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The Abilities Related to Organizing Experiential Learning Activities for Vietnamese Undergraduate Teacher Training Students

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Abstract. Experimental learning, often known as hands-on learning, is a kind of active learning that takes place in the classroom. Many institutions globally have utilized it to build educational programmes, and it is widely regarded as a best practice in the field. Specifically, the purpose of this research was to examine the feasibility and efficacy of improving students' capacity to design experiential learning events in order to better prepare them for the job. Participants in this research included a total of 470 participants, including 420 students, 50 lecturers and representatives from the Ho Chi Minh City University of Education's Youth Union and Students Association. They responded to seven questions regarding their ability to organize experiential learning activities for undergraduate students, as part of a broader questionnaire they completed. However, while both lecturers and students recognized the critical importance of abilities related to the organization of experiential learning activities, the findings of the study revealed that these abilities were not well designed or efficiently purposed for undergraduate students in the context of experiential learning. In order for students to improve their professional skills and gain more useful experience in the area of event planning, they should be encouraged and taught accordingly.

Keywords: experiential learning; professional skill; teacher training student

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1. Introduction

Globilization has led to continuous change and development, also in the field of education Individuals may simply enrol in online classes or training courses, while human resources recruiters are constantly looking for candidates that have excellent interpersonal and soft skills. In addition to seminars, students are given the opportunity to develop key skills that enable them to fulfil the criteria of the position they are seeking (Le & Tran-Chi, 2019). In every industry and profession, communication, cooperation, problem-solving, organization, negotiation, and persuasion are universally recognized as the most important skills and the criteria by which recruiters evaluate prospective employees (Huang et al., 2019). The quality of human resources must be improved in order to meet employment expectations as a consequence of the requirements of socio-economic development. This raises the issue of educational innovation in the classroom. Universities must embrace well-known teaching methods and approaches to help students learn and prepare for the challenging professions that will be available in the future. Traditionally, students have usually been passive participants in their learning process with the use of conventional teaching and learning techniques such as instruction and rote learning, among others. However, many institutions globally have recently embraced more active teaching methods and approaches, such as experiential learning, in order to better engage students (Abdulwahed & Nagy, 2009; Garvin & Ramsier, 2003; Hai, 2016; Healey & Jenkins, 2000; Lan, 2017; Mason & Arshed, 2013).

According to Kolb's theory, learning is a cognitive process that involves continual adaptation to and synergetic interaction with one's surroundings. Teaching and the experience that people acquire due to the learning process help them develop knowledge (Kolb & Kolb, 2009). According to Austin and Rust (2015), "hands-on" learning is regarded to be one of the most important developments in college or university education, and it is one of the most significant trends in higher education today (Katula & Threnhauser, 1999; Wang et al., 2021; Zha, 2021). Many writers have written on the beneficial effects of experiential learning, which has been addressed extensively in the literature. According to scientific studies, there are many benefits to being exposed to new situations. An investigation of the long-term effects of experiential learning was carried out by Victor (2013) via a qualitative research study involving survey participants who had participated in an outdoor experience course. In the study, it was found that experiential learning aided learners in increasing their self-confidence and developing collaboration skills such as communication, actively listening to others, accepting responsibility for mistakes, respecting colleagues as well as developing and strengthening the relationship and interaction between individuals and their environment. According to the results of this qualitative study, the findings of D'Amato and Krasny (2011), who also observed favourable effects of experiential learning in an outdoor adventure education course, were backed up by a strong body of evidence. A number of research studies have also examined the impact of experiential learning on students' knowledge and learning processes as students' self-confidence may be enhanced via the use of active teaching techniques (Girvan et al., 2016; Knecht-Sabres, 2010; Lee & Dickson, 2010; Simons et al., 2012; Voukelatou, 2019) and

they could be better prepared for self-directed learning (Geng et al., 2019; Jiusto & DiBiasio, 2006; Morris, 2019; Tekkol & Demirel, 2018). Student educators in education departments must be educated and developed in the skills associated with the organization of experiential learning activities if they are to be successful educators. This instruction and development will equip students to put their newfound skills to use in training and education situations in the future.

According to the researchers' findings, students should be taught the necessary skills to facilitate planning experiential activities by determining the goals and responsibilities of arranging experiential learning activities for students. A variety of factors determines the exact content of experiential learning exercises. They need to identify the necessary strategies and procedures to organize experiential learning experiences. Finding the most suitable organizational structure for experiential learning activities is a difficult task. Organizational tasks include mobilizing and coordinating human resources as well as estimating financial requirements, putting a plan into action by organizing experiential learning activities, and dealing with any unforeseen circumstances that arise as a result of organizing experiential learning activities.

The question of how to improve skills linked to arranging experiential learning activities is not a new one. However, to the best of our knowledge, only a few research studies have been conducted in Vietnam on this topic. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the implementation and efficacy of developing skills linked to arranging experiential learning activities at the Ho Chi Minh City University of Education in Vietnam, specifically in the field of education. First, the empirical literature on experiential learning in the learning process is reviewed, followed by a discussion of the study questions. The second part is an introduction to the study technique, which is followed by findings and a discussion. The last section concludes the study.

2. Methods

2.1. Participants

An approach was selected to recruit and administer samples from those who volunteered to participate in the research and assist with its administration. An online survey tool was used to collect data for this research, and a sample of 470 respondents was selected. Of these, 420 (89.36 per cent) were sophomore and junior students, while 50 (10.64 per cent) were lecturers and members of the Youth Union and Students Association staff and volunteers. Before taking part in the study, all participants were given the opportunity to provide informed permission and were told of the objective of the study. The university's ethical committee authorized the study conducted by Ho Chi Minh City University in Vietnam.

2.2. Measure

Students enrolled in undergraduate teacher training programmes completed questionnaires that were intended to assess their skills in arranging experiential learning activities. This was cross-sectional research. The research for this project

began in November 2017 and ended in March 2019. In the first section of the questionnaire, several socio-demographic questions were asked to determine the participants' demographic characteristics. The participants' answers are presented in five distinct levels, each corresponding to a five-point Likert scale. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 was used for data analysis. To code the data, a Likert scale with five levels was used: 1 representing Very Unimportant/Never, 2 representing Unimportant/Seldom, 3 representing Neither Important nor Unimportant/Rarely, 4 representing Important/Very Often, and 5 representing Very Important/Always. Following the recommendations of Malhotra and Birks (2007), the interval width of the five-point Likert scale was calculated in order to set up the group boundary value for discussion of the results.

3. Results

Figure 1 depicts the relative significance of increasing one's capacity to arrange experiential learning activities at various degrees of importance. This was rated as essential by the survey participants as shown in Figure 1. In particular, 56.4 per cent of students and 64 per cent of lecturers and employees from the Youth Union and Students Association indicated that increasing the capacity to arrange experiential learning events was essential. Improved capacity to arrange experiential learning events was considered essential by 31 per cent of students, 30 per cent of lecturers, and 30 per cent of Youth Union and Students Association personnel. A modest 10 per cent of students, 6 per cent of lecturers and 6 per cent of YUSA personnel deemed an improvement in the capacity to arrange experiential learning events as essential. In only 2.6 per cent of cases students indicated that increasing their capacity to plan experiential learning activities was not essential to them.

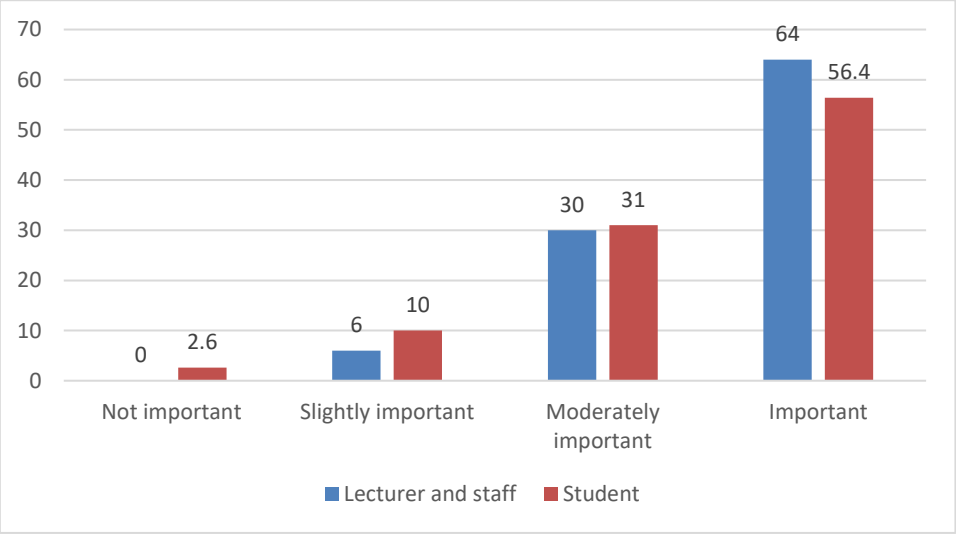

Figure 1. Perception towards improving the ability to organize experiential learning activities

Degree of knowledge among lecturers, members of the Youth Union and members of the Students Association regarding the organizing of experiential learning activities

'Handling unexpected circumstances when arranging experiential learning activities' (M = 2.3; SD = 0.61) is the indication with the greatest levels of implementation out of the seven elements of the capacity to plan experiential learning activities (M = 2.3; SD = 0.61). 'Determining the particular topics for experiential learning activities' has the lowest implementation level (M = 1.92; SD = 0.72).

Efficacy of the capacity to arrange experiential learning events for students

The indicator with the highest levels of effectiveness among the seven items of the ability to organize experiential learning activities is 'Mobilizing and coordinating human resources and estimating the financial requirements for organizing experiential learning activities' (M = 2.96; SD = 0.86). When it comes to determining the goals and tasks of arranging experiential learning activities for students, 'Determining the objectives and tasks of organizing experiential learning activities for students' has the lowest effectiveness rating (M = 2.62; SD = 0.97).

Awareness of and efficacy in implementing experiential learning activities among students

Implementing the plan for arranging experiential learning activities' (M = 2.53; SD = 0.5) is the indicator with the greatest levels of implementation among the seven elements of the capacity to arrange experiential learning activities (M = 2.53; SD = 0.5). When it comes to execution, the indicator with the lowest degree of implementation is 'Handling unexpected circumstances when arranging experiential learning activities' (M=2.02; SD=0.66).

Their capacity to plan and organize such events for other students

There are seven elements in the capacity to arrange experiential learning activities, and the indicator with the greatest levels of efficacy is 'Handling unexpected circumstances when arranging experiential learning activities' (M = 2.92; SD = 0.67). In terms of efficacy, the indicator with the lowest score is 'Determining the particular contents for experiential learning activities' (M = 2.7; SD = 0.72; M = 2.7; SD = 0.72). The mean scores for each of the seven elements are depicted in the first row of Table 1:

Table 1. Ability to organize experiential learning activities for students

No		Lecturers and Youth Union and Students Association staff				Students			
		Implementation		Effectiveness		Implementation		Effectiveness	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
1	Define the goals and responsibilities of the person in charge of arranging experiential learning activities for students.	1.94	0.77	2.62	0.97	2.32	0.47	2.76	0.7
2	Determine specific material for experiential learning activities in advance.	1.92	0.72	2.74	0.90	2.21	0.57	2.70	0.72
3	Determine the strategies and procedures that will be used to organize hands-on experiential learning sessions.	2.18	0.69	2.76	0.89	2.18	0.51	2.77	0.64
4	Decide on the best organization-al structure for your experiential learning activities.	2.08	0.75	2.86	0.833	2.20	0.59	2.82	0.65
5	Organize experiential learning activities through mobilizing and coordinating human resources, as well as estimating the financial resources required.	2.00	0.73	2.96	0.86	2.12	0.63	2.84	0.68
6	Implement the strategy for arranging experiential learning activities that was developed.	2.14	0.70	2.88	0.92	2.53	0.50	2.89	0.72
7	Be prepared to deal with unexpected circumstances while planning experiential learning events	2.30	0.61	2.92	0.83	2.02	0.66	2.92	0.67
M: Mean; SD: Standard deviation									

Table 2 shows the mean scores on seven items related to increasing one's capacity to arrange experiential learning activities by specialized modules of

undergraduate education, with the highest values indicating more improvement. Of the seven elements that make up the capacity to arrange experiential learning activities, 'Implementing the plan for arranging experiential learning activities' has the greatest degree of implementation among the seven items in terms of execution. A large proportion of survey participants assessed 'Sometimes' (51.2 per cent), roughly one-quarter of survey participants evaluated 'Never' (26 per cent), and approximately twenty-three per cent of survey participants assessed 'Often' (23.3 per cent) for this indicator, according to the results of the survey.

The indicator with the lowest level of implementation is 'Determining the most appropriate organizational form for experiential learning activities', with 30.5 per cent of participants indicating that they have never done so and more than half of participants indicating that they have done so occasionally (55.7 per cent). 'Implementing the plan for arranging experiential learning activities' is the indication with the greatest levels of efficacy among the seven components of the capacity to arrange experiential learning activities, and it is the indicator with the lowest levels of effectiveness among the others. To be more specific, a high percentage of survey participants rated this indication as 'Moderately effective' (54.8 per cent), 26.7 per cent of survey participants rated it as 'Slightly successful', and 18.6 per cent of survey participants rated it as 'Extremely effective'. 'Making a decision on the objectives and tasks of organizing experiential learning activities for students' is the indicator with the lowest level of effectiveness (with 31.7 per cent of survey participants evaluating it as 'Slightly effective', 10.7 per cent of survey participants evaluating it as 'Extremely effective', and more than half of participants evaluating it as 'Moderately effective'), followed by 'Determining the objectives and tasks of organizing experiential learning activities for students' (50.5 per cent).

Table 2. Level of development of the capacity to organize own experiential activities through the teaching of specialized subjects

No.		Implementation (%)			Effectiveness (%)			
		Often	Sometimes	Never	Extremely effective	Moderately effective	Slightly effective	Not effective
1	Define the goals and responsibilities of the person in charge of arranging experiential learning activities for students.	18.1	53.1	28.8	10.7	50.5	37.1	1.7
2	Determine specific material for experiential learning activities in advance.	17.4	50.2	32.4	13.3	50	32.1	3.6

3	Determine the strategies and procedures that will be used to organize hands-on experiential learning sessions.	16.0	58.3	25.7	16.0	56.4	26.7	1.0
4	Make a decision on the best organizational structure for your experiential learning activities.	13.8	55.7	30.5	12.1	53.6	30.0	4.3
5	Organize experiential learning activities through mobilizing and coordinating human resources, as well as estimating the financial resources required.	23.3	47.1	29.5	16.2	58.1	25.7	0
6	Implement the strategy for arranging experiential learning activities that was developed.	22.9	51.2	26	18.6	54.8	26.7	0
7	Be prepared to deal with unexpected circumstances while planning experiential learning events	17.9	50.2	31.9	16.0	56.2	25.7	2.1
%: Percentage								

Table 3 depicts the mean scores on seven criteria related to increasing one's capacity to arrange experiential learning events, as determined by the activities of the Youth Union and the Students Association. Of the seven elements that make up the capacity to arrange experiential learning activities, 'Implementing the plan for arranging experiential learning activities' has the greatest degree of implementation among the seven items in terms of execution. In particular, a significant percentage of survey participants rated this indication as 'Sometimes' (45 per cent), almost twenty-three per cent of survey participants rated it as 'Never' (22.9 per cent), and nearly a third of survey participants rated it as 'Often' (32.1 per cent). It is the indication of determining a suitable organizational form of experiential learning activities with the lowest degree of implementation. A small percentage of participants assessed it often, with more than half of participants evaluating it sometimes (53.8 per cent).

Table 3. Improving the ability to organize experiential learning activities by activities of Youth Union and Students Association

No.		Implementation (%)			Effectiveness (%)			
		Often	Sometimes	Never	Extremely effective	Moderately effective	Slightly effective	Not effective
1	Define the goals and responsibilities of the person in charge of arranging experiential learning activities for students.	16.0	55.7	28.3	10.7	50.7	30.5	2.64
2	Determine specific material for experiential learning activities in advance.	18.6	51.0	30.5	13.6	55.7	28.8	2.81
3	Determine the strategies and procedures that will be used to organize hands-on experiential learning sessions.	18.8	51.0	30.5	13.3	55.5	28.8	2.80
4	Make a decision on the best organizational structure for your experiential learning activities.	16.2	53.8	30.0	13.6	55	30.0	2.81
5	Organize experiential learning activities through mobilizing and coordinating human resources, as well as estimating the financial resources required.	18.8	51.7	29.5	20.7	50.2	29	2.92
6	Implement the strategy for arranging experiential learning activities that was developed.	32.1	45.0	22.9	23.3	52.6	23.3	2.99
7	Be prepared to deal with unexpected circumstances while planning experiential learning events	23.3	58.3	18.3	28.8	51.0	18.6	3.07
%: Percentage								

According to the study, 'Handling unexpected circumstances when arranging experiential learning activities' is the indicator with the greatest efficacy among the seven elements of the capacity to arrange experiential learning activities. To be more specific, slightly more than half of the survey participants rated it as 'Moderately effective' (51%), 28.8% of survey participants rated it as 'Extremely successful', and about eighteen per cent of participants rated it as 'Slightly effective' (18.6 per cent). Over ten per cent of survey participants rated it as 'Extremely effective' (10.7 per cent), more than thirty per cent of people rated it as 'Slightly effective' (30.5 per cent), and the vast majority of participants rated it as 'Moderately effective' (70 per cent) (50.7 per cent).

4. Discussion

The main aims of this research are twofold. Firstly, to survey the perception of students, lecturers and the staff of the Youth Union and Students Association towards the role of improving abilities related to organizing experiential learning activities for undergraduate students. Secondly, to examine the implementation and effectiveness of improving the ability to organize experiential learning activities for undergraduate students.

The most significant results show that both lecturers and students acknowledged the critical importance of skills linked to the organization of experiential learning activities in their respective fields. As a consequence of this finding, a prior study conducted by Victor (2013) has shown that experiential learning has a beneficial impact on students' self-confidence, cooperation abilities, and the development of a positive connection and interaction between students and the surrounding environment. Students were fully aware that they could only devote themselves to study if the training programme reflected the community's requirements and addressed social issues at the time of enrolment. Although students' organizational skills were enhanced, they were not adequately educated to arrange experiential learning events for undergraduates. Participants in the poll acknowledged that experiential learning activities had not been executed well enough to enable students to improve their professional knowledge and abilities. Prior to arranging experiential learning activities for students, organizers did not thoroughly define the goals, tasks, and particular contents of the activities, and as a result, students did not obtain the intended results as a result of these activities.

Furthermore, the method of arranging experiential learning activities did not correspond to reality and did not completely represent the material that was needed to achieve the aims and goals of these activities. The failure to mobilize and coordinate human resources and accurately estimate the budgetary requirements of experiential learning activities were the factors that contributed to this outcome. Because of a scarcity of human and financial resources, it was difficult for educators to successfully develop and execute activities that were in line with the goals, tasks, and content of experiential learning activities. As a result, experiential learning should be included in the educational content and goals to guarantee sufficient financial resources (Austin & Rust, 2015).

Student subjective evaluations were based on their own skills and experiences gained via direct participation in all phases of the process, as seen from the individual viewpoint. When students gave high ratings for putting the plan for arranging experiential learning events into action, they expressed high expectations of their participation in these activities. Furthermore, when comparing the efficacy of increasing the capacity to arrange experiential learning events, students gave a better score than those of the professors and the employees of the Youth Union and the Students Association of the university. This demonstrated that students always had high expectations for experiential learning that could educate them to improve their high-level professional abilities and knowledge. It is essential to offer particular methods for

incorporating different types of experiential learning activities into specialized curriculum modules in order for students to gain information and apply it to specific circumstances to achieve success. Moreover, this is exactly in accordance with earlier results achieved by Kolb and Kolb (2009), which showed that experience acquired by learners as a result of the learning process will result in their gaining knowledge.

The findings of this study also revealed that specialized modules of undergraduate curriculum and activities of the Youth Union and Students Association did not significantly enhance or successfully train participants' skills to arrange experiential learning activities. Combining specialist courses with hands-on practical learning activities is critical for success. Students would have the chance to instantly experience and apply what they have learned from the theory in order to deal with issues that arise in the educational environment if they were to acquire specialized knowledge. Experiential learning activities have not been well defined in detail the objectives and tasks for undergraduate students such as determining specific contents, methods and techniques to assist students in enhancing professional skills and applying them, and determining appropriate organizational forms to combine a variety of learning activities. The specialized courses contain both fundamental and professional information, and they have a significant impact on the professional capabilities and teaching abilities of students once they graduate. Students would acquire greater experience if they were given frequent opportunities to use their knowledge to solve hypothetical problems while engaging in experiential learning activities. As a result, they would be better prepared to deal with circumstances in the real world. Furthermore, the experiential learning activities that were conducted did not provide the anticipated outcomes and were not consistent with the significant role that experience played in the specialized modules or the activities of the Youth Union and Students Association.

Experiential learning activities, according to the overall assessment, must be implemented more effectively in order to improve abilities, including determining the objectives and tasks; (determining the specific contents, methods, and techniques; determining the appropriate organizational form of experiential learning activities; mobilizing and coordinating human resources, and estimating costs. Students should be encouraged and educated so that they may develop their professional abilities and acquire more valuable experience in the field of event planning. The sampling method is, without a doubt, the most significant drawback of the current research. The sample was chosen at convenience from among students at the Ho Chi Minh City University of Education, which is located in Vietnam.

5. Conclusion

A cognitive process that includes ongoing adaptation to and synergetic interaction with one's environment is known as learning. Individuals obtain knowledge as a result of the experience they have gained via the learning process. Experiential learning, sometimes known as "hands-on" learning, is regarded to be one of the most significant developments in higher education,

and it is becoming increasingly popular. The most important finding of this research is that both lecturers and students recognized the critical importance of talents linked to the organization of experiential learning activities in their learning. Although students' organizational skills were enhanced, they were not adequately trained to create experiential learning events for undergraduates. It is vital to use all of the findings from this research in order to develop educational programmes that satisfy the needs of students while also meeting the requirements of socio-economic development. Students' perceptions of experiential learning activities and the attributes and skills of school educators should all be taken into consideration in future research to develop strategies for effective experiential education programmes. Experiential learning provides learners with the chance to put what they have learned into practice by tackling real-world problems. In order to obtain the best results, learners must be able to demonstrate their knowledge of the underlying concepts, methods, and procedures, as well as experimenting with and modifying their practice. A combination of practice and targeted coaching based on what is seen during practice is required to achieve expert status. After every experiential learning engagement, learners should participate in a debriefing session in which they get feedback and coaching from subject matter experts and other team members.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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