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EXPLORING EDUCATION IN THE DIGITAL AGE: INNOVATIONS, INTERSECTIONS AND INSIGHTS

PREFACE

Dear esteemed readers and contributors,

It is with great pleasure and excitement that I extend a warm welcome to you all to this special edition of our journal, dedicated to exploring the diverse and dynamic themes shaping the landscape of education in the digital era. As we embark on this journey of discovery, each theme serves as a guiding beacon, illuminating the innovative intersections of technology and pedagogy.

Our first theme, Teaching based on Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), and the Internet of Things (IoT), sets the stage for our exploration by delving into the transformative potential of intelligent technologies in education. From personalized learning experiences to predictive analytics, AI, ML, and IoT hold the promise of revolutionizing traditional teaching methods and unlocking new pathways to knowledge acquisition.

Theme 2 invites us to immerse ourselves in the realm of 360 Learning, Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR), and Mixed Reality (MR). Here, we witness the fusion of physical and digital worlds, as learners embark on immersive journeys that transcend the confines of the traditional classroom. Through experiential learning and interactive simulations, VR, AR, and MR technologies redefine the boundaries of education, offering unprecedented opportunities for engagement and exploration.

In Theme 3, we explore the power of Collaborative Teaching, Global Learning, and innovative practices such as Gamification, Maker-Space, and Maker Lab initiatives. This theme underscores the importance of collaboration, cultural exchange, and hands-on experimentation in fostering creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills among learners worldwide.

Theme 4 sheds light on the paradigm shift towards Open and Distance Learning (ODL), Self-Instructional Materials (SIM), and the utilization of Big Data Analytics in Learning. Here, we witness the democratization of education, as learners gain access to high-quality resources and personalized learning experiences irrespective of geographical constraints. Big Data analytics further enhance the educational landscape by providing insights into learner behavior and preferences, enabling educators to tailor instruction to individual needs.

In Theme 5, we explore the evolving role of Social Media Learning as a catalyst for knowledge dissemination, collaboration, and community building. From online forums to multimedia platforms, social media offers a dynamic space for peer-to-peer learning, digital literacy development, and the cultivation of virtual learning communities.

Theme 6 invites us to embrace Design Thinking for new Learning Delivery, emphasizing the importance of user- centered design principles in creating innovative and inclusive learning experiences. Through empathetic design, educators can reimagine learning environments that foster creativity, adaptability, and lifelong learning skills.

In Theme 7, we delve into Andragogy in technology-based learning, Instructional Design, and Best Practices in e-learning. This theme highlights the importance of learner-centered approaches, effective instructional design strategies, and the dissemination of evidence-based practices to optimize learning outcomes in the digital age.

Finally, Theme 8 explores the Development of e-learning systems, materials, and mobile technologies, including the emergence of MOOC-based mobile learning materials. Here, we witness the evolution of educational technologies, as mobile devices and online platforms redefine the boundaries of access and engagement in education.

As we navigate through these diverse themes, let us embrace the spirit of inquiry, collaboration, and innovation that defines our scholarly community. I extend my deepest gratitude to all the contributors who have enriched this journal with their insights and expertise. May this edition inspire new ideas, spark fruitful discussions, and contribute to the ongoing dialogue surrounding the future of education.

Thank you for your dedication and commitment to advancing the frontiers of knowledge in the field of education.

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Theme 1: Teaching based on Artificial Intelligence (Ai)/ Machine Learning (ML)/ Internet of Things (iOT)

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2. Exploring the Potential of Artificial Intelligence in Chemical Engineering Education

Theme 2: 360 Learning/Virtual Learning Virtual Reality/Augmented Reality & Mixed Reality

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2. Post pandemic conceptual study on virtual learning method (VLM) in chemical engineering related courses

Theme 3: Collaborative Teaching or/and Global Learning/A.D.A.B in Teaching and Learning/ Gamification in Teaching and Learning/Maker-Space/ Maker Lab

1. The Implementation of Service-Learning Malaysia-University for Society (SULAM) Programme at Universiti Teknologi MARA Perak Branch, Malaysia
2. Group Conflict: Exploring Forming and Storming in Group Work
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1. Adaptive Learning in the Age of COVID-19: Exploring Psychomotor and Cognitive Impacts on Open and Distance Learning (ODL)
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Theme 5: Social Media Learning

Theme 6: Design thinking for new Learning Delivery

1. Leading the Way: Self-Directed Learning and Leadership in University Student-Leaders

Theme 7: Andragogy in technology-based learning/Technology in learning/Instructional design in learning/Best practices in e-learning

1. Challenges and Innovations: Adapting Practical Culinary and Foodservice Subjects for Distance Learning during COVID-19
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Theme 8: Development of e-learning system/Development of e-learning materials/Development of mobile systems in Learning/Development of MOOC-based mobile learning materials

1. Student Acceptance with the Usage of Padlet in Guiding Research Statistics Analysis
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Guest Editors

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Group Conflict: Exploring Forming and Storming in Group Work

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ABSTRACT
The aim of this study is to investigate how learners perceive the phases of the emergence and storming of group conflicts. The study is based on Tuckman's model, which proposes four phases of group development: Forming, Storming, Norming and Performing. However, the study focuses only on the Forming and Storming phases. In the study, a questionnaire developed on the basis of the Tuckman model was distributed to 59 respondents. The forming phase is about putting together the structure of the team, whereby the team members seek acceptance and are guided by a group leader. The storming phase is characterised by conflict and the need for conflict resolution. The study found that some teams never progress beyond the storming phase. Educational implications include assigning roles, emphasising goal definition, and setting clear expectations. Future research can examine the factors for effective group work, the role of global competence, and the impact of group developmental stages on dynamics.

Keywords: conflict resolution, group development, learning environment, pedagogical implication, team formation

INTRODUCTION

The inclusion of collaborative learning through group work has become a central educational method in modern higher education. Through group work, students are able to actively engage in the classroom and also acquire important skills for the modern workplace, such as teamwork, problem solving and effective communication (Prince, 2004). According to Hiltz et al. (1999) and Lin et al. (2014), group work has the ability to promote peer learning, critical thinking and deeper knowledge. Tuckman's (1965) model provides a formal framework for describing the usual progression of groups through their developmental stages — forming, storming, norming and performing — within this pedagogical paradigm. Understanding group dynamics and interactions can be guided by these stages. Although this model provides insightful information, empirical research is needed to examine how these stages emerge and influence the overall learning process within higher education (Johnson & Johnson, 1999).

In this study, particular attention is paid to the "forming" and "storming" phases of group dynamics. The forming phase refers to the initial phase of group formation in which the organisational structure of the team and initial goals are established. In this phase, the participants often seek the approval of the group and orient themselves towards the designated leader. Due to differing points of view and competing ideas, tensions arise in the group during the storming phase that need to be resolved. The course of the group and consequently also the learning outcomes are significantly influenced by these phases. Izadi (2013) found that group work can be complex and difficult.

The complexity and difficulties that can arise in group work have been recognised in previous research from various sources (Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). These difficulties include such things as discrepancies in individual contributions, the dynamics of interpersonal interactions, and disagreements. The need for a deeper understanding of learner perception and behaviour at this crucial stage is underscored by the fact that these problems are particularly evident at the storming stage (Wheelan et al., 2003; Tjosvold, 1991). The main aim of

this study is to address this gap in knowledge by investigating how learners perceive and manage the forming and storming stages of group conflict in the context of higher education. The goal of the study is to provide insight into the nuances of group dynamics, their impact on academic outcomes, and the pedagogical implications for educators.

1) How do learners perceive forming stage in group conflict?
2) How do learners perceive storming stage in group conflict?

This study attempts to answer these research questions to provide insightful information on the dynamics of group work in Malaysian higher education, focusing on the crucial early stages of group growth. The findings of this study can also guide pedagogical practises and interventions to improve the effectiveness of group work techniques and create a conducive learning environment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Due to its usefulness and popularity, group work has become a staple of many university students' education. The term "group work" is used to describe educational activities conducted in an atmosphere where students come together, talk to each other, and share their perspectives to find solutions to problems (Galegane, 2018; Prince, 2004). Simply put, when students work together to solve a problem, it is known as "group work'. According to recent findings, a considerable amount of theoretical and empirical research has been devoted to the topic of group work (Caruso & Woolley, 2008; Chiriac, 2014; Lin et al., 2014; Onlu et al., 2020). Most studies agree that group work can be associated with benefits such as improved learning perspectives, development of problem-solving skills, higher levels of learning than individual learning alone, and overall success at university (Ahn & Class, 2011; Hiltz et al., 1999; Piezon & Donaldson, 2005). Although group work can be beneficial, it can also lead to conflict and difficulties. Several studies have shown that working in groups has some disadvantages, such as disagreement (Forsyth, 2014; Hammer, 2005; Izadi, 2013; Leech, 2014), less individual effort (Latane et al., 1979), and less freedom to work alone (Corliss, 2005; Panitz, 1997). Zhang (2004) also pointed out that some students believe that their classmates often have meaningless conversations and that listening to them is a waste of time. When working in a group, interactions and conflicts are inevitable; however, it is not impossible to manage them properly. Group activities should be carefully planned and organised to help students and improve their skills and capacities to achieve their learning goals (Amin et al., 2018; Nakatsugawa & Takai, 2013).

Previous studies have addressed a range of group work-related issues in higher education. For example, Amin et al. (2018) investigated the effects of intra-group disagreement on group work efficiency. Their study highlighted the importance of understanding group conflict, which is a key aspect of the storming phase that we will examine. In addition, Hiltz et al. (1999) examined the impact of cooperative learning in online environments and emphasised the need for successful group interactions as a critical component of both the forming and storming processes. Group projects and classroom interactions were the subject of research by Galegane (2018). This study emphasised the importance of understanding group work among learners, especially in the context of higher education. It aligns with the aim of our study, which is to examine how students' perspectives change when groups form and storm, in particular. In addition, research by Forsyth

(2014), Hammer (2005), Izadi (2013) and Leech (2014) has shed light on the difficulties that can arise when working in groups. These studies have looked at issues such as conflict, individual effort and the dynamics of group interaction. Although they have mainly focused on the difficulties, their findings highlight the complexities that can arise during the storming phase of group formation and provide a backdrop to our exploration of learners' experiences and views. Taken together, these studies highlight the importance of examining group conflict during the formation and storming process in higher education. They demonstrate the need for a better understanding of these dynamics and their potential impact on education, which is also the main aim of this study.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the study. The conceptual framework for this study is based on Tuckman's (1965) model of group development. Tuckman's model assumes that groups go through four phases: Forming, Storming, Norming and Performing. However, this study focuses specifically on the forming and storming phases as they play a crucial role in shaping group dynamics and learning outcomes. The Forming phase is characterised by group members coming together, seeking acceptance and being guided by a group leader. In this phase, they define the structure of the team and the initial goals. Learners' perceptions and behaviours in this phase are influenced by factors such as their enthusiasm for the team roles, their willingness to define project goals, and their trust in the other team members (SECTCaFQ 7, SECTCaFQ 2, SECTCaFQ 3, SECTCaFQ 5, SECTCaFQ 4).

The storming phase involves conflicts and the need for a solution. The group members may have different views and argue. Learners' perceptions in this phase are shaped by factors such as their willingness to continue tasks despite challenges, the role of the team leader, perceptions of task difficulty, and their reactions to conflict and goal setting (SECTCbSQ1, SECTCbSQ2, SECTCbSQ3, SECTCbSQ4, SECTCbSQ5). The effects of learners' perceptions and behaviours during the forming and storming phases on their overall learning outcomes are a central focus of this study. It is expected that positive perceptions and effective behaviours during these phases will lead to better collaborative experiences and better learning outcomes.

Understanding how learners perceive and manage the stages of formation and storming has significant pedagogical implications. It can inform educators about strategies to improve group work, promote positive interactions, and facilitate conflict resolution in higher education. To summarise, this conceptual framework guides our study of learners' perceptions of the emergence and eruption stages of group conflict in higher education. It helps us to analyse how these perceptions and behaviours affect learning outcomes and provides insights for pedagogical improvement in group work situations.

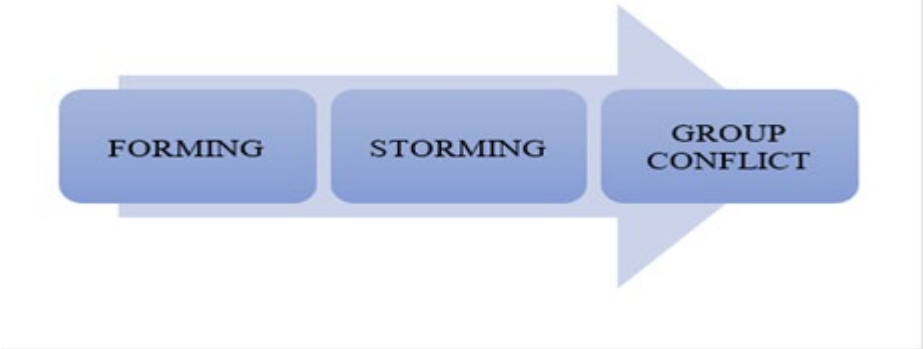

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study Forming and Storming in Group Conflict

METHODOLOGY

This quantitative study examines the motivational factors for learning among students. The survey collected data from a random sample of 59 participants from two groups of students taking the English for Academic Writing course. The questionnaire used an instrument derived from Tuckman (1965) with a 5-point Likert scale to capture the variables shown in Table 1. The survey consists of four sections: Section A contains demographic information, while Sections B, C, D, and E examine the Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing phases, respectively. As the focus of the report is on the Forming and Storming phases, the distribution of items is summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of Items in the Survey

Section	Stage	Items
B	Forming	7
C	Storming	6
		13

Table 2. Reliability of Survey

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.731	13

After testing the items in the first two phases, the reliability of the survey is shown in Table 2 and indicates a Cronbach's alpha of .731. This demonstrates the high reliability of the instrument. The subsequent analysis with SPSS is used to present the results of the study that answer the research questions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section deals with the results of the mean value analysis of the study, which is based on Tuckman's model. The study focuses on the forming and storming phases and aims to gain valuable insights into these crucial group dynamic phases. This research contributes to a better

understanding of the way groups initiate and manage their collaboration and provides essential insights into the processes of collaboration.

Results for the demographic profile

The following section provides an in-depth examination of the demographic analysis that offers insights into the characteristics of the participants in this study. Understanding the different profiles of the individuals involved in the research enriches the context for interpreting the subsequent findings in relation to the forming and storming phases.

Table 3. Percentage for Gender

1	Male	16%
2	Female	85%

A total of 59 participants took part in the study. Among these participants, a gender breakdown was observed, with 16% identifying as male and 85% as female. This demographic breakdown provides a basic understanding of the composition of the study participants. It also provides an initial insight into the diversity of perspectives that contribute to the broader exploration of the dynamics of group work.

Table 4. Percentage for Study Discipline

1	Science & Technology	39%
2	Humanities & Social Sciences	10%
3	Business Management	15%

The 59 participants come from a variety of study programmes, split between science and technology (39%), humanities and social sciences (10%) and business administration (51%). This diverse representation increases the breadth of perspectives we gathered for our investigation into the dynamics of group work.

Results for Forming

This section presents data to answer the first research question, "How do learners view the group forming phase?" By analysing this data, the study aims to discover how learners perceive and approach the initial phase of conflict within a group. This research provides valuable insights into learners' perspectives during this important phase and offers a deeper understanding of how conflict is perceived and managed in a group context.

Table 5. Mean for Forming Stage

		Mean
SECTCaFQ1	At the start, we try to have set procedures or protocols to ensure that things are orderly and run	3.9
SECTCaFQ 2	At the start, we assign specific roles to team members	4.3
SECTCaFQ 3	At the start, we are trying to define the goal and what tasks need to be accomplished.	4.2

SECTCaFQ 4	At the start, team members are afraid or do not like to ask others for help.	2.8
SECTCaFQ 5	At the start, team members do not fully trust the other team members and closely monitor others who are working on a specific task.	2.6
SECTCaFQ 6	At the start, it seems as if little is being accomplished with the project's goals.	3.2
SECTCaFQ 7	At the start, although we are not fully sure of the project's goals and issues, we are excited and proud to be on the team.	4

From the calculated mean scores, SECTCaFQ 2 (M=4.3) is the most pronounced, which means that the majority of respondents express enthusiasm about their team roles, closely followed by SECTCaFQ 2, which shows that most respondents start the discussion by assigning specific roles (M=4.2). In addition, SECTCaFQ 7 reflects their enthusiasm for being part of the team despite unclear knowledge of the project's goals and problems (M=4). Conversely, SECTCaFQ 5 shows that a minority lack trust in the team members, suggesting that they need to be closely supervised during the execution of tasks (M=2.6). Similarly, SECTCaFQ 4 has a slightly higher mean score of 2.8, indicating that the minority are reluctant to ask for help and have few concerns about seeking help.

Results for Storming

This section presents data to answer the second research question: "How do learners perceive the storming phase in group conflict?" The data analysis aims to understand learners' perspectives and behaviors when conflicts in a group come to a head. The research provides insights into how participants view and manage conflict escalation and sheds light on their reactions during this crucial phase.

Table 6. Mean for Storming Stage

		Mean
SECTCbSQ1	During discussions, we are quick to get on with the task at hand and do not spend too much time in the planning stage.	3.5
SECTCbSQ2	During discussions, the team leader tries to keep order and contributes to the task at hand.	4.1
SECTCbSQ3	During discussions, the tasks are very different from what we imagined and seem very difficult to accomplish.	3.3
SECTCbSQ4	During discussions, we argue a lot even though we agree on the real issues.	2.9
SECTCbSQ5	During discussions, the goals we have established seem unrealistic.	2.9
SECTCbSQ6	During discussions, there is a lot of resisting of the tasks on hand and quality improvement approaches.	3.6

The highest mean score (M=4.1) is observed in SECTCbSQ2, which shows that learners recognise the role of the leader in maintaining order and contributing to the task. This is closely followed by SECTCbSQ1 (M=3.5), which indicates a tendency to complete tasks quickly, albeit without strong endorsement of this attitude. SECTCbSQ3 records the third highest mean (M=3.3), indicating a neutral attitude towards the perception that tasks deviate significantly from their

expectations and appear challenging. On the contrary, the lowest mean scores are recorded in SECTCbSQ4 and SECTCbSQ5 (M=2.9 each), indicating that they disagree with the possibility of intense conflict, although they agree on the actual issues (SECTCbSQ4), and that they are dissatisfied with the likelihood of setting unrealistic goals (SECTCbSQ5).

The group development process usually consists of five phases: Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing and Adjourning. In the forming phase, the team members get to know each other and look for leadership and authority. There is a great deal of uncertainty and the individual members ask questions about their role and expectations. The Storming phase is characterised by conflict and competition as individual personalities emerge. Team performance can decline during this phase due to unproductive activities and disagreements over goals. When teams successfully pass through the storming phase, conflict is resolved and unity begins to emerge in the norming phase. Consensus emerges and roles and responsibilities become clearer. The performance phase is characterised by high productivity and effective collaboration. Finally, in the adjourning phase, the team disbands when the project or task comes to an end (Johnson & Johnson, 2013).

The conclusion contained in the question can be linked to previous discussions. For example, the finding that SECTCaFQ 7 indicates enthusiasm for team tasks even when project goals are unclear is consistent with the concept of positive interdependence, which emphasises the importance of team members working together toward a common goal (Johnson & Johnson, 1999). Also, the finding that SECTCbSQ2 shows that learners recognise the role of a leader in maintaining order and contributing to tasks is consistent with the concept of individual accountability, which emphasises the importance of each team member taking responsibility for his or her own contribution to the group. However, based on the results in the 'forming phase', it appears that although the respondents have the right motivation for teamwork, a minority of them still have trust issues towards the other members and are afraid to communicate (ask for help). Therefore, the team leader plays the most important role in maintaining order and ensuring that everyone contributes to the task at hand. Although the mean score of 4.1 is close to the maximum score of 5, it still shows that there is a need to teach effective leadership skills to every student. It is therefore suggested that future researchers investigate students' leadership knowledge and its influence on the success of group work.

Overall, the conclusion contained in the question can be related to previous studies on group dynamics in higher education by examining the extent to which the factors identified in the conclusion are consistent with those in previous research.

CONCLUSION

In summary, it can be said that the analysis of the means in two different phases of the group conflict reveals astonishing findings. In the formation phase, SECTCaFQ 2 is the most important result, followed by 3, which emphasises the initiation of discussions by assigning roles or emphasising the definition of project goals. In third place is SECTCaFQ 7, which shows that the majority of participants show enthusiasm for their team roles even when project objectives are unclear. Conversely, SECTCaFQ 5 indicates a lack of trust in team members, while SECTCaFQ 4 indicates a reluctance to seek help. In the transition to the storming phase, SECTCbSQ2 stands out with the highest mean score and shows that learners recognise the role of a leader in

maintaining order and completing tasks. This is closely followed by SECTCbSQ1, indicating a preference for completing tasks quickly. In contrast, SECTCbSQ3 reflects a neutral attitude towards task expectations and perceived challenges. SECTCbSQ4 and SECTCbSQ5 have the lowest mean scores, indicating an aversion to intense arguments and setting unrealistic goals. The results show the importance of developing students with effective leadership skills to ensure productive teamwork. Future studies should therefore include the leadership factor in the assessment of effective group work among university students.

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Conflict of Interest

We confirm that the manuscript is an authentic creation of the authors. It has not been presented for publication elsewhere, and no portion of it has been previously published. We affirm that all contributors have made substantial contributions to the content, accuracy, and credibility of the data, as well as its interpretation, in preparation for submission to this journal.

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Authors' Contributions

Introduction and literature review (NHA & SKO); research methodology, data collection and data analysis (TNLTMF & NHR); research findings (NHA, TNLTMF, NHR & SKO); discussion and conclusion (TNLTMF); formatting (SKO); final proofreading (SKO, TNLTMF & NHA). All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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