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# Opinion of Teachers towards Experiential Learning in Secondary Schools

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### Abstract

Education in the twenty-first century has experienced a paradigm shift from conventional teaching and learning to experiential and student-focused learning styles. The conventional approach of rote memorization and passive listening has been replaced by innovative teaching methods that allow students to be actively involved in the learning process. Experiential learning has received recognition as an important teaching method. Experiential learning draws its roots from John Dewey, Jean Piaget, and David Kolb and asserts that "meaningful learning occurs when individuals interact with their environment and reflect upon their experiences." The students are no longer passive recipients of knowledge but are actively involved in the learning process. Experiential learning is vital in bridging the gap between knowledge and practical application in the context of secondary education. It is worth noting that the secondary education stage is critical in shaping the cognitive, emotional, and social development of students. During this stage, the learning process is geared towards imparting knowledge that is applicable in the future, both in college and in practical problem-solving situations. However, it is important to understand that this process is highly dependent on the effectiveness of the teacher in creating a learning environment that encourages curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking. This is where experiential learning comes in; creating a platform for a more interactive class environment that is not limited to textbooks. In the Indian context, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 recommends activity-based, inquiry-based, and experiential learning methods to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The policy recommends shifting away from rote learning and examination-oriented education to holistic education that promotes understanding, skill development, and lifelong learning. In this context, teachers are the key agents of experiential learning. Their views, attitudes, and willingness to implement experiential learning methods are crucial to the success of this paradigm shift in education. Hence, the measurement of teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards experiential learning becomes an essential step in determining the feasibility and acceptability of these approaches in schools.

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### Introduction

According to David Kolb (1984), experiential learning is a cyclical process that involves four steps: active experimentation, abstract conceptualization, reflective observation, and real experience. This method emphasizes how important it is for people to engage in experiences, reflect on them, think abstractly about them, and then apply this thinking to future experiences. Teachers benefit greatly from this technique since it not only helps students increase their knowledge but also gives them a sense of professional fulfillment as they witness their pupils' increased performance and enthusiasm.

Such tactics require ongoing motivation and training to be implemented. Teachers' perspectives on experiential learning are also influenced by a number of variables, including their educational background, experience, subject-matter knowledge, resource accessibility, and administrative support. Experiential learning is more likely to be used by educators who have had professional training or have been exposed to modern teaching methods. However, implementing such strategies may be challenging for educators who work in settings with limited resources or who are under pressure to perform well on exams. Therefore, investigating teachers'

perspectives provides valuable information about the practicalities, challenges, and opportunities of experiential learning in secondary education.

Moreover, there is a close link between experiential learning and the development of 21st-century skills such as collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking. These skills are vital for students to succeed in the dynamic global environment. By incorporating experiential learning strategies, teachers can enable their students to become problem solvers, innovators, and independent learners. However, this transformation is entirely dependent on teachers' willingness and potential to enable students to learn beyond the conventional scope. Hence, teachers' perception of experiential learning is a clear reflection of the extent of educational transformation. In the secondary schools of Bhubaneswar, there are several issues that teachers encounter while implementing experiential learning methods. These include a lack of exposure to teaching aids, a large number of students in a class, the need to finish the syllabus, a lack of autonomy in designing the curriculum, and a lack of time for project-based evaluation. However, despite these issues, there have been positive experiences among teachers in terms of their attitude towards experiential learning methods, which have helped in increasing student engagement and knowledge retention. In addition, experiential learning is consistent with the constructivist theory of education, which holds the belief that knowledge is constructed and not simply transmitted. In this regard, the teacher is more of a facilitator and not the transmitter of knowledge. For teachers in Bhubaneswar, especially those in secondary schools with adolescent students, experiential learning is beneficial in a psychological way. It addresses the different learning needs, instills confidence, improves social skills, and develops emotional intelligence among students.

### Review of Literatures

- Kumar and Sahoo (2016):** Studied the role of teacher training in promoting experiential pedagogy in Odisha. The findings showed that teachers trained through interactive workshops demonstrated higher confidence in conducting activity-based classes compared to untrained counterparts.
- Mishra (2017):** Investigated secondary teachers' readiness towards experiential learning in Bhubaneswar. The study revealed that though teachers appreciated its relevance, most lacked infrastructural and administrative support to implement it effectively.
- Brown (2018):** Analyzed the impact of experiential learning on student motivation in American secondary schools. The study concluded that experiential learning significantly increases intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, and participation levels among students.
- Sharma and Verma (2018):** Conducted a comparative study of experiential and traditional teaching methods in science subjects. The results showed that experiential learning produced better comprehension and analytical abilities among students, though teachers reported challenges related to assessment.
- Singh and Jha (2019):** Explored teachers' attitudes towards experiential learning in Bihar and Jharkhand. The research indicated that age, qualification, and teaching experience influence teachers' perceptions-young teachers were more open to adopting experiential methodologies than senior ones.
- Thapa (2019):** Assessed the relationship between experiential learning and student performance in Nepalese schools. It was found that experiential learning led to higher academic achievement and social competence.
- Vergheese (2020):** Emphasized experiential learning as an effective tool for inclusive classrooms. Teachers using real-life projects and role-play activities were able to engage students from diverse learning backgrounds, improving participation and confidence.
- Pattnaik and Behera (2021):** Conducted research on experiential learning in Odisha's government schools and noted that while teachers valued experiential teaching, lack of financial resources and overcrowded classrooms limited practical implementation.
- Kaur and Gill (2022):** Explored how experiential learning contributes to students' socio-emotional development. Teachers reported that students who engaged in outdoor learning and hands-on activities demonstrated better communication and empathy.

The growing need to prepare students for 21st-century competencies. Experiential learning promotes problem-solving, collaboration, adaptability, and innovation skills that are crucial for personal and professional success. When teachers integrate experiential methods into their instruction, students not only gain academic knowledge but also develop essential life skills. Therefore, assessing teachers' readiness and willingness to adopt such methods is crucial for the overall improvement of educational quality in secondary schools.

### Statement of the Problem

#### Opinion of Teachers towards Experiential Learning in Secondary Schools.

#### Research Questions

- What is the level of awareness among secondary school teachers in Bhubaneswar regarding the concept, principles, and process of experiential learning?
- How do teachers perceive the usefulness and effectiveness of experiential learning in improving student engagement and academic achievement?
- What challenges and barriers do secondary school teachers face in implementing experiential learning in classroom practices?

#### Objectives of the Study

- To examine the awareness level of secondary school teachers regarding the concept, principles, and process of experiential learning in Bhubaneswar.
- To study teachers' attitudes and perceptions toward the usefulness and effectiveness of experiential learning methods in enhancing student engagement and academic achievement.
- To identify the challenges and barriers faced by teachers in implementing experiential learning approaches in secondary schools.

#### Delimitation of the Study

The study was confined to a sample of 100 teachers from selected secondary schools in Bhubaneswar. The study was based on self-reported responses through a questionnaire.

## Methodology

The present study adopted a descriptive research design. The primary data were collected directly from secondary school teachers in Bhubaneswar through a structured questionnaire designed specifically for this research. The study covered a total of 100 respondents, consisting of secondary school teachers from various government, private, and aided schools in Bhubaneswar. The data were collected using a structured questionnaire containing 20 multiple-choice questions. The questionnaire was designed to capture teachers' awareness, attitudes, and challenges related to experiential learning. After data collection, responses were systematically organized and analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques.

## Data Analysis

**Awareness of Experiential Learning:** The results show that 82% of teachers are aware of the concept of experiential learning, while only 18% are not aware. This high level of awareness indicates that experiential learning is not an unfamiliar concept among secondary school teachers in Bhubaneswar. Such awareness may be attributed to policy initiatives, teacher education programs, and discussions around modern pedagogy. However, the existence of 18% unaware teachers highlights the need for broader dissemination of knowledge and orientation programs.

**Training on Experiential Learning:** Although awareness is high, only 46% of teachers reported receiving formal training or workshops on experiential learning, while 54% have not received any structured training. This reveals a significant gap between conceptual awareness and professional preparation. Training is essential for practical classroom implementation, as it equips teachers with strategies, tools, and confidence.

**Improves Students' Conceptual Understanding:** The data reveal that 36% of teachers strongly agree and 44% agree that experiential learning improves students' conceptual understanding. This combined 80% positive response reflects strong confidence among teachers regarding the academic benefits of experiential learning. Only 10% of respondents remain neutral, while 6% disagree and 4% strongly disagree.

**Positively Influences Academic Achievement:** The data show that 30% strongly agree and 42% agree that experiential learning positively influences academic achievement, resulting in a 72% positive response. However, 16% remain neutral, while 8% disagree and 4% strongly disagree.

**Lack of Proper Training as Barrier:** The data indicates that 46% strongly agree and 30% agree that lack of proper training limits effective implementation of experiential learning. With a combined 76% agreement, this is one of the most significant barriers identified.

## Conclusion

Secondary school teachers are generally in favor of experiential learning because they understand its importance in giving pupils a more interesting, useful, and relevant education. They frequently note that this strategy improves critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and the practical application of knowledge—things that conventional approaches might not be able to fully accomplish. However, worries about obstacles including time constraints, strict curricula, a lack of resources, and inadequate training to successfully apply experiential tactics can counterbalance their support. Overall, successful integration requires institutional support, professional development, and adaptable educational frameworks, even if educators recognize the advantages and are likely to embrace experiential learning. In essence, the

study concludes that experiential learning is generally accepted and valued by Secondary school teachers across the city of Bhubaneswar. It is considered a vital pedagogy that has the potential to enrich all aspects of the students' learning process. However, the transfer of the conceptual acceptance of experiential learning into practice depends on the resolution of the challenges that were identified. It is vital to bridge the gap between knowledge and practice, ensuring that experiential learning does not remain at the conceptual stage but becomes a routine part of the teaching and learning process.

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