# COOPERATIVE LEARNING IN EVENT MANAGEMENT: A CASE STUDY OF EDVENTURE OF BEAUTY & THE BEAST

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*Abstract: Event management education has emerged as an alternative to the related disciplines of business, tourism and hospitality. Numerous courses offered in the area of event management has raised questions on employability of graduates in requiring the students to be employed in the industry. This article explores a study offering a multifaceted perspective on the requisite skills and abilities students perceive to be associated with event management employment. By employing students' experiences and perspectives over the individual leadership and soft skills. This study employed 64 structured questionnaires and students' individual reflections. Based on the findings, the respondents agreed that positive feedback on teamwork and communication skills, project management, ability to perform and personal attitudes are significant in organizing an event. For soft skills, the study found that communication, teamwork, creative thinking, time management, event management and management are the skills needed to be improved in the future.*

*Keywords: Collaboration Learning, Event Management, Soft Skills*
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## Introduction
The focus of the employability of graduates will be on whether students will be able to execute and exercise skills they learnt in the classroom to the real world. One of the requirements of current job employability is where graduates need to be skilful in the

workplace where it emphasized on the necessary soft skills. According to Yasmin and Najib (2012), the development of soft skills based on formal and informal activities at tertiary education levels is essential in college students' life. One of the challenges is to create positive and opportunities for students to develop their soft skills and preparing them with a clear understanding of the future demands.

Moreover, one of the elements that the employers seek for is strong leadership skills – It is an essential element in positioning executives to make attentive decisions concerning organization's missions and goals. It focuses on the ability to delegate, inspire and communicate effectively. The objective of the research is to gain an insight into the abilities and skills that students anticipated to be associated in organizing a successful event. This study concentrates on teamwork and soft skills required to manage an event – EDventure 4.0: The EDventure of Beauty & the Beast. The EDventure 4.0 is an event where it is a requirement for MPU2432 – Co-curriculum students need to plan and execute in order to complete the course. The objective of the event is to invite 210 underprivileged primary school students from 22 schools in Negeri Sembilan to trigger their interest in English and Science. From this event, students are expected to demonstrate individual leadership and learn the soft skills needed to get the job done. Students had to cooperate with each other and worked in small groups to develop segments that later will be combined to execute the event. It will be able to inspire learners and engage them as teammates to ensure that the event to be a successful event.

**Adventure Education- EDventure of Beauty & The Beast**
Student centered learning has expanded its horizon where the expansion of the idea of adventure education. Adventure Education is a combination of an adventure and educational purpose event or programs with the deliberate usage of adventurous experiences in order to create learning in individuals or groups with the intention to improve the society or the communities. Adventure programming may focus on recreation, education, individual or group development, therapy, or a combination of these elements.

Moreover, adventure education is a dynamic process, which involved learning process that encompassed active engagement different stakeholders (combination of learners and instructors). Furthermore, these activities is incorporated with the experiential learning opportunities where of all five senses integrated within the experience which can elevated the learning and retaining information chances. As for adventure educational learning experience, it is the journey of the event or program is counted rather than the destination. Studies identifies that adventure education is related to positive impacts where it can be classified into the following six categories; leadership, self-concept, personality, interpersonal, academic, and adventuresome. In addition, adventure education engrossed practical skills where these practical skills benefits individual in areas, which are beyond the activities within an adventure program later, applies it to the workplace or other group experiences (miles, 1999).

The EDventure of Beauty & the Beast is an event where it is a requirement for MPU2432 – Co-curriculum students are required to design, plan and execute an event in order to complete the course. The objective of the event is to invite 210 underprivileged primary school students from 22 schools in Negeri Sembilan to trigger their interest in English. On the other hand, for the diploma students, they are expected to demonstrate individual leadership and learn the soft skills needed to get the job done. Students had to cooperate with each other and worked in small groups to develop segments that later will be combined to execute the event.

It will be able to inspire learners and engage them as teammates to ensure that the event to be a successful event. The EDventure of Beauty & the Beast promotes cooperative learning between each group member in executing the event.

## Literature Review

### *Cooperative Learning and Teamwork*

Cooperative learning can be defined as an educational approach with the purposes to organize classroom activities into academic and social learning experiences. It has been described as "structuring positive interdependence" method where given instruction which students grouped in small learning teams - working together to solve problems or to perform tasks presented (Daud & Rusly, 2018). Referring to Felder & Brent (2018), cooperative learning is an approach to group work that minimizes the occurrence of those unpleasant situations and maximizes the learning and satisfaction that result from working on a high-performance team (Daud & Rusly, 2018). In cooperative learning, student is the prime focus and they need to work with each other, discuss, negotiate, praise, contribute and criticize each contribution made by other members in order to achieve goals and receive group performance score (Daud & Rusly ,2018).

The backgrounds of the cooperative learning model can be drawn back to the works of Dewey (1916). According to Dewey (1916) in his book *Democracy and Education* it conceived the idea that classroom should mirror the larger society, and function as a laboratory for real life learning, whereby students can participate in small groups and learn democratic principles and behavior through daily interactions with each other (Dewey, 1916, as cited in Neo, 2004). The work on cooperative learning method also being supported by Thelan (1954,1963) with regards to the idea that cooperative learning not only can develop and improve academic learning, but it is also can support the development of cooperative behavior and processes.

Through cooperative learning, students will be able to expand their understanding on the concept of teamwork in order to communicate effectively in achieving their goals. Furthermore, discussing problem tasks with others helps students to clarify their understandings, negotiate meaning and co-construct new knowledge with discussions to have the potential to transform students' thinking (Wittrock, 1990). Cooperative Learning can develop a sense of belonging on each student, where students are aware that their contribution is significant, and each student or team member is equally important. Gaining soft skills from cooperative learning through teamwork would be essential for the students to develop confidence and assertiveness in completing their tasks. In addition, the foremost argument is that cooperative learning increases cognitive achievement, nurture social, and team building skills. According to Johnson & Johnson (2006), cooperative learning approaches lead to (a) higher academic achievement than competitive or individual approaches, (b) better interpersonal relationships among students, and (c) more positive attitudes towards the subject being studied and the overall classroom experience.

### *Engaging Conceptual Framework in Event Management*

An execution of an event is a process of translating and projecting ideas in a completely new way. Organizing an event could be an intimidating task both for an individual and for committee planning and managing the event. Even though the dimensions of events could be different, the concept of event management essentially remain the same. Proper planning and managing events are crucial in making sure that the outcome of the event could fulfill its

goals. There is no guarantee of a successful outcome; however, event organizers can plan, prepare and be prepared for the unanticipated (Allen, 2000). The main consideration should be on the overall goal of the event. Successful planning of events needs a coordinated plan to address every detail. There is a lot of coordination involved in managing events.

To be successful in event management, some of the soft skills required are as follows:
- Communication skills
- Creative skills
- Planning skills
- Coordinating skills
- Implementing skills
- Problem-solving skills

In designing an event, there are various criteria should be regarded as the basis of the framework for successful event experience production. According to Monroe (2006), event design is the concept of structure aim in organizing and planning an event. Under the structural concept it manifests an expression of that concept which been expressed via verbally and visually which leads to a final product known as the execution of the concept (Graham, 2015). This structural concept is supported with the need to produce the experience. The structural design becomes a systematic and incorporated series of actions that are purposeful at every stage of the event execution. Below is a conceptual framework by Graham, 2015; the framework suggested that event management needs a paradigm shift in order to place event design as the central core element of practice. It is where design awareness should be repeated at every decision stage of the event planning and management process.

Once the decision has been made to organize an event, organizer needs to be focusing on two considerations. Firstly, the event is a planned experience influenced by nature or genre of the theme involved. The framework mentions that the experience of stakeholders, with an emphasis on the prime stakeholder experience which in this case referring to the diploma students from various courses. At this stage, the event organizers should encompass event design as a solution and objective-setting tool. This kind of phases are essential to ensure that the types of experience envisioned in the concept are included through a specific action. Therefore, by enabling this conceptual design, it enables to focus on: (1) specific creative elements of the event and (2) general process elements of the event.

For EDventure of Aladdin, the event's objectives and outcomes should be understood as it is a part of a plan to design an experience, which leads to interaction between the organizing committee members (via diploma students), and participants (via primary school students). Lastly, with the integrated design, the analysis and evaluation of the experience can be analyzed and evaluated in how the diploma students perceived challenges encountered in relation to decisions taken to design each element of the event.
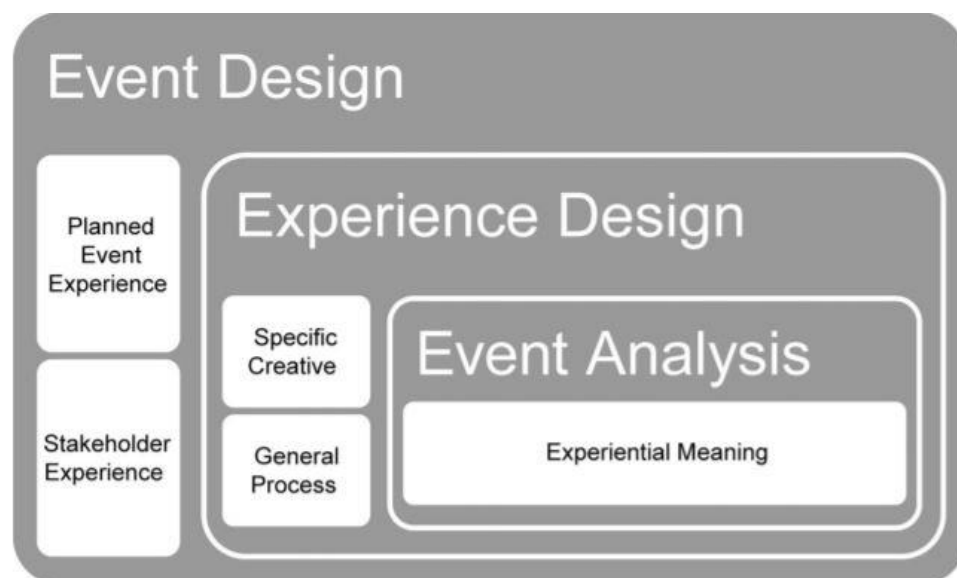
Source: Event Experience Design Framework, Graham (2015)

Having a high interest in applying and gaining experiences related to the mentioned soft skills would make an individual a successful event manager. In the field of event management communication is the most essential skills required. Event management is a people's industry, where everything is based on effective communication skills at all levels (Jaipur International University, 2013).

In relation to situations in learning institutions, students are being exposed to all the necessary soft skills in managing events. Providing students with relevant and necessary opportunities for them to learn and apply specific soft skills in completing tasks; managing events. Learning institutions are aware with the fact that, gaining beneficial soft skills from the hands-on tasks and learning through experiences is essential for students. It is to prepare themselves for the high standard of students' qualification and skills required to enter the workforce. Greater collaboration between academics and event practitioners is seen as necessary in order to produce graduates who have the necessary training and skills to work in industry (Lee et al., 2008 in Junek et al., 2009).

*The Task- Course Design*

Students are required to plan and manage an event - The EDventure 4.0: The EDventure of Beauty & the Beast. Through the event, the students need to learn how to work together to make sure that the event is successful. The requirements for the task include:

**Table 1: The Course Structure of Co-Curriculum Subject (MPU 2432)**

| |
|---|
| Portfolio: Project Proposal - 10 marks |
|     Students are to work with group members (10 members per group) to write a project proposal using MPU Project Proposal Template in the Blackboard 'About the Course' folder. |
| Project Proposal Presentation - 10 marks |
|     Each group is to pitch their project idea for their lecturer's approval. Students are encouraged to do *visual presentation* of data using point forms, *tables, diagrams, charts* or images. |
| Portfolio: Group Wiki - 40 marks |
|     Each group is to update their Group Wiki weekly. Students are encouraged to present |

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| informative data in visual forms (e.g. tables, diagrams, charts, graphics or images). |
| **Portfolio: Post-Mortem Report – 15 marks** |
| Each group is to submit their project post-mortem report after the completion of their project event by using the MPU post-mortem report template in the Blackboard 'About the Course' folder. |
| **Event Presentation - 10 marks** |
| Each group is to present about the event day. The presentation should be about 10 minutes with PowerPoint slides (no more than 8 slides), followed by Question & Answer session by the lecturer(s). |
| **Individual Reflection – 15 marks** |
| Each student is to write a reflective paragraph in 200 words. They are to reflect on the following: |
| 1. What are your feelings upon completion of the project?<br>2. What were the challenges you encountered while doing the project?<br>3. What are the areas you could improve on yourself? |

## Method and Data Collection

In this research, it is a combination of mixed method analysis where it combined both quantitative and qualitative data collection. The focus in this research is experiential in nature where students have to work together in a small team scale on the real event. In this research, it will focus more on quantitative study. The unit of sample for this research is mainly Diploma students who are taking subject Co- Curriculum in INTI International University. The students were given a survey to assess their attitude towards working in cooperative learning environment. The aim of the study is to explore students' experiences and insights from the commencement of this group project, the soft and leadership skills gained; the challenges faced.

This will be done through various techniques include questionnaires, group interviews, observations and document analyses.

In this research, the four-point Likert scale design with 14 items will assess students' attitude and commitment towards the project, which was adapted from Diamond (1998). The Project Attitude Survey was administered at the end of January 2019 session where it was measured through the following cooperative constructs in the survey; 1) Teamwork & communication skills, 2) Project Management, 3) Capability to perform, 4) Personal attitudes. 64 students from various departments; Diploma in Business, Diploma in Quantity Survey, Diploma in Information Technology, Diploma in Mass Communication, Diploma in Accounting and Diploma in Engineering. The profile of respondents is given in Table 2.

## Result Findings

In this study, there are 24 male students (37.5%) and 40 female students (62.5%) took part in the survey. The highest number of students are from Diploma in Business (34.4%) and Diploma in Mass Communication (34.4%) followed by Diploma in Information Technology (12.5%) and Diploma in Quantity Survey (4.7%) and Diploma in Engineering (4.7%). The details of the demographic of the respondents as mentioned below:

**Table 2: Demographic Information of the Respondents**

| Gender | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Frequency | Percentage |
| **Male** | 24 | 37.5 |
| **Female** | 40 | 62.5 |
| **Total** | 64 | 100 |
| **Program** | | |
| | Frequency | Percentage |
| **Diploma in Business** | 22 | 34.4 |
| **Diploma in Quantity Survey** | 3 | 4.7 |
| **Diploma in IT** | 8 | 12.5 |
| **Diploma in Mass Communication** | 22 | 34.4 |
| **Diploma in Accounting** | 6 | 9.4 |
| **Diploma in Engineering** | 3 | 5.3 |
| **Total** | 64 | 100 |

**Table 3: The Questionnaire Items, Means and Standard Deviation**

| Item | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **We were able to achieve our goals** | 64 | 1.00 | 4.00 | 3.3750 | .67847 |
| **Our group leader was effective** | 64 | 1.00 | 4.00 | 3.1563 | .82074 |
| **I was able to contribute well to the project** | 64 | 3.00 | 4.00 | 3.4375 | .50000 |
| **My group members contributed well to the project** | 64 | 1.00 | 4.00 | 3.2656 | .67241 |
| **My group was able to work together effectively** | 64 | 2.00 | 4.00 | 3.2813 | .65390 |
| **We were able to solve our challenges as a group** | 64 | 1.00 | 4.00 | 3.3594 | .69846 |
| **My group members communicated well between each other.** | 64 | 1.00 | 4.00 | 3.1875 | .83333 |
| **I enjoyed collaborating with my team members.** | 64 | 1.00 | 4.00 | 3.2813 | .70076 |
| **My collaboration was a challenge, but I enjoyed it.** | 64 | 2.00 | 4.00 | 3.3750 | .51946 |
| **I found the collaboration motivating** | 64 | 2.00 | 4.00 | 3.3281 | .50567 |
| **This collaboration enhanced my personal development.** | 64 | 2.00 | 4.00 | 3.3438 | .51080 |
| **I learnt more from collaboration with my team than on my own.** | 64 | 1.00 | 4.00 | 3.1719 | .72495 |
| **My group members taught me something I would not have learnt on my own** | 64 | 1.00 | 4.00 | 3.1250 | .74536 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Overall, I'm enjoyed working with my friends' commitment in finishing our assignment together** | 64 | 1.00 | 4.00 | | 3.2656 | .71807 | |
| **Valid N (listwise)** | 64 | | | | | | |

In addition to the survey on students' perspectives towards cooperative learning environment, students are also required to share feedback upon the event and answer to a series of closed ended questions on soft skills required to complete the event (Table 3). This paper has strengthened with data collected from students' feedback and the questionnaires answered by the students. The questionnaires are to identify set of soft skill variables that affect the students' perceptions in completing their task in organizing an event.

*Questionnaire Result*

**Table 4: Percentage Responses on Cooperative Survey Items for This Cooperative Learning Environment (N=64)**

| | DESCRIPTIVE | Strongly Disagree | % | Disagree | % | Agree | % | Strongly Agree | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | We were able to achieve our goals | 2 | 3.1 | 1 | 1.6 | 32 | 50 | 29 | 45.3 |
| 2 | Our group leader was very effective. | 4 | 6.3 | 5 | 7.8 | 32 | 50 | 23 | 35.9 |
| 3 | I was able to contribute well to the project. | | | | | 36 | 56.3 | 28 | 43.8 |
| 4 | My group members contributed well to the project. | 1 | 1.6 | 5 | 7.8 | 34 | 53.1 | 24 | 37.5 |
| 5 | My group was able to work together effectively. | | | 7 | 10.9 | 32 | 50 | 25 | 39.1 |
| 6 | We were able to solve our challenges a sa group. | 2 | 3.1 | 2 | 3.1 | 31 | 48.4 | 29 | 45.3 |
| 7 | My group members communicated well between each other. | 4 | 6.3 | 5 | 7.8 | 30 | 46.9 | 25 | 39.1 |
| 8 | I enjoyed collaborating with my team members. | 1 | 1.6 | 6 | 9.4 | 31 | 48.4 | 26 | 40.6 |
| 9 | My collaboration was a challenge, but I enjoyed it. | | | 1 | 1.6 | 38 | 59.4 | 25 | 39.1 |
| 10 | I found the collaboration motivating | | | 1 | 1.6 | 41 | 64.1 | 22 | 34.4 |
| 11 | This collaboration enhanced my personal | | | 1 | 1.6 | 40 | 62.5 | 23 | 35.9 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | development | | | | | | | |
| 12 | I learn more from collaboration than on my own | 2 | 3.1 | 6 | 9.4 | 35 | 54.7 | 21 | 32.8 |
| 13 | My group taught me some things I would not have learnt on my own | 2 | 3.1 | 8 | 12.5 | 34 | 53.1 | 20 | 31.3 |
| 14 | Overall, I am enjoyed working with my friends' commitment in finishing our assignment together. | 3 | 4.7 | 1 | 1.6 | 36 | 56.3 | 24 | 37.5 |

As shown in table 4, the majority of the students shared positive attitudes and perceptions in the questionnaire. Therefore, this cooperative construct (and skills) can be analyzed.

### Teamwork and Communication Skills

Items 3,4,5,6 and 7 in the survey were used to measure students' teamwork, leadership and communication skills (refer to Table 4). These items reflect on how students responded on working together as a group and solved their group problems. The study reported high means on these items. 89.1% of students responded positively that they individually contributed well to the project (item 3: m= 3.43). The students admitted that 90.6% their group members equally contributed well in their project (item 4: m=3.26). When it comes to working together well and effectively, the result shows 89.1% of the students responded optimistically with overall teamwork shown by their group members (Item 5:m= 3.28). The result shown strong indication that group members have the ability to solve their challenges as a group (Item 6, 93.7%, m= 3.35). Meanwhile, item 7 shows 86% respondents said that the students can communicate with their group members (m=3.18).

### Project Management

Moreover, in this study, the researchers intended to measure project management skills by measuring item one and two in the enquiry (refer to Table 1.3). The students were asked about their capability in completing their group tasks and respondents' perceptions on their leaders. The data shared the level of confidence that they can complete their tasks in timely manner 95.3% (Item 1: m= 3.37) while item 2 reflects that the group members were convinced with the effectiveness of their group leaders (85.9%, m= 3.15).

### Ability to Perform

Finally, yet importantly, item 11, 12 and 13 inquire to measure students' ability to perform within the cooperative setting (see table 4). These items examined how much students comprehended from the project and do they gain skills in the group environment rather than on their own. Individually, the respondents answered 98.4% felt that the collaboration was positive, and they had enhanced their learning of the project (Item 5, m=3.34). Meanwhile, 87.5% of the respondents reported that they did learn more from the group than if they were to do the task on their own (Item 12, m= 3.17). For item 13 the respondents certainly agreed that their group as overall did teach them something which they would not have learnt on their own 84.4 %(m=3.12).

*Personal Attitudes*

Finally, the questionnaire tried to engage with students' personal attitudes towards the group project especially on the personal enjoyment and motivation. Items 8, 9 and 10 are meant to measure this paradigm. Students reported positive reaction that they enjoyed cooperating with their team members for Item 8, (mean=3.28, 89%). Meanwhile, 98.5% agreed that the journey in organizing an event is challenging, but they enjoyed doing it (m=3.37). Finally, 98.5% of the respondents found that the project to be motivating by referring to Item 10 (m=3.32).

*Soft Skill Variable*

The students were asked to select five out of ten soft skills that they have developed from the project event (Junek, Lockstone & Mairs, 2009) which are; communication (84.8%), Teamwork (83.3%) Time Management (69.7%) Event Management (65.2%), Analytical Skill and Problem Solving (65.2%), Creative Thinking (63.6%), commitment (50%), Stress management & Behavior Management (42.4%), Leadership (40.9%) and Organizational Skill (1.5%).

**Table 5: Soft Skill**

| Soft Skill | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| Communication | 56 | 84.8 |
| Analytical Skill & Problem Solving | 43 | 65.2 |
| Stress Management | 48 | 42.4 |
| Creative Thinking | 42 | 63.6 |
| Teamwork | 55 | 83.3 |
| Leadership | 27 | 40.9 |
| Commitment | 33 | 50 |
| Behavior Management | 28 | 42.4 |
| Time Management | 46 | 69.7 |
| Event Management | 43 | 65.2 |
| Organizational Skill | 1 | 1.5 |

This data supported with the students' feedback in answering the question below:

**1)     What are the areas that you could improve on yourself in event management?**
Analysis of the written comments revealed that the students, there are five soft skill variables that is needed in event management: communication (55 comments), time management (31 comments), creative thinking (17 comments), Management (15 comments) and teamwork (13 comments).

*Personal Development: Communication and Teamwork*

Personal development is seen as the major benefit from the EDventure 4.0 event. This event engaged and even educated students, in helping them to organize an event that more enjoyable and meaningful. It is interesting to know that to most students, the journey of organizing an event was as important as the event itself. Many reported the excitement of talking with their classmates and instructor in class and spending time to discuss the event's journey. The EDventure 4.0 was seen as the development of relationships on an evolutionary basis. It is because many of the respondents stated about the importance of this event in forming solidarity from common experiences in organizing the event. Interestingly, students treated the journey in organizing an event as positive experience that gave everyone the

chance to "connect" with the group members and classmates in general. One student wrote in the journal "I can improve myself such as trusting teammates, trust is crucial to teamwork, and it starts with people knowing each other".  The EDventure 4.0 is an event that offered the sort of enriching interpersonal experience. Experiential learning took place as it recognized as the central focus in educational endeavors  due to they are experiences, lived social events that become way of knowing. One student wrote:

"I could improve my communication skills. From the group project, I learn how to improve my communication skills. It also important for group bonding. Group bonding is very important to finish the project successfully. Hence, I got to improve on communication skills, which is one of the reasons of the successful ending of the event…"

The personal experiences included relationships between students and students and instructors. For example, students tended to disagree during the first five weeks of class where the students need to develop games and decorations for the children based on the theme given. Some of them refused to work in the groups due to different courses and unexplained reasons. By organizing the event together, the students tried to overcome personal conflicts and move towards common goals. One of the students wrote:

"I learned how to improve on how to communicate more with my team members and children and understand team communication can complete projects in a quicker and more efficient amount of time than others."

"I could improve my communication skills. I should express all my thoughts and ideas to my teammates to achieve consensus. I developed strong communication skills that would increase the chance for successful relationships."

### Personal Development: Behaviour Management
Furthermore, while organizing the EDventure 4.0, the Diploma students experienced face-to-face interaction with the primary school students and learn how to communicate with them. Their initial perception of the primary school students were naive at the same time active. During the event, the Diploma students were surprised on how they handle the primary school students psychologically as mentioned by one of the students:

"..If I could improve on myself, it would the way on how I communicate with the primary school students. This is because this is the first time I organized an event with primary school students, so I was lacking with the experience on how to communicate with the students. Maybe I was not polite enough when I talk with the students"

Besides the communication and teamwork, the students learned over creative thinking and problem solving. While organizing the EDventure 4.0, the students are encouraged to think creatively in game formulation and designing their game room decoration based on the theme given. The students mentioned that it was challenging them to think outside their comfort zone but somehow the students managed to come up with the game and the decoration desired. One student wrote that creativity is one of the elements that in job employability these days.

"I want to improve my innovation. Innovation is significant in this era. If you are not creative enough, you will be eliminated by this era. I should be more creative in designing our t-shirt and photo booth".

*Personal Development: Time Management*

In addition to the personal development, time management was one of the areas, which the MPU 2432 students learned while organizing the EDventure 4.0. Majority of the students agreed that time management is important for them. The EDventure 4.0 was held in January Session 2019 where most students are taking more than five different subjects. Therefore, to agree on a suitable time for the students to have meetings and discussions are difficult. Moreover, the students mentioned that they have to do other various assignments that needed to be submitted within the stipulated date. It was a challenging task and it required flexibility and commitment, as they need to fulfil the expectations of each subject. The students wrote:

"The area that I need to improve is I need to practice good time management skills, so that I can use my time effectively as well as to complete all the work that I should do and pass up on time."

"For time management, I hope that I can manage my schedule better so that I can finish the tasks ahead of the deadline and have extra time to make adjustments."

**Discussions**

In the discussion of group-based cooperative learning, students learned by cooperating and interacting with their peers. This kind of interactive new learning environment is different from traditional teacher-centered approach, where the teachers instruct and students to learn individually and compete with each other in learning. In experiential learning, the paradigm shifted where students in cooperative learning are required to cooperate and collaborate among students in order to complete the group learning goals. In supporting the group learning objectives, it has to be supported with cooperative activities in the students' learning process where a set of soft skills such as communication, teamwork, creative thinking, time management, event management, analytical skills, problem solving, stress handling, leadership, commitment and management are essential in the learning process. This learning environment also was placed in an authentic learning situation where students had to brainstorm on suitable and appropriate games with the decorations for the event. The students had to complete Need Analysis Program (NAP), set a budget for their group tasks as part of the learning process. This authentic setting promotes high engagement levels among students and facilitates their experiential-cooperative learning activities.

From the survey and the students' feedback, cooperative learning enhanced their teamwork and communication skills, project management and improved their personal attitudes in learning, these skills enable the students to enjoy doing the project and it increases their motivational level to execute the event. The project - The EDventure 4.0: The Adventure of Beauty & the Beast has helped the students to increase their team spirit and to learn the complete process in order to enhance their understanding of the subject matter.

In addition, in this experiential- cooperative learning, online interactive tool - Blackboard was used by the students to share their ideas about the event, to construct their plan for the project, and then execute The EDventure of Beauty & the Beast. This process of learning is inclined towards experiential learning perspective where students learn by experiencing the knowledge and participate actively in their learning process (Neo, 2006; Jonassen, Peck & Wilson, 1999). Therefore, the learning process become the focus point, not the content (Neo, 2006). In addition, the use of multimedia video presentation enables the students to be more engaged and motivated to complete their tasks (Neo, 2006). As a result, such activities

provide students with a good platform to be involved in learner-centered activities where the students become the focus in their learning experience, while the teacher becomes a facilitator of learning, acting as a consultant and guide to the students through their learning experience. Meanwhile, the use of technology makes the learning process possible and a practicable process. The requirement to create multimedia video presentation and online assignment such as Group Wiki and Blogs are where the students need to complete and upload them onto the Blackboard. Course management system resulted in the students taking advantage of several web-based technologies, not only for completing the task given, but also for cultivating cooperative and collaborative activities such as conducting a meeting, discussion on the online platform such as the use of Group Wiki among the students, which also can be accessed by the lecturer.

Feedback from the students found that the students have a positive impression on the cooperative activities where it brings benefits to their experiential learning process, as well as group in general. Many studies reported that the project allowed them to learn much more from working in a group than working alone. In addition, it is more effective to have a small group of students compared to larger group number of students to enable students to consider the objectives of the class as a whole. Hence, engaging the students to work together cohesively towards the same objectives is the essence of experiential-cooperative learning. As a result, The EDventure of Beauty & the Beast project and the usage of the Blackboard as a tool in online learning was able to have a positive impact towards students' learning environment. It can be seen on the completion of the event and online tasks, which are the students' reflection, Group Wiki, and the submission of the multimedia video presentation.

**Conclusions**

In conclusion, the study of experiential learning, group-based project, online learning in managing an event has revealed that its effect on student learning is extensive. It reflects on the fact that working with individuals in a group with same objectives is more reliable compared to work as a separate individual. It stresses on the importance of cooperation and collaboration rather than competing with each other, has brought significant impact on the individual experiential learning. This study also has shown that it is also effective to have an online platform to communicate and share ideas with the group members. It has shown that group- based online cooperative learning method has assisted students to work effectively in groups. It helps students learn to manage their time and to plan an event, develop their communication and soft skills related to event management, apply proper leadership roles to manage group members, and increase students' motivation to learn new things. Some of the setbacks are related to internal issues within groups' members; it is closely related to group management problems such as difficulty to meet up and disagreement upon certain decisions made. Certain remote situations, like certain members of the groups are passive and lack of cooperative skills. Despite all of these issues - through clear communications and online-mediated learning, the student has successfully managed the event.

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