

## **FACTORS AFFECTING BUILDING EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN VIETNAM**

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### **Abstract**

*This research is conducted to identify and analyze the factors that influence building an empirical learning environment for Vietnamese students. Based on the factor groups affecting, survey questionnaires were designed to collect the opinions of 275 managers, experts in HCM City selected using convenience sampling. The empirical results state the factors forming an experiential learning environment for students affected by the following five factors: Fact sightseeing, Event Organizations, Forum Organizations, Club Activities, and Volunteer Campaigns. The result of this study is the basis for colleges and universities in Vietnam to change and improve their training qualities in regional and world integration trend.*

*Keywords: Experience learning, education quality, skill training, tertiary education*

## INTRODUCTION

Learning trend from experience is the methodology has been attracting a lot of attention from the whole society. Experiential learning is a learning form that involves organization of education and training activities to enhance the learning experience for students, creating different environments for students to experience the most and expressing their creative abilities. Experiential activities enable students to observe, think and participate in practical activities, thereby motivating and facilitating them to actively research and find new solutions based on their ideas knowledge learned at school and their life realities, thereby forming the consciousness, qualities, life skills and abilities in the integration.

Awareness about the benefits of experiential learning is enormous; however at present Vietnamese colleges and universities have not applied or limited to the quality of higher education which poorly compared to the world. The demand for innovative thinking and developing education in positive learning direction is one of the urgent requirements of Vietnamese education now and in the future.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Experimental learning is learning form connecting theory with real life closely. The objective of this activity is to help learners get closer to reality, and have professional knowledge and comprehensive life skills (John Hanrry, 2010). Experiential learning is teaching activities assisting learners to develop the creativity and individuality of each personality in a team. Innovative learning activities attach practical accomplishments to students' self-control and self-efficacy (Hann L. C, 2015). These activities include Fact sightseeings, Event Organizations, Forum Organizations, Club Activities, Volunteer Campaigns (THP, 2016). Practical education activities are conducted in parallel with teaching activities in schools. They are part of the educational process organized apart from class time or integrated with classroom activities. These activities help harness the potential of each student, nurture a sense of autonomy, share with others, and promote the role of subject positively, actively, autonomously and creatively.

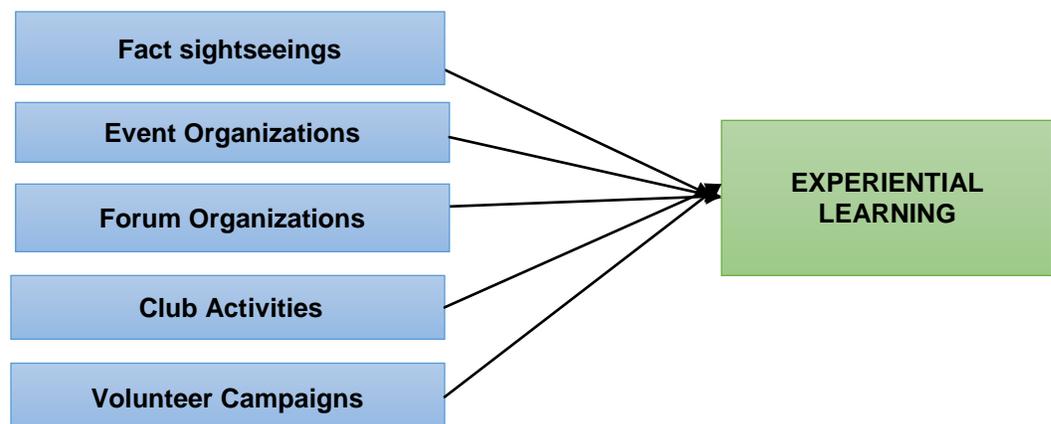
According to experts, this type of learner must actively participate in all stages of the operational process from operational design to preparation, implementation and evaluation of performance in accordance with subject characteristics with his level and ability. In this learning environment, students can experience, express their views, give ideas, and evaluate their performances, their friends, and their groups which forming and building students' values and necessary capabilities (THP, 2016). It is advisable that the theme of the learning experience is related to the critical issues of business and society. In addition, learning experience is over students' knowledge. The content of knowledge must be within the framework that students

have learned which is in the curriculum and relevant to what can be consulted from society (Katti et al, 2013).

In learning experience activities, the instructors are only supporters, instructors, facilitators whereas students participates in activities and solve their problems. Instructors serve as mentors, guides, reminders, testers and helper in supporting students in their studies. In order to achieve the lesson effectively, the instructors need to have clear content and ideas arranged in order from lower levels to higher ones, so that students will not be surprised and gradually adapt to new learning methods. With this learning method, students are no longer as passive as the traditional way of learning that they become the center, who actively receive, ask instructors for knowledge and guidance. Innovative learning activities are very diversified and integrated with the knowledge and skills of many subjects, many fields of study and education (Tran Van Dinh and Vu Hanh, 2014). Experimental education activities include many participations, coordination, educational forces such as faculty members, training sections, school administrators, parents, local authorities, and associations of study encouragement, trade unions, Youth Union, local agencies, organizations and enterprises and so on. If educational activities are well-organized, they will meet students' needs which help them apply their knowledge to make their life easier and more convenient.

Thus, it can be concluded that the factors influencing the development of student learning environment in Vietnam (Y) are focused on the following main points: Fact sights, Event Organizations, Forum Organizations, Club Activities, and Volunteer Campaigns (X). Research model includes 05 independent variables (X) and 01 dependent variable (Y). experiential

Figure 1. Model study of the factors affecting building experiential learning environments for university students in Vietnam



Hypothesis H1: There is a close relationship between the " Fact sightseeings " and building experiential learning environments for students in Vietnam

Hypothesis H2: There is a close relationship between the " Event organizations" and building experiential learning environments for students in Vietnam

Hypothesis H3: There is a close relationship between the " Forum Organizations " and building experiential learning environments for students in Vietnam

Hypothesis H4: There is a close relationship between the " Club Activities " and building experiential learning environments for students in Vietnam

Hypothesis H5: There is a close relationship between the " Volunteer Campaigns " and building experiential learning environments for students in Vietnam

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The two following major research methods are focused qualitative and quantitative: Based on theory and the related results of scientific research mentioned the above, qualitative research method was used for group discussing and leading experts consulting to select the variables and observed variable groups. Based on the factor groups affecting, survey questionnaires were designed to collect the opinions of 275 managers, experts in HCM City (convenience sampling). The research model includes 5 scales, 22 observed variables (questionnaires), using 5-point Likert scale (Likert scale with a 5-point), Distance value =  $(\text{Maximum} - \text{Minimum}) / n = (5 - 1) / 5 = 0.8$ : 1. Completely disagree; 2. Disagree; 3. No opinion / Normal; 4. Agree; 5. Totally agree. Survey results were entered SPSS 20.0 and Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was used to test reliability of the scale. After testing the reliability using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, Exploratory Factor Analysis - EFA was analyzed to shrink and summarize the data of the scale (Hoang Trong Chu and Nguyen Mong Ngoc, 2005 "Quantitative Research SPSS"). This method is based on extraction ratio factor (Eigenvalue), under which only those factors having ratiom (Eigenvalue) greater than 1 will be kept, those smaller than one will not show information better than origin variable because after standardizing, each original variance is 1. The method of extracting the main components (Principal components) and original method of factor rotation (Varimax Procedure) were used to minimize the number of variables that have large coefficients for the same factor, which increases explaining the factors. The above results were used to analyze multiple linear regressions to test the assumptions of the model considering the impact level of these factors affecting building experiential learning environments for university students in Vietnam.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1. Testing the average value for the observed variables

OBSERVED VARIABLES	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
Event organization helps me express ideas, creativity	0.847				
Event organization helps me understand how to deal with any situation that could happen	0.855				
Event organization helps me practice teamwork abilities	0.845				
Event organization helps me exercise leadership abilities	0.839				
I'd like to practice setting relationships skills and communication skills	0.791				
I'd like the realistic simulation classrooms in business		0.888			
I'd like to practice in the workplace		0.877			
I'd like to learn, to visit businesses		0.877			
I'd like to learn the practical experience in the business		0.859			
I'd like the friendly and positive learning environment			0.878		
I'd like to share my understanding			0.873		
I'd like to have chance to express personality			0.866		
I'd like the club to operate under public guidelines			0.789		
I'd like to have periodical club activities schedule			0.759		
Volunteers Campaigns help me get a chance to assert myself in the community				0.894	
Volunteers Campaigns help me have an understanding of the social urgent problems				0.884	
Volunteers Campaigns give me the opportunity to participate in solving social problems				0.849	
I'd like to participate in volunteer activities for community benefit				0.811	
Forum is a place where the school identify, capture students' feelings and needs					0.847
Forum helps strengthen exchanges among students, parents and schools					0.821
The school will get many useful comments from students					0.820
I think to encourage and replicate positive behavior of others					0.766

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results shows that there are five factors affecting building experiential learning environments for university students in Vietnam, each element is different. According to the analysis, five factors have impact positively correlated to building experiential learning environments for university students in Vietnam in order respectively. This result is the basis for the education sector to have strategies enhancing competitiveness in regional and international integration trend.

From the above analysis, the authors propose the following recommendations: Firstly, Vietnamese colleges and universities need to raise more awareness about experiential education and mobilize community participation in education, creating more opportunities for learning and practicing for students. Moreover, they should raise understanding about the important roles and positions of faculty in the development of comprehensive capacities for learners. Lecturers need to invest in their lectures, problem research, and student guidance greatly. Secondly, experts should be offered to develop training programs and organize trainings for lecturers and staff in related departments in the schools before the official applying. Thirdly, students are asked to learn about experiential learning and encourage to engage in an incentive programs. Fourthly, it is necessary to maintain this activity regularly to help students have the opportunity to express their abilities, training their qualities, and capacities needed.

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