

Education for Students: A Socio-Cultural Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the socio-cultural perspective on education, focusing on the role of experiential learning and career guidance for students. In an increasingly interconnected world, where cultural diversity and social dynamics shape educational experiences, the need for effective career orientation linked to cultural realities is paramount. The study analyzes the significance of experiential activities in fostering personal capacities and adaptability among students. It emphasizes the importance of collaboration among families, schools, and communities in providing comprehensive career guidance. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach that includes document analysis, observations, and qualitative research, the article identifies key strategies for enhancing experiential learning initiatives. Findings suggest that integrating experiential activities into the curriculum, investing in professional development for educators, and strengthening community partnerships are essential for improving students' engagement and preparedness for future careers. This research contributes to understanding how socio-cultural factors influence educational practices and highlights the necessity of an integrated approach to career guidance.

Keywords: Experiential Learning, Career Guidance, Socio-Cultural Education, Student Development, Community Collaboration, Curriculum Integration.

1. INTRODUCTION

Reason for Choosing the Topic

In today's rapidly evolving world, experiential learning and career guidance have garnered significant attention across various educational systems, particularly for students. This educational trend is gaining traction globally, playing a crucial role in enhancing personal capabilities and adaptability among students as they navigate diverse cultural and social environments. In an era characterized by information overload and global connectivity, effective career orientation linked to cultural realities and societal needs is vital for students' successful integration into the labor market (Kolb, 1984).

In Vietnam, the implementation of experiential education and career guidance in schools has shown promising developments in recent years. However, a balanced perspective—considering both the positive

outcomes and potential challenges—is essential for identifying solutions that can further enhance students' personal capacities and adaptability in the face of a multifaceted cultural and social landscape.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This article aims to analyze the significance of experiential activities in relation to culture and society. It seeks to determine the importance of collaboration between family, school, and community in providing effective career guidance. Furthermore, it proposes actionable solutions to enhance the effectiveness of experiential activities and career guidance for students.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

The research employs a combination of methodologies, including document synthesis and analysis from scientific journals, observations, interviews,

and both qualitative and quantitative research approaches utilizing statistical data.

4. DISCUSSION

1. Experiential Activities Associated with Culture and Society

1.1. The Concept of “Experience” and “Career Experience Activities”

According to the Vietnamese Encyclopedia, “experience” is defined as any emotionally charged state that an individual perceives, undergoes, and integrates into their psychological life alongside knowledge and consciousness (Vietnamese Encyclopedia, 2005). In this context, “career experience activities” can be understood as educational endeavors within schools designed to help learners cultivate skills, critical thinking, and cultural values that align with their social context.

In essence, career experience activities are structured educational initiatives where educators guide students to engage directly in various experiences aimed at stimulating creative thinking and problem-solving abilities (Schön, 1983). These activities can take place in diverse settings—classrooms, libraries, multipurpose rooms, museums, historical sites, cultural landmarks, manufacturing facilities—depending on local resources and school contexts.

The integration of experiential activities with socio-cultural elements, particularly through field trips, enables students to develop a deeper understanding of traditional values and identities within their own communities and across diverse ethnic groups globally (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This approach not only enhances cultural awareness but also fosters a sense of responsibility for preserving social and cultural heritage.

In this context, “career guidance experiential activities” represent a vital component of school-based educational programs, designed to help learners cultivate essential skills, critical thinking, and cultural values aligned with societal needs. These activities involve direct participation in diverse, educator-guided experiences aimed at stimulating creative thinking and problem-solving abilities.

The organization of such activities is adaptable, taking place in various settings depending on the resources and conditions of the school and local community. Potential venues include classrooms, libraries, multipurpose rooms, heritage rooms, museums, historical and cultural sites, scenic locations, and production facilities. By connecting experiential activities with socio-cultural contexts, students gain a more profound understanding of local and global traditions, fostering their ability to consciously and responsibly identify and preserve these values.

1.2. Typical “Experiential Learning Cycle”

David A. Kolb’s “Experiential Learning Cycle” is a foundational model in education and career development, particularly in experiential learning contexts that emphasize learning through practice and reflection (Nguyen, 2023). This model outlines a cyclical process comprising four key stages, each rooted in specific types of experiences:

1. Concrete Experience

This stage involves direct participation in practical activities or real-world experiences. It is often symbolized by icons such as an activity scene or a brain, representing active engagement.

2. Reflective Observation

Here, learners analyze and reflect on their experiences, focusing on understanding what occurred. This stage is represented by symbols like a person thinking or taking notes, emphasizing introspection and observation.

3. Abstract Conceptualization

During this phase, learners synthesize their reflections into theories or concepts, building a structured understanding based on prior experiences. Common symbols for this stage include a book or a light bulb, signifying knowledge construction and insight.

4. Active Experimentation

In this final stage, learners apply their newly developed theories or ideas in practice, testing and verifying their applicability. This phase is often represented by symbols such as a gear or a flask, highlighting experimentation and application.

Kolb’s cycle fosters continuous learning by encouraging individuals to engage in iterative processes of experience, reflection, theory formation, and experimentation. This approach enables learners to adapt swiftly to new environments and evolving challenges in life and work. Furthermore, it promotes collaboration and group dynamics, enhancing skills in teamwork, communication, and idea sharing. The cyclical nature of the model, represented by a circular diagram with connecting arrows, ensures an ongoing process of learning, reflection, and practical application.

This study utilizes David A. Kolb’s “Experiential Learning Cycle” as a theoretical framework to examine learners’ emotional expressions during experiential and career guidance activities. The research focuses on selected high schools in Thua Thien Hue province, Vietnam, during the 2024–2025 academic year, with a specific emphasis on the following criteria:

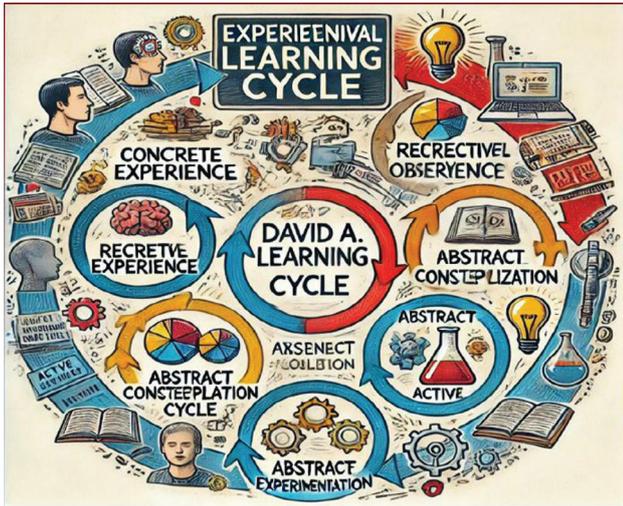


Figure 1. Mind Map Depicting David A. Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle

Table 1. Emotional Expressions and Learner Engagement Criteria during Experiential and Career Guidance Activities: A Study Based on Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle

Category	Value
Very satisfied, very interested	10
Satisfied, interested	20
Neutral	30
Unpleasant	15
Very unpleasant	5
Indifferent	10
Very indifferent	10

Source- Author, 2024

Table 2. Criteria and Values for Preparation Levels Before Experiential Education Activities

Criteria	Value
Very active	15
Proactive, proactive	25
Self-motivated, responsive, compliant	30
Perform passively, compliant	20
Perform reluctantly, forced	10

Source- Author, 2024

Through a systematic analysis of data obtained from collected samples and structured interviews utilizing questionnaires, our findings indicate that this model significantly influences education and career development. Its impact is particularly notable in experiential learning environments, where learners are encouraged to engage actively through practice and reflection. This approach fosters a deeper understanding of concepts compared to passive theoretical learning, accommodating diverse learning styles. Moreover, it enables learners to apply theoretical knowledge flexibly and effectively in practical contexts. The model



Figure 2. Experiencing Vietnam Book Day at the library



Figure 3. Virtual reality driving experience



Figure 4. Experience Culinary Culture

is especially beneficial in vocational training, soft skills development, and management education, as it promotes critical thinking and supports the development of creative problem-solving abilities.

Here are some pictures illustrating the students' experience.



Figure 5. Festival Cultural Experience

Figure 6. A Video on Celebrating Traditions: A Cultural Journey at the Lao Festival

Click to see a Video on- [Immersive Cultural Experience at the Lao Festival.MP4](#)

If the above video does not work in your browser, [Click Here](#)

2. The Role of Experiential Activities in Career Guidance

2.1. Enhancing Personal Capacities

Experiential learning plays a pivotal role in developing personal capacities among students. By engaging in hands-on activities that reflect real-world scenarios, students can better understand their strengths, weaknesses, interests, and potential career paths (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). This self-awareness is crucial for making informed decisions about their futures.

Students' career experiences can be tailored to align with their chosen fields of study and individual capabilities. For instance, they may pursue roles such as chef, driver, teacher, tour guide, or engineer, depending on their interests and aptitudes.

2.2. Fostering Adaptability

In an increasingly globalized world where cultural exchanges are commonplace, adaptability becomes a key competency for students. Experiential activities expose learners to various cultural contexts and social dynamics, equipping them with the skills necessary to navigate diverse environments effectively (Bandura, 1986). This adaptability not only enhances their employability but also prepares them to engage meaningfully with different communities.

Educating students through career-oriented experiential activities fosters a realistic, dynamic, and responsible outlook, equipping them with essential skills for career acquisition and adaptation to diverse situations and contexts. For instance, participation in cultural festival activities exposes students to a variety of traditions and practices, enabling them to gain deeper insights into rituals and cultural expressions. This immersive approach enhances their cultural competence and practical awareness, offering a vibrant and engaging learning experience.

3. The Importance of Collaboration Among Family, School, and Society

3.1. Family's Role in Career Guidance

Families play an instrumental role in shaping students' career aspirations and choices (Blumenfeld & Cooper, 2010). Parental support and encouragement can significantly influence a child's confidence in pursuing specific paths. Therefore, fostering an environment where families are actively involved in career guidance initiatives is essential.

In the context of social life, it is imperative to emphasize the significance of family and family education in shaping individuals and contributing to societal development. As President Ho Chi Minh aptly stated, "Many families together make a society, a good society makes a better family, a good family makes a good society. The nucleus of society is the family." This perspective underscores the reciprocal relationship between family and society. Parental guidance and support play a pivotal role in enabling children to make informed choices aligned with their abilities, aspirations, and familial circumstances, thereby empowering them to pursue their dreams and shape their futures effectively.

3.2. School's Responsibility

Schools serve as critical platforms for delivering career guidance through experiential learning programs. Educators must be equipped with the necessary training to facilitate these experiences effectively while also collaborating with local businesses and community organizations to provide real-world insights into various professions (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010).

Vocational training institutions are increasingly focusing on this issue. By establishing partnerships with local businesses, including restaurants, hotels, companies, and professional agencies, these institutions have created opportunities for students to engage in practical learning. Through coordinated schedules with specific units, students are able to visit, participate in hands-on activities, and complete internships at these facilities.

This approach enhances students' experiences, providing them with valuable and practical insights that contribute to their overall development. It fosters a more dynamic and effective way of improving students' knowledge and skills.

3.3. Community Engagement

Community involvement is vital for creating a supportive ecosystem around students' career development efforts (Agnew, 2000). Collaborations with local industries can provide students with internships or mentorship opportunities that enhance their practical skills while reinforcing the connection between education and employment.

The barriers to promoting the development and commercialization of research outcomes, as well as the valuation of intellectual property, present significant challenges that necessitate the intervention of comprehensive policies accompanied by operational mechanisms. Such policies are essential to effectively facilitate and streamline these processes in practice. These challenges also represent both opportunities and obstacles in the selection of collaborative partnerships and joint development efforts aimed at advancing students' careers.

4. Proposed Solutions for Improving Experiential Activities

4.1. Curriculum Integration

To maximize the impact of experiential learning on career guidance, schools should integrate these activities into the curriculum systematically rather than treating them as supplementary experiences (Veenstra & Dijkstra, 2011). This integration ensures that all students have access to meaningful learning opportunities that align with their academic goals.

4.2. Professional Development for Educators

Investing in professional development for educators is crucial for enhancing the quality of experiential learning experiences offered in schools (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Training programs should focus on innovative teaching methods that promote active engagement and critical thinking among students.

4.3. Strengthening Partnerships

Building strong partnerships between schools, families, businesses, and community organizations can create a network of support for students' career development efforts (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2021). These partnerships can facilitate resource sharing while providing students with diverse perspectives on various professions.

Limitations to the Study

Here are some potential limitations of the study conducted:

- 1. Scope of Research:** The findings are primarily based on the context of Vietnam, which may limit their applicability to other cultural or educational settings, reducing generalizability.
- 2. Methodological Constraints:** The study's sample size and diversity may be limited, potentially affecting the richness and representativeness of the qualitative data collected.
- 3. Lack of Longitudinal Data:** The absence of longitudinal data means that the long-term effects of experiential learning and career guidance on students' development are not assessed, making it difficult to draw conclusions about sustained impact.
- 4. Potential Bias in Data Collection:** Reliance on self-reported data from interviews and questionnaires may introduce bias, as participants might provide socially desirable responses rather than accurate reflections of their experiences.
- 5. Insufficient Exploration of Challenges:** While the article highlights the importance of experiential activities, it does not adequately address the challenges schools face in implementing these initiatives effectively, which is crucial for developing practical solutions.
- 6. Limited Discussion on Assessment:** The article lacks a detailed exploration of how to measure the effectiveness of experiential learning and career guidance initiatives, which is essential for evaluating success and identifying areas for improvement.
- 7. Cultural Sensitivity:** The discussion may not fully account for how different cultural backgrounds influence students' experiences with career guidance and experiential learning, limiting a comprehensive understanding of these dynamics.

These limitations highlight areas for future research and improvement in understanding the socio-cultural factors influencing education and career guidance practices.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, education from a socio-cultural perspective emphasizes the importance of experiential learning and career guidance as essential components of student development in contemporary society. By recognizing the interconnectedness of family, school, and

community roles in this process, we can create a holistic approach that enhances students' personal capacities and adaptability within diverse cultural contexts.

As Vietnam continues to evolve within a global landscape marked by rapid change and complexity, it is imperative to prioritize these educational strategies to prepare future generations for success in an interconnected world (Kolb, 1984). Through collaborative efforts focused on enhancing experiential activities related to culture and society, we can foster a generation of learners equipped not only with knowledge but also with the skills necessary to thrive in diverse environments.

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Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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