEVEMENT	Pearson (Correlation	844**	1	924**
	Sig (2-tailed)	<.001		<.001
	N	157	157	157
AFFILIATION	Pearson (Correlation	811**	924**	
	Sig (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	
	N	157	157	157

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

Table 14 shows there is an association between power and achievement. Correlation analysis shows that there is a high significant association between power and achievement($r=.844^{**}$) 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 power and achievement.

Next, there is also an association between achievement and affiliation. Correlation analysis shows that there is a high significant association between achievement and affiliation($r=.924^{**}$) 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 achievement and affiliation.

Lastly, there is also an association between affiliation and power. Correlation analysis shows that there is a high significant association between affiliation and power ($r=.811^{**}$) 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 indicates a strong positive relationship between affiliation and power. Null hypothesis is rejected.

Hence, the null hypothesis for all types of needs in group work is rejected. All three factors; power, achievement and affiliation reveal strong positive relationships.

CONCLUSION

Summary of Findings and Discussions

The current study attempts to shed light on the groupwork through McClelland's Theory. Findings for Tables 5 and 6 reflect that students had a high perception of the need for power in groupwork or roleplay in this context. Both constructs, Satisfaction with Current Learning and Self-confidence in learning, score a high mean, which indicates that students are generally satisfied with the instructors' teaching styles and approaches in roleplay activities, and they understand their responsibilities clearly, although some students reported feeling less confident in mastering the roleplay activities. These findings suggest that group work, particularly roleplay activities, provides learners with a sense of control over their learning, reflecting McClelland's theory of power.

Next, findings from Tables 7 to 10 indicate that students' perceptions of the need for achievement were also high. High mean scores for the Purpose and Goal construct reflect that students shared clear objectives and were committed to achieving them. Similarly, results for the Roles construct show that students valued the contributions of each group member and clearly understood their roles. This will foster effective collaboration and enhance interpersonal connections among group members. High ratings for the Team Processes construct indicate students' proactivity in resolving problems that arise and effectiveness in consensus-based decision making. Then, high mean scores for the Skills and Learning construct further indicate that roleplay activities support skill development effectively. Overall, these findings suggest that group work clearly supports achievement motivation.

Then, results from Tables 11 to 13 indicate that students' perceptions of the need for affiliation are high. The team Relationships construct score high means, reflecting good communication, mutual appreciation and trust among group members. Similarly, high mean scores of the Intergroup Relations construct suggest that there are effective communication and cooperation among groups to resolve conflicts. Additionally, the Passion and Commitment construct indicates that group work inspires the students to do their best. Hence, these findings suggest that fulfilling affiliation needs improves students' motivation and engagement in group work.

The relationship between the three types of need is shown in Table 14, where Pearson correlation analysis revealed strong positive relationships. The correlation between power and achievement ($r=.844^{**}$) and ($p=.000$), achievement and affiliation ($r=.924^{**}$) and ($p=.000$), and affiliation and power ($r=.811^{**}$) and ($p=.000$) reflects that these types of needs are closely related in group work for language learning. Hence, the null hypothesis for all types of needs in group work is rejected.

In conclusion, the findings confirm that the motivational needs are interconnected and it was reported that the students had high perceptions of the three types of needs, which are the Need for Power, Achievement and Affiliation. A high perception of the need for power reflects that leadership opportunities lead to students' confidence. In educational settings, this type of need does not necessarily possess a negative meaning. (McClelland, 1987). In addition, a high perception of the need for achievement indicates students' clear

objectives, proactivity in resolving issues and skills development. This is consistent with Oxford (1997), where structured groups encourage goal-oriented behaviour. Next, perception of the need for affiliation is also high, reflecting the importance of positive relationships and social interaction, which can reduce anxiety and willingness to communicate. (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015)

Then, it is important to highlight that there are significant correlations between the three types of needs. These results are also aligned with the Social Constructivism Theory by Vygotsky (1978) which emphasises learning as a socially mediated process.

Implications and Suggestions for Future Research

Pedagogical Implications

There are few pedagogical implications that can be applied in language learning. Firstly, instructors should organize activities that promote collaborative learning where opportunities for students to become leaders, make decisions and become responsible are provided to address the need for power. The second implication is that instructors should design tasks that have clear goals and measurable outcomes to address students' need for achievement. Finally, instructors should encourage students to communicate openly, solve problems collaboratively and have mutual respect to support students' need for affiliation.

Suggestion for Future Research

Future studies can adopt a qualitative method to get proper insights into how students experience power, achievement and affiliation in group work settings, such as classroom observations and interviews. In addition, to better understand motivation, future research could explore other situational elements such as group dynamics, task difficulty and teaching strategies.

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