THE CURRENT STATE OF ORGANIZING EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITIES FOR KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN AT PRESCHOOLS IN HUE CITY

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ABSTRACT

Experiential learning is considered a fundamental educational philosophy that promotes the holistic development of children. This study employed a questionnaire-based survey of 100 preschool teachers in Hue City, utilising SPSS software for descriptive statistical analysis and independent-samples t-tests to examine differences between urban and mountainous areas. The findings elucidate the current state of teachers' perceptions and practical implementation. Specifically, the results indicate that while teachers possess a profound and consistent awareness of the importance of their roles in experiential activities aligned with child-centred approaches, the practical execution faces numerous obstacles due to external factors and limited infrastructure. Furthermore, significant regional disparities exist in pedagogical approaches; while urban teachers encounter substantial pressure regarding facilities, those in mountainous regions face primary challenges in building community consensus and organising social connectivity activities. The empirical data derived from this research establishes a vital scientific foundation regarding the local implementation of experiential activities, contributing to the framework for innovating contemporary early childhood education.

1. INTRODUCTION

Experiential learning is regarded as a foundational educational philosophy, originating from John Dewey's (1938) "learning by doing" perspective, which asserts that education is most effective when the learning process occurs within the context of daily life. Dewey defines genuine experience as a complex process involving the impact of objects on the individual, the adjustment of actions, and the proactive capacity to initiate subsequent changes. This viewpoint is grounded in the principle of the continuity of experience, which holds that every experience is influenced by the past and simultaneously shapes future experiences. Furthermore, Dewey (2001) emphasises that lived experience is a process mediated through social interaction, based on the principle of "give and take" among individuals, particularly between teachers and children.

From an educational theory perspective, experiential activities are built upon the view of the child as a competent agent, capable of intentional action and intellectual development through active interaction with the environment (Bruner, 2000; Jean Piaget, 1950). This theory is operationalised through David Kolb's (1984) four-stage cycle, comprising concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation, which establishes a crucial scientific framework for applying and transforming practical experience into knowledge. Supplementing this model, Andresen et al. (2020) assert that the essence of experiential learning is not merely physical action but also a systematic process of analysis and evaluation that transforms experiences into a guiding compass for future actions. A child's learning process is constructed upon four components: action, reflection, collaboration, and culture. Consequently, effective pedagogical methods are essential to enhance children's roles and participatory capacities through experiential learning (Mason, 2005). These approaches affirm that EL is a core methodology that enables children to co-construct knowledge and develop skills from real-world situations.

In Vietnam, this spirit is clearly reflected in the current Early Childhood Education (ECE) curriculum, characterised by the motto "learning through play, playing to learn," which mandates that educational institutions create environments that encourage children to explore and discover their surroundings. Domestic studies have demonstrated the efficacy of experiential activities in developing specific competencies, such as logical thinking (Hoang et al., 2025), coherent language development (Dang et al., 2021), and creative arts abilities (Le, 2023). However, practical implementation reveals a significant gap between theory and practice, particularly regarding teachers' lack of skills in facilitating and designing experiential environments at the local level. Investigating the current state of organising these activities is an urgent requirement to identify practical barriers and propose pedagogical solutions tailored to local resource constraints.

Based on the identified research gap, this study focuses on elucidating the current status of organising experiential activities in Hue City, aiming to address the following research questions:

(1) How do preschool teachers perceive the significance of organising experiential activities for kindergarten children?

(2) What are the organisational forms utilised, and what are the advantages and challenges encountered by teachers in implementing experiential activities within preschools in Hue City today?

2. PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research Participants

To investigate the current state of organizing experiential activities for kindergarten children in Hue City, a survey was conducted with 100 preschool teachers, including 50 from the city center and 50 from mountainous areas. The specific distribution is as follows:

- Hue City Center: 38 teachers from Hoa Mai Preschool and 12 teachers from Preschool I.
- A Luoi Mountainous District: 27 teachers from Hoa Phong Lan Preschool, 12 teachers from Nham Preschool, and 11 teachers from Hong Thai Preschool.

2.2. Research Methodology

- Theoretical Research Method: A comprehensive literature review was performed, involving the collection of information from research reports, followed by the synthesis, analysis, and generalization

of theoretical frameworks regarding the organization of experiential activities in early childhood education.

- Empirical Research Method: Data were collected using a questionnaire-based survey conducted in April 2025. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended questions based on a 5-point Likert scale. An interval width of 0.8 was established (calculated as [Maximum – Minimum] /n). The mean score ranges for each level are defined as follows: (1) Strongly disagree / Not important: 1.00 – 1.80; (2) Disagree / Slightly important: 1.81 – 2.60; (3) Neutral / Moderately important: 2.61 – 3.40; (4) Agree / Important: 3.41 – 4.20; (5) Strongly agree / Very important: 4.21 – 5.00

In addition, SPSS 26.0 software was utilized to calculate the following parameters: reliability testing (Cronbach's Alpha), percentages (%), mean scores (M), and standard deviations (SD). Furthermore, a one-way ANOVA was performed to evaluate significant differences in perceptions among preschool teachers across the surveyed regions.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

3.1. Fundamental theoretical issues in organizing experiential activities in early childhood education

Experiential activities (EA) are understood as processes in which individuals participate in or directly interact with their environment, enabling them to reflect and accumulate knowledge, skills, and attitudes that shape their personal experiences (Nguyen & Hoang, 2017). In the context of ECE, EA is defined as a systematic teacher-led process of influencing children. In this framework, the teacher acts as the designer, organiser, and facilitator of activities, ensuring that children engage in direct interaction and reflection to construct their unique experiential repertoire (Hoang, 2018).

Preschoolers, defined as children ages 3 to 6 participating in ECE programs (OECD, 2020), are at a critical stage of cognitive, social, and emotional development (Piaget, 1952; Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). The content of experientially based educational activities for this age group is typically developed around themes related to the natural and social environments or local seasonal events (Hoang, 2018). Selecting the timing and types of activities requires careful consideration of multiple factors, including institutional infrastructure, teacher professional competence, children's interests, and the specific characteristics of the surrounding ecological and social environment.

In the preschool setting, children participate in a variety of activities. Each offers distinct advantages for experiential learning. The primary organisational forms for experiential-based education for children aged 3–6 include play activities, learning activities, field trips, labour activities, social interactions, and festivals. EA is often organised according to Kolb's (1984) closed four-stage cycle: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation. Within this cycle, children learn through trial and error. They derive rules, co-construct knowledge, and apply learned concepts to similar real-world situations. The strong connection between action and reflection ensures children do not simply "do," but also understand the meaning of their actions.

However, the efficacy of EA is directly impacted by various objective and subjective factors. Consequently, investigating and assessing the current status of the EA organisation in Hue city is essential to accurately identify practical gaps and propose appropriate professional development solutions for teachers. This study plays a vital role in providing empirical data on the current state of EA implementation, particularly in a context where execution remains inconsistent. By analysing teachers' perceptions and practical difficulties, this research establishes a scientific foundation for proposing feasible solutions that ultimately enhance the quality of EA and advance the goals of ECE innovation.

3.2. Survey results

3.2.1. Teachers' perceptions of the importance of organizing experiential-based educational activities for preschoolers

We conducted a survey among 100 preschool teachers regarding the perceived importance of organizing EA for kindergarten children. The collected data are presented in the table below:

Table 1. Preschool teachers' perceptions of the importance of organizing experiential-based educational activities for kindergarten children

No	Content	Number					M	SD
		1	2	3	4	5		
1	EA facilitates holistic development and shapes the fundamental elements of a child's personality	0	5	29	35	31	**3.92**	0.89
2	Preparing children for grade 1 by fostering psychophysiological functions, core competencies, and essential life skills	0	10	18	16	56	4.18	1.05
3	Integrating educational objectives through EA by combining knowledge, skills, and attitudes to address specific practical tasks	0	10	18	23	49	4.11	1.03
4	Optimizing the accumulation of knowledge, skill development, and attitude formation toward objects, phenomena, and the community	0	10	18	34	38	4.00	0.98
5	Creating an environment for educators to employ active learning methods tailored to children's cognitive, emotional, and experiential characteristics	0	2	15	50	33	4.14	0.73
6	Encouraging children to seek assistance when needed and developing their capacity for self- and peer-assessment	0	5	14	32	48	4.23	0.88
7	Positioning the child at the center of all activities, promoting autonomy, proactivity, freedom, and self-confidence	0	6	13	18	63	**4.38**	0.93
8	Establishing robust connections between the school, family, and society	0	6	13	22	59	4.34	0.92
9	Involving families and the community in the educational process, monitoring, and supporting school activities	0	2	8	46	44	4.32	0.70

Note: $1 \leq M \leq 5$; *1: Not important; 2: Slightly important; 3: Neutral; 4: Important; 5: Very important*

The results presented in Table 1 indicate that the majority of preschool teachers possess a clear and positive perception of the importance of organizing experiential-based educational activities for kindergarten children (with mean scores ranging from 3.92 to 4.38). Notably, the statement "The child is the center of all activities, demonstrating proactivity, positivity, freedom, and self-confidence" received the highest evaluation (M = 4.38) with a very high consensus rate (63% selecting the highest level), reflecting a distinct awareness of the child-centered role in ECE.

Criteria pertaining to the connection between family, school, and society also garnered high levels of agreement, with Mean scores of 4.32 and 4.34, respectively. This demonstrates that preschool teachers are deeply cognizant of the role of an open and integrated educational environment. Furthermore, criteria regarding the contribution of EA to personality formation and life skills development received strong support, with Mean scores fluctuating between 3.92 and 4.18. Additionally, the relatively narrow range of Standard Deviations (SD = 0.70 to 1.05) suggests that teachers' opinions are consistently aligned with minimal polarization. These findings imply that teachers' perceptions of the importance of EA are not only profound but also highly unified, providing a critical foundation for the effective practical implementation of experiential learning in ECE.

To further investigate preschool teachers' perceptions of their own roles in organizing EA for kindergarten children, a survey was conducted with 100 teachers, the results of which are presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Preschool teachers' perceptions of their roles in organizing experiential-based educational activities for kindergarten children

No	Content	Number					M	SD
		1	2	3	4	5		
1	Teachers act as directors, designers, facilitators, and evaluators who provide corrective feedback to ensure EA aligns with children's age and developmental abilities	0	2	11	51	36	4.21	0.71
2	Teachers create safe and enriched learning environments that align with the specific goals and objectives of EA	0	4	7	27	62	4.47	0.79
3	Teachers serve as guides and facilitators, providing support when necessary while creating conditions for children to freely explore and learn from their own experiences	0	5	17	39	39	4.12	0.86
4	Teachers act as knowledge communicators, sharing and updating information to ensure children's timely and comprehensive participation in EA	0	7	18	31	44	**4.12**	0.94
5	Teachers encourage children to develop social skills, logical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving abilities	0	4	14	34	48	4.26	0.84
6	Teachers serve as a bridge to share information about children's progress and learning outcomes with parents, fostering collaborative support for the child's development	0	4	12	50	34	4.14	0.77
7	Teachers evaluate the effectiveness of activities and adjust pedagogical methods to meet the individual needs of each child	0	7	7	36	50	4.29	0.88

8	Collaborating with parents and community members to create an enriched, positive, and safe environment for EA	0	0	2	42	56	**4.54**	0.54

Note: *1 ≤ M ≤ 5; 1: Strongly disagree; 2: Disagree; 3: Neutral; 4: Agree; 5: Strongly agree*

The survey results indicate that the majority of preschool teachers demonstrate a high level of consensus regarding their roles in organizing EA for kindergarten children, with Mean scores ranging from 4.12 to 4.54. The most highly rated role was "Collaborating with parents and community members to create an enriched, positive, and safe environment for EA" (M = 4.54, SD = 0.54), reflecting a very high degree of uniformity in teachers' perceptions. The remaining roles also maintained relatively high Mean scores, suggesting that preschool teachers are deeply aware of their proactive, creative, and flexible roles in EA, moving beyond the traditional role of a unidirectional knowledge transmitter.

3.2.2. Organizational forms, advantages, and challenges encountered by teachers in implementing experiential activities for kindergarten children in Hue city

a. Organizational forms utilized in the implementation of experiential activities

We conducted a survey on the various forms of EA organized by preschool teachers within ECE institutions. The findings are summarized as follows:

Table 3. Organizational forms utilized by teachers in the implementation of experiential activities

No	Form	Number					M	SD
		1	2	3	4	5		
1	Play-based activities	0	1	5	30	64	**4.57**	0.64
2	Learning activities	0	3	10	53	34	4.18	0.73
3	Labor activities	0	7	21	40	32	3.97	0.90
4	Field trips	0	6	25	31	38	4.01	0.93
5	Festival-based activities	0	7	26	30	37	**3.97**	0.95
6	Social exchange activities	0	7	22	36	35	3.99	0.92

Note: *1 ≤ M ≤ 5; 1: Never; 2: Rarely; 3: Occasionally; 4: Frequently; 5: Very frequently*

The survey results demonstrate that preschool teachers employ a diverse range of organizational forms for EA, with Mean scores ranging from 3.97 to 4.57. Among these, "Play-based activities" are the most frequently and widely utilized, accounting for 64% of responses with a Mean score of 4.57. This reflects a positive perception among educators regarding the role of play in skill formation and the stimulation of children's learning interests. This is followed by "Learning activities" (M = 4.18), indicating that teachers continue to emphasize the integration of structured learning into children's practical experiences. Other forms, such as "Labor activities," "Field trips," "Festival-based activities," and "Social exchange activities," are implemented at a relatively consistent level, with Mean scores fluctuating between 3.97 and 4.01.

The SD across these forms also reveal variations in the extent of implementation. SD values range from 0.64 to 0.95, with “Play-based activities” recording the lowest SD, signifying a high degree of consensus in pedagogical execution among teachers. Conversely, festival-based activities and field trips show higher SD values, suggesting disparities between educational institutions or individual teachers in organizing these specific forms.

ANOVA analysis reveals a statistically significant difference in the organizational forms of EA between the group of teachers in city-center preschools and those in mountainous areas ($p < 0.05$). To provide a clearer visualization of these disparities, the data is presented in Figure 1:

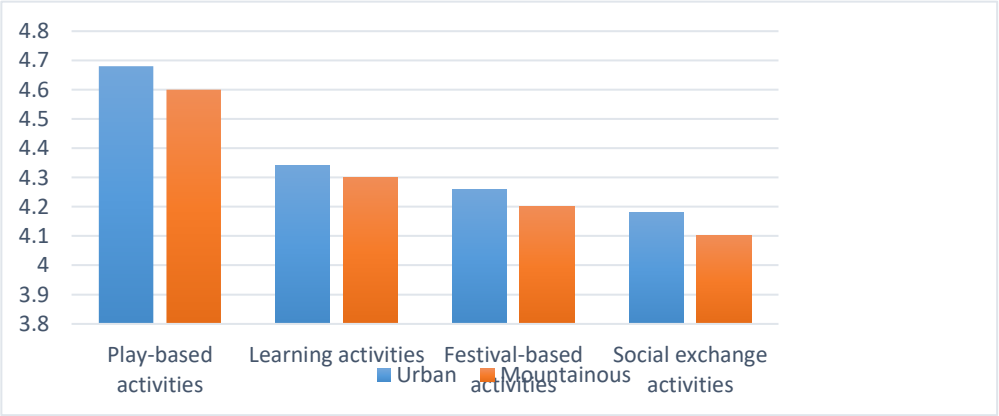

Figure 1. Disparities in organizational forms of experiential activities: A comparison between urban and mountainous preschool teachers

The figure provides visual evidence of statistically significant disparities in the frequency of organizing EA, with teachers in the city center maintaining a higher implementation frequency across all four categories compared to their counterparts in mountainous areas. "Play-based activities" and "Learning activities" constitute the dominant proportion, recording the highest Mean scores in both groups, which reflects a consistency in core educational orientations. Conversely, extensive connectivity activities such as "Festivals" and "Social exchanges" exhibit a downward trend, reaching their lowest points particularly with a marked decline in mountainous regions. This highlights the practical constraints and limited conditions prevalent in these specific localities.

b. Advantages and challenges encountered by teachers in organizing experiential activities for kindergarten children

We conducted a survey regarding the advantages and challenges encountered by preschool teachers during the implementation of EA within early childhood education institutions in Hue City. The findings are summarized as follows:

Table 4. Facilitating factors for preschool teachers in organizing experiential activities for kindergarten children

No	Content	Number					M	SD
		1	2	3	4	5		
1	National policies prioritize children's physical and intellectual development within the education system	0	2	14	34	50	4.32	0.79

2	Schools possess adequate infrastructure and facilities to support the organization of EA	0	4	8	35	53	4.37	0.80
3	The teaching staff possesses the professional qualifications, pedagogical skills, and ethics required to organize EA	0	4	8	29	59	**4.43**	0.80
4	There is effective collaboration and mutual support between the school, teachers, and families	0	4	8	39	49	4.33	0.79
5	Children demonstrate relatively uniform cognitive, health, and developmental levels	0	6	2	42	50	4.36	0.79
6	Teachers can flexibly adapt EA to align with the developmental appropriateness and capacities of kindergarten children	0	3	16	48	33	**4.11**	0.77
7	EA fosters teacher-child bonding through diverse, engaging, active, and stimulating interactions.	0	6	10	31	53	4.31	0.88
8	Kindergarten children exhibit high levels of curiosity, exploration, and a strong desire for learning	0	6	10	31	53	4.31	0.88
9	An abundance of instructional materials and curricula is available to guide the implementation of EA	0	6	12	42	40	4.16	0.86
9	An abundance of instructional materials and curricula is available to guide the implementation of EA	0	6	12	42	40	4.16	0.86

Note: *$1 \leq M \leq 5$; 1: Strongly disagree; 2: Disagree; 3: Neutral; 4: Agree; 5: Strongly agree*

The survey results indicate that preschool teachers possess a clear awareness of the facilitating factors when organizing EA for kindergarten children, with Mean scores for these factors ranging from 4.11 to 4.43. Overall, these advantages are highly rated by teachers, reflecting significant support systems from society, schools, families, and the educators themselves during the implementation process. The most prominent advantage is that "The teaching staff possesses the professional qualifications, pedagogical skills, and ethics required to organize EA," which achieved a Mean score of 4.43 and a low Standard Deviation (SD = 0.80). This signifies a high degree of consensus regarding the competence and quality of teachers in executing these activities, which serves as a vital factor in ensuring the quality and effectiveness of EA. Other facilitating factors also received high evaluations, with Mean scores fluctuating between 4.11 and 4.37. These findings suggest that a conducive learning environment, coupled with robust collaboration among stakeholders, creates favorable conditions for teachers to organize experiential learning.

Alongside these advantages, various obstacles hindering the organization of EA were also surveyed, the results of which are presented in Table 5:

Table 5. Challenges faced by preschool teachers in organizing experiential activities for kindergarten children

No	Content	Number					M	SD
		1	2	3	4	5		
1	Limited financial resources and inadequate infrastructure	8	2	6	58	26	3.92	1.06
2	Impact of external factors such as adverse weather conditions, pandemics, etc	2	2	4	60	32	**4.18**	0.77
3	Teachers' limited knowledge and professional skills in organizing EA	14	10	6	52	18	**3.50**	1.29
4	Substantial time requirements for careful planning and logistical coordination	6	4	6	55	29	3.97	1.02
5	Inconsistency in children's cognitive development and readiness levels	10	6	6	50	28	3.80	1.20
6	Unstable health conditions of both teachers and children	12	6	16	38	28	3.64	1.28
7	Geographical barriers and unfavorable locations for student transportation	4	14	8	42	32	3.84	1.14
8	Lack of robust collaboration between the school, teachers, and students' families	8	16	10	42	24	3.58	1.24
9	High student-to-teacher ratios (large class sizes) hindering the implementation of EA	8	9	23	38	22	3.57	1.16

Note: *$1 \leq M \leq 5$; 1: Strongly disagree; 2: Disagree; 3: Neutral; 4: Agree; 5: Strongly agree*

The survey results regarding the challenges encountered by preschool teachers in organizing EA indicate that the majority of factors are evaluated as having a relatively high impact, reflecting numerous practical implementation hurdles within early childhood education institutions. Among the surveyed factors, the “impact of external factors such as weather and pandemics” was identified as the most significant challenge, with a Mean score of 4.18 (SD = 0.77). This suggests that objective factors beyond organizational control play a substantial role in hindering the implementation of EA, particularly within the current context of climate change and public health concerns. Other barriers, including limited funding, inadequate infrastructure, and subjective factors related to teachers and children, also represent significant obstacles of concern.

ANOVA analysis reveals a statistically significant difference in the challenges encountered by preschool teachers in city-center and mountainous areas during the organization of EA, as illustrated in the following figure:

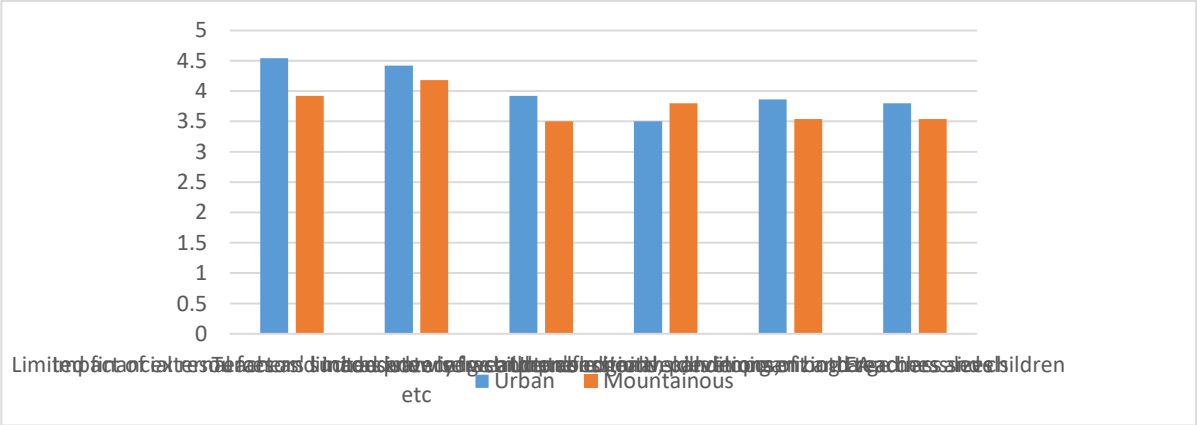

Figure 2. Disparities in challenges of organizing experiential activities between urban and mountainous preschools

The figure indicates that preschool teachers in both urban and mountainous areas face significant challenges when organizing EA for children. Specifically, urban teachers encounter greater pressure regarding physical resources, external factors, and professional competence requirements in organizing EA. Conversely, teachers in mountainous regions face primary obstacles in building community consensus and shifting public perception regarding these activities. Both regions require specialized support solutions to enhance the quality of EA organization for children.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on survey results and empirical data from 100 preschool teachers in Hue City, this study has elucidated the current state of EA organisation. The following key conclusions address the two primary research questions:

First, the research confirms that preschool teachers in Hue City hold a positive, unified perception of the significance of EA. Educators highly value the child-centred approach and children's autonomy, while clearly identifying their own roles as facilitators and environment-designers rather than mere unidirectional knowledge transmitters. This indicates that teachers' pedagogical mindsets are well-aligned with modern educational trends, providing a favourable foundation for implementing active learning methods.

Second, although teachers' professional competencies effectively sustain core play and learning activities, the implementation of EA is still negatively affected by external factors and resource shortages. The findings reveal distinct regional disparities: while urban teachers face significant pressure regarding infrastructure and facilities, those in mountainous areas struggle with community consensus and limited capacity to organise social connectivity activities.

In summary, the organisation of EA in Hue City's preschools is undergoing positive transformations driven by teachers' correct perceptions. However, to achieve comprehensive educational effectiveness, a more synchronised investment in infrastructure is required, alongside robust collaboration between schools, families, and society to overcome existing practical barriers.

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