

ABSTRACT

The study titled "Effectiveness of Experiential Learning Approach in Social Science in Terms of Achievement and Reaction of Upper Primary Students of Assam" explores the transformative potential of experiential learning methodologies in the context of social science education for upper primary students in Assam. Traditional teaching methods, which often rely heavily on rote memorization and passive absorption of information, have been increasingly criticized for their inability to engage students deeply or to prepare them adequately for the complexities of real-world applications (Freire, 1970; Dewey, 1938). In contrast, experiential learning emphasizes active participation, hands-on experiences, and reflective practices, aiming to create more meaningful and lasting learning experiences (Kolb, 1984).

John Dewey, one of the foremost proponents of experiential learning, argued that education should not merely involve the transmission of factual knowledge but should also focus on the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills through real-life experiences (Dewey, 1938). Dewey's philosophy underpins much of the modern understanding of experiential learning, suggesting that students learn best when they are actively involved in their learning process, can connect new information to prior knowledge, and can see the relevance of what they are learning to their own lives.

David Kolb further developed the theory of experiential learning, proposing a model that emphasizes the cyclical nature of learning through experience. Kolb's model includes four stages: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation (Kolb, 1984). This model highlights the importance of reflection in learning, suggesting that students must not only engage in activities but also think critically about what they have done and learned to solidify their understanding and apply it to new situations.

In the context of social science education, experiential learning can take various forms, such as project-based learning, field trips, role-playing, and interactive simulations. These methods encourage students to explore social science concepts actively and contextually, helping them to develop a deeper understanding of the material and its relevance to contemporary societal issues (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008). By involving students

in activities that require them to analyze, evaluate, and create, experiential learning fosters higher-order thinking skills and a greater engagement with the subject matter.

The present thesis comprises of 6 chapters, the first chapter provides the background of the study including the concept and genesis of experiential learning, principles of experiential learning and its importance in social science subject. This chapter also includes the rationale of the study, statement of the problem, objectives and hypotheses of the study, operational definitions of the terms used and delimitations of the research.

The second chapter provides a comprehensive summary of the various literature reviewed by the researcher. The literature encompasses both national and international studies, offering a broad perspective on the topic of experiential learning. The review includes an in-depth analysis of previous research, theoretical frameworks, methodologies, findings, and implications relevant to the study. This extensive literature review serves to contextualize the current research within the broader academic discourse, research gaps, and advancements in the field. By examining a wide range of sources, the researcher aims to provide a solid foundation for understanding the effectiveness of experiential learning approaches in social science education, particularly in the context of upper primary students in Assam.

The third chapter delves into the methodological design employed in the current study. It encompasses details about the study's population, the sample selected, the tools utilized for data collection, the procedure followed for gathering data, the methods used for data tabulation, and the techniques applied for data analysis. The present study has been conducted using a quasi-experimental research design, which falls under the category of experimental research. A non-randomized pre-test post-test control group design was employed.

The fourth chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of data, organized according to the study's objectives under various headings. The statistical techniques employed to analyze the data include Mean, Standard Deviation (S.D.), Paired t-test, ANCOVA with 2*2 and 2*3 factorial designs, percentage, intensity index, and graphical representations.

In the fifth chapter, the researcher has provided the results and discussion of the research in light of existing literature. This chapter provides a comprehensive analysis of the study's results, as well as a comparison with the findings of earlier investigations. The

chapter discusses the effects of experiential learning approach on students' achievement in social science subject of class VIII by controlling the extraneous variables- intelligence, gender and study habits. Students' reactions towards experiential learning approach are also discussed in this chapter.

Finally, chapter six provides a comprehensive summary of the thesis. This chapter presents the main findings of the study, discusses the educational implications for students, teachers and parents, and highlights the study's limitations, suggestions for further research and conclusion of the study.

The findings of the study revealed that the students exposed to experiential learning activities demonstrate higher levels of engagement and motivation compared to those in traditional classrooms. They also show improved critical thinking skills and a greater ability to apply social science concepts to real-world situations. By providing students with opportunities to actively engage with and reflect on their learning, experiential learning can foster a deeper understanding of social science concepts and greater enthusiasm for learning. This approach not only improves academic achievement but also prepares students to become more informed and active citizens, capable of applying their knowledge to address real-world challenges.