

Current Status of Instructional Management of Natural and Social Sciences Through Experiential Approaches in Primary Schools in Phu Loi Ward, Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

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ABSTRACT: In the context of competency-based education reform, experiential learning is increasingly emphasized in primary education. This study examines the theoretical foundations and the current management of teaching Natural and Social Sciences through experiential approaches in primary schools in Phu Loi Ward, Ho Chi Minh City. A mixed-methods design was applied, including questionnaires for administrators and teachers, interviews, and document analysis. The study focuses on stakeholders' awareness, implementation practices, and the planning and organization of teaching activities. Findings show that although experiential teaching has been implemented, management remains inconsistent, with limitations in awareness, planning, organization, and evaluation. These findings provide a practical basis for further management recommendations aimed at improving the effectiveness of teaching Natural and Social Sciences through experiential approaches in primary schools.

KEYWORDS: Experiential learning, Natural and Social Sciences, Primary education, School management

1. INTRODUCTION

At present, the shift from knowledge-transmission teaching to the development of learners' competencies has increased the role of experience-based learning approaches at the primary level. With its integrated nature and close connection with real-life contexts, Natural and Social Sciences is considered a favorable environment for implementing experiential teaching. However, the effectiveness of this approach depends not only on teaching methods but is also significantly influenced by school management activities. In practice, although experiential teaching has been implemented in many primary education institutions, related management activities have not yet been organized systematically and consistently. Inconsistencies in awareness, limitations in planning and plan implementation, as well as shortcomings in inspection and evaluation, are directly affecting the quality of practical implementation.

Notably, most existing studies have focused on the pedagogical aspects of experiential teaching, while research approaching this issue from the perspective of instructional management, particularly for integrated subjects at the primary level, remains relatively limited. This highlights the need for empirical studies to clarify the role and effectiveness of school management in implementing experiential teaching.

Based on these considerations, this study focuses on analyzing the current status of instructional management of Natural and Social Sciences through experiential approaches in primary schools in Phu Loi Ward, Ho Chi Minh City. The study aims to identify achievements, limitations, and emerging issues in the management of teaching this subject within the context of ongoing educational reform.

2. RESEARCH CONTENT

2.1. Theoretical Foundations of the Instructional Management of Natural and Social Sciences in Schools

Experiential teaching is not merely the inclusion of additional hands-on activities in lessons; rather, it is an approach to organizing the learning process in which students actively participate, observe, interact, reflect, and draw lessons from their own experiences. According to a contemporary perspective, "teaching is directed not only toward the acquisition of knowledge but also toward the development of competencies through practical activities" [5, p. 12]. With its integrated nature and close connection to everyday life, Natural and Social Sciences is considered a favorable context for organizing experiential learning activities. Kolb (1984) asserted that "learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" [1, p. 41], while Dewey (1938) emphasized that "experience is the foundation of meaningful education" [2, p. 25]. Therefore, the core value

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of experiential teaching lies not in the external activities themselves, but in the process through which students transform experiences into knowledge, attitudes, and action competencies.

Recent studies have shown that “the integration of experiential activities into teaching contributes to increased student engagement and improved learning outcomes” [6, p. 78]. However, for experiential teaching to be implemented effectively, it must be supported by an appropriate management mechanism rather than relying solely on the individual initiative of teachers. From the perspective of educational management, “instructional management is a process of purposeful and planned influence by managers on the components of the teaching process in order to achieve educational objectives” [3, p. 56]. According to Nguyen Ngoc Quang (1995), “instructional management in schools includes fundamental functions such as planning, organization, direction, and inspection and evaluation” [4, p. 63]. In addition, the Ministry of Education and Training (2018) emphasized that “competency-based teaching requires comprehensive innovation in content, methods, and assessment, in which school management plays a central role” [5, p. 19]. Therefore, the management of teaching through experiential approaches should be viewed as a continuous process involving goal setting, planning, resource organization, instructional direction, inspection, evaluation, and post-implementation adjustment. This is an essential condition for ensuring that experiential activities in teaching Natural and Social Sciences move beyond isolated practices and are implemented in a systematic, monitored, and continuously improved manner.

Accordingly, the instructional management of Natural and Social Sciences through experiential approaches can be understood as a purposeful, planned, and organized process carried out by school administrators to direct, coordinate, support, monitor, and adjust the implementation of teaching activities that connect academic knowledge with students’ lived experiences. This process aims to ensure that experiential activities are not conducted in a superficial or fragmented manner, but instead become a systematic instructional approach that contributes to the development of students’ competencies and the enhancement of the quality of primary education.

2.2. Current Status of the Instructional Management of Natural and Social Sciences through Experiential Approaches in Primary Schools in Phu Loi Ward, Ho Chi Minh City

To assess the current status of the instructional management of Natural and Social Sciences through experiential approaches in primary schools in Phu Loi Ward, Ho Chi Minh City, a questionnaire survey was conducted with 126 participants, including 18 administrators and 108 teachers working in public primary schools within the area.

2.2.1. Current Status of Administrators’ and Teachers’ Awareness of the Instructional Management of Natural and Social Sciences through Experiential Approaches

The survey results regarding administrators’ and teachers’ awareness of teaching Natural and Social Sciences through experiential approaches are presented in Table 2.1. as follows:

Table 2.1. Administrators’ and Teachers’ Awareness of the Instructional Management of Natural and Social Sciences through Experiential Approaches in Primary Schools

Survey Items	Number (N)	Minimum Value	Maximum Value	Mean Value	Standard Deviation
Administrators and teachers clearly understand the meaning and role of managing experiential teaching activities.	126	1.00	5.00	3.70	0.94
Administrators and teachers have an accurate understanding of the contents, procedures, and functions of management in experiential teaching.	126	1.00	5.00	3.82	0.98
Administrators regard the management of experiential teaching as a key task of the school.	126	1.00	5.00	3.79	0.95

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Teachers are clearly aware of their responsibilities in coordinating the management and implementation of experiential teaching activities.	126	1.00	5.00	3.72	0.94
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The survey results show that administrators' and teachers' awareness of the instructional management of Natural and Social Sciences through experiential approaches in primary schools in Phu Loi Ward was at a fairly good level. The respondents demonstrated a relatively adequate understanding of the contents, procedures, and management functions, including planning, implementation, direction, and inspection and evaluation. In addition, the instructional management of Natural and Social Sciences through experiential approaches was regarded as an important task of the school, while teachers were also aware of their responsibilities in coordinating the implementation process. However, certain differences remained in the level of awareness across management contents and among the survey subjects, indicating the need to further strengthen professional development and develop a shared understanding in management practice.

2.2.2. Current Status of Planning for the Implementation of Teaching Natural and Social Sciences through Experiential Approaches

To examine the current status of planning for teaching Natural and Social Sciences through experiential approaches, the author conducted a survey among administrators and teachers at primary schools in the study area. Data were collected through a questionnaire using a five-level Likert scale and were processed using descriptive statistics to assess the extent to which planning for teaching Natural and Social Sciences through experiential approaches was carried out. The survey results are presented in Table 2.2 as follows:

Table 2.2. Planning for Teaching Natural and Social Sciences through Experiential Approaches in Primary Schools

Survey Items	Number (N)	Minimum Value	Maximum Value	Mean Value	Standard Deviation
The school develops a specific plan for experiential teaching activities during the school year.	126	1.00	5.00	3.67	0.88
The plan is developed with the participation of professional teams and teachers directly involved in teaching.	126	1.00	5.00	3.76	0.90
The plan ensures feasibility and is appropriate to the school's facilities and actual conditions.	126	1.00	5.00	3.67	0.86
The plan is periodically reviewed and adjusted based on teachers' feedback.	126	1.00	5.00	3.57	0.88

The survey results show that planning for teaching Natural and Social Sciences through experiential approaches in primary schools in Phu Loi Ward was carried out at a fairly good level and with a relatively clear orientation. Experiential-oriented teaching content has been incorporated into the schools' annual plans, reflecting the attention of school administrators to organizing instruction in line with the orientation of developing students' competencies.

The planning process involved the participation of professional teams and teachers, which helped improve the relevance of the plans to teaching practice and the characteristics of the subject. In addition, schools paid attention to the feasibility of the plans by considering actual conditions related to facilities and organizational resources. However, the extent to which these conditions were met remained uneven across schools.

The review and adjustment of plans, as well as the collection of teachers' feedback, had been implemented but were not yet sufficiently regular or flexible. Overall, planning has created a favorable foundation for organizing the teaching of Natural and Social Sciences through experiential approaches. However, it remains necessary to further improve the feasibility of the plans, strengthen coordination, and enhance the capacity to adjust plans in order to better meet practical requirements.

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2.2.3. Current Status of the Implementation of Teaching Natural and Social Sciences through Experiential Approaches in Primary Schools

To assess the current status of the implementation of plans for teaching Natural and Social Sciences through experiential approaches in primary schools in Phu Loi Ward, the author surveyed administrators and teachers regarding such aspects as task assignment, guidance for developing instructional plans, coordination among educational stakeholders, and the implementation of experiential activities in practice. The survey results are summarized and presented in Figure 2.1.

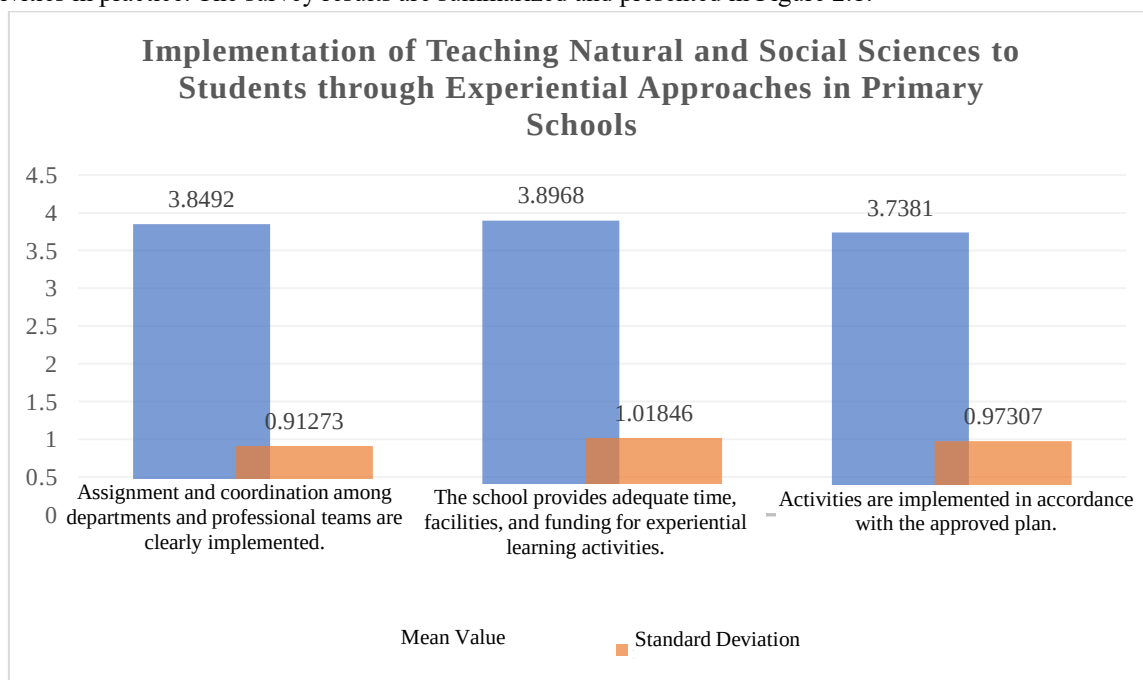


Figure 2.1. Implementation of Teaching Natural and Social Sciences to Students through Experiential Approaches in Primary Schools

The implementation of plans for teaching Natural and Social Sciences through experiential approaches in primary schools in Phu Loi Ward was generally rated at a fairly high level, indicating that experiential activities have been effectively translated from planning into practice. The assignment of responsibilities and coordination among school departments and professional teams were relatively clear, contributing to consistency in the organization and implementation of activities.

However, while coordination mechanisms and plan-based implementation were generally ensured, supporting conditions such as time allocation, facilities, and funding varied across schools and specific activities. This suggests that experiential teaching activities have been implemented but that the supporting conditions have not yet been fully standardized.

In addition, although most activities were carried out in accordance with approved plans, the level of stability and consistency in implementation remained limited, reflecting certain disparities among schools and across implementation periods. These findings indicate that the implementation process has established a solid foundation but still lacks sufficient consistency and sustainability in practice.

2.2.4. Current Status of Directing the Implementation of Teaching Natural and Social Sciences to Students through Experiential Approaches in Primary Schools

To assess the current status of directing the implementation of teaching Natural and Social Sciences through experiential approaches, the author surveyed administrators and teachers regarding such aspects as guidance for implementing instructional plans, direction of innovations in teaching methods and organizational forms, coordination among educational stakeholders, and support provided to teachers during implementation. The survey results are summarized and presented in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2. Direction of the Implementation of Teaching Natural and Social Sciences to Students through Experiential Approaches in Primary Schools

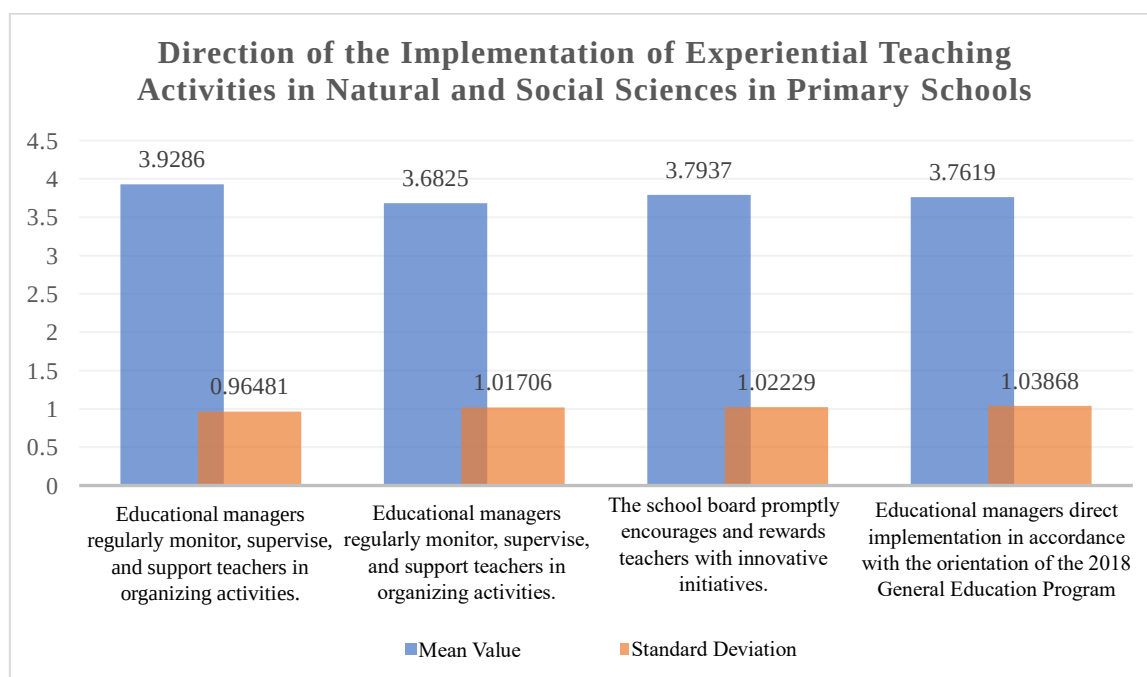


Figure 2.2. Direction of the Implementation of Teaching Natural and Social Sciences to Students through Experiential Approaches in Primary Schools

The direction and supervision of teaching Natural and Social Sciences through experiential approaches have been implemented in a relatively systematic manner, with monitoring, support, and guidance activities being carried out on a regular basis. However, the management cycle has not yet been fully completed, as evidenced by the imbalance among different stages of implementation. The most notable limitation lies in the stages of inspection, evaluation, and post-implementation reflection, which are essential components of the quality improvement cycle but have not been conducted regularly or in sufficient depth. Direction activities have mainly focused on monitoring progress rather than closely linking supervision with practical adjustment and improvement, creating a risk of formalism in instructional implementation. In addition, although incentive and reward mechanisms have been introduced, their effectiveness in promoting innovation and facilitating the sharing of experiences remains limited. While alignment with curriculum requirements has been relatively well maintained, two-way feedback mechanisms have not operated effectively, reducing flexibility in management and decision-making.

Overall, the management process for teaching through experiential approaches has not yet functioned fully in accordance with the PDCA (Plan–Do–Check–Act) cycle, particularly due to weaknesses in the improvement stage following inspection and evaluation. This has adversely affected the effectiveness, depth, and sustainability of management practices.

2.2.5. Current Status of Inspection and Evaluation of the Implementation of Plans for Teaching Natural and Social Sciences through Experiential Approaches

To assess the current status of inspection and evaluation of the implementation of plans for teaching Natural and Social Sciences through experiential approaches in primary schools in Phu Loi Ward, the research team conducted a survey among administrators and teachers. The results are summarized in Table 2.3 as follows:

Table 2.3. Inspection and Evaluation of the Implementation of Plans for Teaching Natural and Social Sciences through Experiential Approaches

Survey Items	Number (N)	Minimum Value	Maximum Value	Mean Value	Standard Deviation
There is a periodic inspection plan for organizing the teaching of Natural and Social Sciences through experiential approaches.	126	1.00	5.00	3.73	.95
Inspection results are publicly disclosed and accompanied by clear feedback.	126	1.00	5.00	3.63	.99

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Inspection data are used to adjust plans and support teachers' professional development.	126	1.00	5.00	3.58	1.03
The effectiveness of management is evaluated in relation to students' competency development outcomes.	126	1.00	5.00	3.52	1.18

The survey results show that inspection and evaluation of the implementation of plans for teaching Natural and Social Sciences through experiential approaches in primary schools in Phu Loi Ward were carried out at a fairly good level. Schools had developed periodic inspection plans and gradually incorporated inspection and evaluation activities into the management process in order to monitor and adjust the implementation of teaching plans.

The disclosure of inspection results and the provision of feedback to teachers had received attention, contributing to the improvement of professional activities. In addition, inspection results were initially used to adjust plans and support teachers' professional development. However, the extent to which inspection results were utilized remained uneven across schools, and the connection between evaluation results and professional development activities was not yet clearly demonstrated.

Notably, the evaluation of management effectiveness in relation to students' competency development outcomes was rated lower than the other contents. This indicates that current inspection and evaluation activities still mainly focus on the implementation of plans and management procedures, while the use of evaluation results to reflect their impact on students' competency development remains limited.

Overall, inspection and evaluation have contributed to supporting the management of teaching through experiential approaches. However, it remains necessary to further improve the consistency of feedback, make greater use of inspection results for improvement, and align inspection and evaluation more closely with the goal of developing students' competencies.

2.2.6. General Assessment of the Current Situation

The survey results indicate that the instructional management of Natural and Social Sciences through experiential approaches in primary schools in Phu Loi Ward has received considerable attention and achieved certain positive outcomes. Administrators and teachers generally demonstrate a relatively adequate awareness of the role of experiential teaching, while key management functions, including planning, implementation, direction, and inspection and evaluation, have been carried out at a fairly satisfactory level.

First, administrators' and teachers' awareness of the instructional management of Natural and Social Sciences through experiential approaches was at a fairly good level. Most respondents understood the role, contents, and basic management functions involved in the implementation process.

Second, planning and the organization implementation of teaching Natural and Social Sciences through experiential approaches received attention from schools, contributing to the establishment of a foundation for practical implementation. However, the feasibility of the plans, coordination among educational stakeholders, and supporting conditions remained uneven.

Third, direction activities were carried out relatively regularly through guidance, support, and supervision provided to teachers. However, mechanisms for feedback, post-implementation reflection, and adjustment remained limited, affecting the effectiveness of activity improvement.

Fourth, inspection and evaluation were implemented according to plans; however, the use of evaluation results to adjust management activities, support teachers' professional development, and link management effectiveness with students' competency development outcomes was not yet truly effective.

Overall, the instructional management of Natural and Social Sciences through experiential approaches in the primary schools within the study area has established a foundation. However, several limitations remain and require further attention and improvement. These findings provide an important practical basis for proposing appropriate management measures to enhance the effectiveness of teaching Natural and Social Sciences through Experiential Approaches.

3. CONCLUSION

This study has clarified both the theoretical foundations and the current status of the instructional management of Natural and Social Sciences through experiential approaches in primary schools in Phu Loi Ward, Ho Chi Minh City. The survey results indicate that schools have paid increasing attention to the implementation of experiential teaching, while administrators and teachers have developed an initial positive awareness of its role in fostering students' competencies. However, the management of these activities still faces several limitations, including insufficiently deep understanding of experiential teaching, a lack of consistency in planning

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and implementation, instructional direction that is not yet closely linked to continuous support and adjustment, and inspection and evaluation practices that have not fully fulfilled their role in improving instructional quality.

These findings suggest that the instructional management of Natural and Social Sciences through experiential approaches in the primary schools within the study area has established an initial foundation but has not yet functioned as a coherent and sustainable management process. Therefore, accurately identifying the current situation and highlighting existing limitations and emerging issues provide an important practical basis for further research and for the development of appropriate management measures in subsequent studies.

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