

Experiential Classroom Learning Activities: How Business Students Perceive, Train, and Use Them?

Glenn S. Cabacang, DBA

*De La Salle - College of St. Benilde / Polytechnic University of the Philippines - College of Business
Administration Graduate Studies /Ascendens Asia*
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9963-3128>

Abstract

Experiential pedagogy in business courses is becoming more popular, both inside institutions and external stakeholders. Experiential learning techniques are examined in this mixed-methods study employing the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the Social Learning Theory as frameworks. According to quantitative research, the utilization of experiential learning activities has a good link with a conceptual transformation (student-focused) approach toward teaching. However, teaching standards and pedagogical training had no clear correlation with these educational practices. According to qualitative responses, graduate students' teaching methods are influenced by their peers' and professors' teaching styles. This research adds to existing discussions concerning corporate, educational strategies, and training in teaching. The limitations, as well as the opportunity for future study, are discussed.

Keywords: Pedagogical approaches, students, experiential learning activities Attitudes of teachers, business student education

Introduction

Students that participate in a simulated or created experience are better able to learn and develop critical business skills, including decision making, interpersonal and communicative skills, and leadership (Cacciolatti et al., 2017; Ratten & Usmanij 2021; Weerawardena et al., 2021, Zaman et al., 2019). As a result, major educational organizations have urged business schools to include more experiential learning opportunities into their curricula (Anderson & Gold 2019). Even yet, teachers who employ experiential learning methods like computer-simulated scenarios or role-playing exercises need to have the abilities necessary to handle students' reactions in the present, which might require further training (Torres & Augusto, 2017). Furthermore, the use of experiential pedagogy training is increasingly infrequent in business programs based on recent research.

New instructors may not use experiential learning activities as often as they should, and it is unclear why they do so (Bandera et al., 2018; Hamdani 2018). Even while teachers may obtain

training in experiential learning activities, including electronic simulations, experiential exercises, and role-playing in the classroom (Awaysheh & Bonfiglio, 2017), it is not apparent if students receive the same training.

Using a mixed-methods approach that combines quantitative and qualitative data, this research adds to the current body of knowledge in a variety of ways. The Theory of Planned Behavior serves as a framework for our investigation and evaluation of the frequency with which students use experiential educational practices (Cheung & To 2017). This theory (Hendy & Montargot, 2019; Laguna et al., 2019) is a helpful tool to learn how attitudes and norms influence individual intentions and actions. The Social Learning Theory (Chen et al., 2017) is then used to make sense of the qualitative data, which shows that students learn by watching other instructors and reproducing instructional tactics modeled by previous instructors. While ideas exist to describe how students understand, the concepts underlying why instructors choose diverse teaching tactics remain primarily

unexplored in business education research (Parkes et al., 2017).

The second reason is that we provide empirical evidence to support the widespread use of experiential teaching methods in business school curriculums. Some writers claim experiential learning activities are infrequent (e.g., Olalla & Merino 2019). "While aspects of experiential techniques are often found in business schools, they are seldom important in management education," Conz et al. (2020) and colleagues stated to support this assertion. Consequently, students in management seminars learn more about management than they do about management. According to some academics, experiential learning may be more widespread in business education than previously imagined. "People engaged in management learning... commonly employ experiential methodologies," according to Hermes & Rimanoczy (2018). Teaching strategies that go beyond just "talking" are used by instructors to encourage their pupils to become active participants in their education. Many of the differences between the authors' points of view may be traced back to their own life experiences. This research examines the role of hands-on activities in business courses using data collected from a variety of sources.

This study aims to contribute to the continuing debate over how crucial it is to educate students in business. It is not new to see the necessity for business instructors to be educated. Burke-Smalley et al. (2017) stated that "instruction should place a greater emphasis on teaching techniques." Scafuto et al. (2020) said that "practical teaching skills are now among the most highly valued in the nation's best business schools," but also lamented that "in the nation's best schools, faculty are typically hired (and tenured) for their research potential and productivity, not their teaching skills." Formal training in teaching is provided by fewer than half of the business programs (Seow et al., 2019); the majority of schools offer informal training via seminars or mentorship. This work is expanded in three ways. So, rather than just asking whether such possibilities exist, it first asked students how frequently they have made use of them informally. Workshops, for example, may be used by students, but only if their peers are also using this kind of informal instruction. Second, it looked at chances for

informal training, such as conferences. In the third part of our study, it examined how students acquire teaching strategies via formal and informal observation of other students.

Research Objectives

Generally, this study aims to assess the use of experiential learning activities in business education classes. Specifically, it aims to: (1) investigate the use of electronic simulations, experiential exercises, and role-playing exercises, how do students who teach business courses connect to a) formal and informal teacher training, b) norms on the value of teaching, and c) attitudes toward teaching? And lastly, as a student in a business program, what influences the students' utilization of experiential learning activities?

Review of the literature and formulation of a theory

Combining simulated business situations with individual or group reflection is often utilized in business classes to achieve learning goals (Leal-Rodriguez & Albort-Morant, 2019). As a teaching methodology, it actively encourages pupils to engage in the learning process, and the experiences offered in higher education range from volunteer work to outdoor activities to classroom activities tailored to student interests (e.g., Weerawardena et al., 2021; Garnjos & Lawter, 2019). Business students are more likely to employ experiential classroom activities in this research because they may be used to teach a wide variety of business subjects and are readily accessible in textbooks and academic publications. A student looking for an immersive exercise for their classroom should not have to construct it from scratch. Students learn about different teaching styles using a variety of ways. For example, faculty members' actions, departmental and institutional standards, and the student culture all contribute to students being influenced to pursue academic careers that include teaching (Davies et al., 2019). To improve students' self-efficacy as teachers, initiatives such as teacher training, shadowing teaching-oriented faculty mentors, and student teaching communities are highly recommended (e.g., Ibrahim et al., 2020; Seow et al., 2019).

Planned Behavior Theory

According to the Theory of Planned Behavior, a person's perception of behavioral control, subjective standards, and attitudes toward the activity all play a role in one's intents (Cheung & To 2017). This leads to specific acts. As a result, this theory provides a framework for investigating present instructional behavior's motivating factors. It has been shown that instructors employ instructional technology (Lung-Guang 2019), and academic dishonesty in business school students may both be explained by the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPBD) (Hendy & Montargot, 2019). For new business teachers, it utilize this idea to understand better why experiential learning activities are (or aren't) used (or not used) in the classroom.

Self-perceived control over conduct refers to how easily a person thinks they can carry out a particular action. If a student intends to teach business courses, training in pedagogical approaches might influence whether or not they employ certain learning activities. University-sponsored teaching conferences and seminars may give students information and knowledge about optimal teaching techniques, boosting their confidence in their abilities to bring experiential learning activities into the classroom. A course on learning theories is an example of such training.

Subjective norms are a person's sense of how others expect them to act or which actions are rewarded. As a consequence, one's intentions and behavior are influenced by these expectations. Departmental and institutional norms may affect business students' usage of specific teaching approaches. Students, for example, may believe that research takes precedence over teaching in particular departments or institutions, causing them to change their teaching intents and activities. Finally, teaching actions may be influenced by beliefs about the function or goal of teaching. According to Uiboleht et al., instructors have either a student- or a teacher-centered view of teaching (2018). Some instructors feel that education should focus on helping students create new ways of thinking about course material in a student-centered teaching approach known as the conceptual transformation method. As a teacher-focused strategy, also known as an information-transfer technique, instructors feel

that successful teaching entails imparting knowledge so that students may pass an exam or demonstrate their expertise in their profession. Learning results may be influenced by both attitudes (and instructional methods). Our first research question is derived from these considerations:

Research Question 1: Using electronic simulations, experiential exercises, and role-playing exercises, how do students who teach business courses connect to a) formal and informal teacher training, b) norms on the value of teaching, and c) attitudes toward teaching?

Theory of Social Learning

The Social Learning Theory (Chen et al., 2017) offers a new perspective on student teaching practices. The primary tenet of this idea is that people learn to behave in specific ways by seeing others do so. Observed learning may happen in a variety of ways for business students. By studying the teaching methods of colleagues in the same department or institution, students may be inspired to follow in their footsteps. Second, students may learn from others in a formal or informal setting. students (e.g., Farashahi & Tajeddin, 2018). Third, by observing and commenting on former teachers and their own learning experiences as a student, students might construct experiential teaching approaches. Our second research topic is to learn more about the people that students watch and learn from.

Research Question 2: As a student in a business program, what influences the students' utilization of experiential learning activities?

Methodology

Sample and procedure

Email addresses from 400 business students identified on their school's website were used to evaluate our study questions. The participants were contacted by emailing them and posting a survey link on multiple disciplinary email list serves to reach students who did not have contact information. The creation of a lottery system in which gamers could win e-gift cards for playing promoted participation. Over 400 students took part in the poll anonymously. Based on the data supplied by lottery participants. The participants came from the

countries of Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia.

Quantitative measures

Teachers' actions' antecedents

"Formal training" refers to courses for credit or necessary programs for graduation. The question "How many formal courses in your program prepared you in teaching or pedagogical techniques?" was used to measure formal teaching training. The question "How many informal courses in your degree prepared you in teaching or pedagogical techniques?" was used to measure teaching training. (Training that is not required by a conference or your institution, such as a short course or seminar, is known as informal training .) A numerical answer was needed for both questions.

Teaching, research/scholarship, and service were all rated on a scale of 100 percent by participants to determine their belief in their relative significance at the departmental and

institutional levels (the three categories had to total 100 percent). A faculty work role salience index, which measures the relative importance percentages of a particular role, served as the method's inspiration (Bales et al., 2019).

The updated Approaches to Teaching Inventory, which has 22 items, was used to assess teacher attitudes (Loh 2019). On a scale of one to five, participants considered themselves as "nearly always true for me" and "extremely seldom true for me," with five being "virtually always true for me" and one being "very rarely true for me." A Conceptual Change Teaching Approach is scored on 11 different items (student-focused approach). "I set aside some teaching time so that the students may debate significant concepts and ideas in this topic among themselves," for example, is an example item. There are additional 11 elements that assess how well you educate information transmission (teacher-focused approach). "It is critical to offer much information to pupils so that they are aware of what they must study for this topic," says one sample item.

Table 1. Correlations and descriptive statistics.

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Training formally	.75	1.85	–								
2. Training informally	1.48	1.67	.03	–							
3. Teaching's Departmental Importance	24.70	18.20	.39 **	-.01	–						
4. Teaching's Institutional Importance	30.48	16.18	.39 **	-.08	.83 **	–					
5. Teaching Approach for Conceptual Change	3.73	.72	.19	.12	.05	-.01	(.85)				
6. Approach to Teaching Information Transmission	3.47	.69	.12	-.04	-.11	-.09	.02	(.84)			
7. Simulations in Electronics	1.77	1.14	.17	-.04	.14	.02	.13	.01	–		
8. Experiential Activities in the Classroom	2.58	1.32	.04	.13	-.11	-.10	.29 *	.01	.02	–	

9. Activities Based on Role Play	2.21	1.17	.11	.09	.11	-.04	.36 **	.12	-.08	.55* *	—
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Experiential learning activities

The Rizvi et al. (2019) typology of pedagogical techniques provided us with a framework for assessing the three teaching practices interested in: Virtual Reality (VR) simulations, in-class exercises, and role-playing activities are all examples of simulated experiences that may be used in the classroom without the use of computer scoring and artificial intelligence (e.g., Two or more persons collaborate to solve an issue by assuming specified roles or following precise behavioral instructions.) It looked at how frequently business educators included hands-on activities in their lessons during our research. In response to the question, "How often do you employ the following teaching techniques/methods in your class?" participants provided their answers. Response choices from 1 "never" to 5 "always" may be used in this situation.

Qualitative questions

Along with the quantitative questions, it included the following open-ended text responses: 1) "What particular exposure or experience with experiential learning has your program provided you?" 2) "What do you know about experiential learning from sources other than your program?", 3) "How was experiential learning incorporated into your program, or how might experiential learning be integrated into your program?", 4) "How may exposure to experiential learning boost your teaching abilities?" and 5) "What challenges do you perceive to incorporating training in experiential learning into your program?"

Results

Quantitative exploration

The quantitative dataset omitted 98 participants because they either did not teach college courses or responded to all survey items (N=20). After the study, the final sample of 73 business students comprised 46.6 percent males and 43.8 percent females who had completed their

comprehensive tests (9.6 percent chose not to answer this question). The average, standard deviation, and zero-order correlation coefficients for each variable included in our quantitative investigation are shown in Table 1. According to this survey, less than one formal course in teaching and pedagogical processes was taken by students (M=0.75, SD=1.85). However, the formal standard deviation shows a large deal of variation in what is technically included in business training in terms of education. More than half of the management programs examined did not include courses on teaching training, according to a recent study by Seow et al. (2019). There does seem to be some informal preparation for teaching and pedagogical strategies for business students' candidates, though (M=1.48, SD=1.67). Students pursuing business are likely to seek additional knowledge outside of their academic work. A closer look at the descriptive data reveals that students in the business program are less likely to use electronic simulations in their courses than they are to use in-class experiential exercises and role-play activities.

Using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), students who teach business courses were asked to examine the link between training, norms, and attitudes toward teaching and the frequency of electronic simulations, experiential exercises, and role-play activities. Experiential exercises and role-playing activities in class revealed statistically significant favorable relationships with teachers who identified their educational approach as "conceptual shift teaching." Figure 2 shows the results of the regression models, and we found a similar trend. Experiential activities (p0.05) and role-play activities (p0.01) were statistically significant in connection to a teaching style focusing on conceptual shifts. The model's variables explained between 8% and 15% of the variation in the frequency with which these three in-class experiential learning activities were used (R-squared values ranging from 0.08 to 0.15). While teacher education and teaching standards are crucial, only a student-centered teaching strategy seems to be linked to business students' adoption of experiential teaching approaches. This is significant.

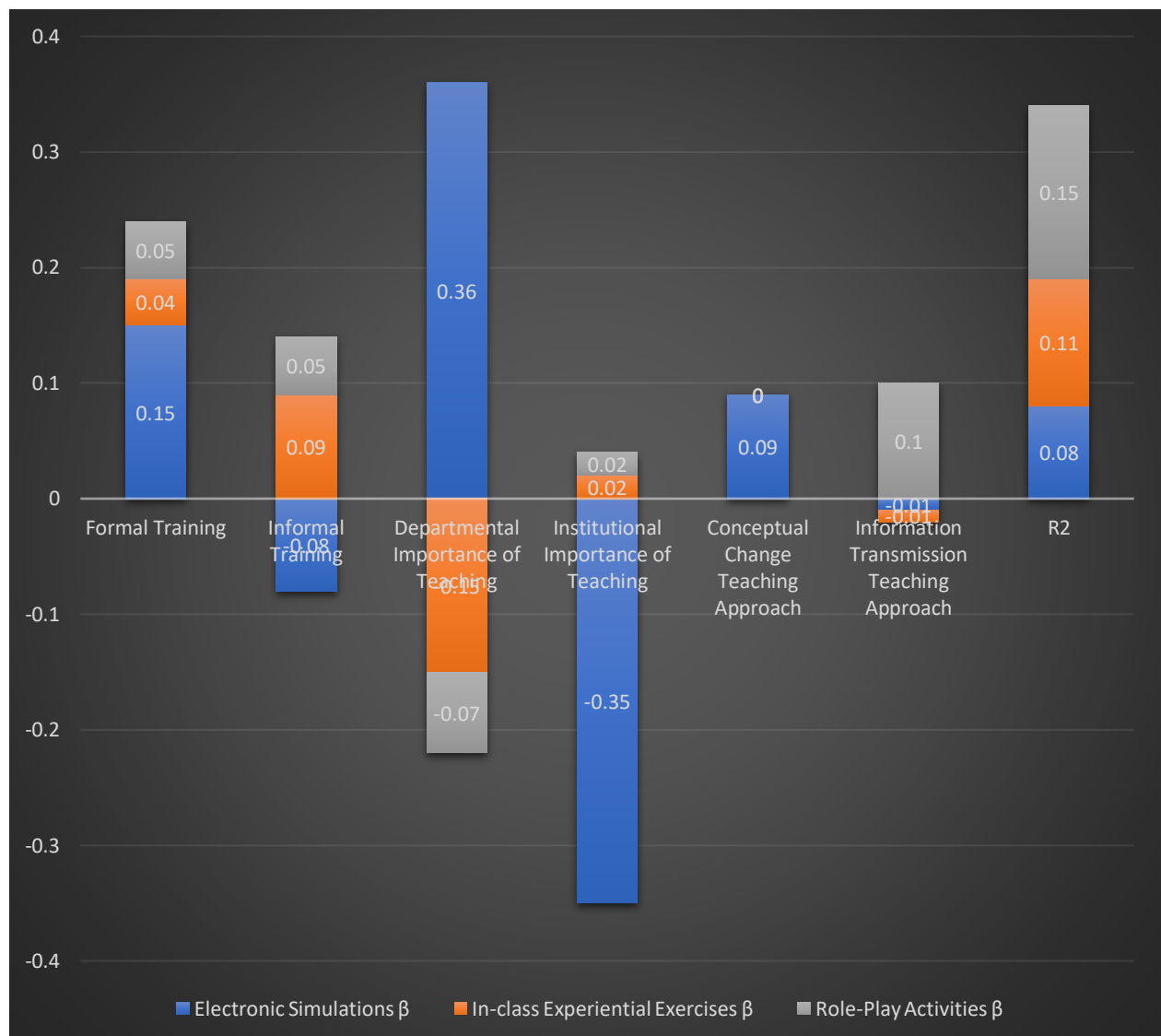


Figure 1. Regression analysis of the frequency with which students engaged in hands-on activities during class produced interesting results

Qualitative exploration

Second, it looked at what impact students' perceptions of the people they are learning from had on their usage of experiential learning techniques in class. Open-ended text replies to a survey were analyzed using thematic analysis (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). At least 81 students replied to the survey (42.4 percent of the 191 total student responses). Four authors searched for similar threads in all of the questions to classify the reactions. Social Learning Theory advocates that one may learn by watching others. Thus, it omitted any comments indicating formal training (e.g.,

university-mandated or informal training), such as conferences and workshops (Chen et al., 2017). A total of 51.9% of those polled said they would rather watch others engage in experiential learning activities than participate themselves. Observation of other students, faculty members lecturing, maintaining tabs on their instructors while in school, and prior teachers from previous professions have all been demonstrated to benefit students.

Four respondents (4.9 percent) said that they learned how to teach from the experiences of other students. Another said that they saw other students lecture and learned comparable

teaching strategies from what they heard from their fellow students and from what they observed in their courses; for instance, "I questioned past students who taught courses whether they had employed experiential learning strategies," a third student said. "It was quite beneficial to ask former students for guidance on the advantages and downsides, as well as their personal experiences." Despite the small sample size, it suggests that students forming a network to assist one another in their academic endeavors is a positive development. Faculty members offered experiential learning activities to 13 people (16.1%) who watched or worked as TAs in their classes or were given course materials to use while teaching. One student, for example, said, "I learned the teaching skills through watching other faculty members teach." Others cited formal experiences like becoming a teaching assistant (TA) as providing "exposure to case studies."

In contrast, others spoke of casual encounters like "sitting in on a well-known bargaining course" taken by a student. At long last, some students said that "teaching instructors in our department routinely seek student help them comprehend how they use learning activities for different courses." All of these examples demonstrate that students may learn from lecturers in a variety of ways, and there is no "one-size-fits-all" technique."

As a student, it's vital to experience and reflect on these events as part of the learning process as a student. Ten participants (12.4%) responded that reflecting on their own experiences as undergraduate or graduate students helped them learn. One participant, for example, said, "I know most from having been exposed to this style of learning as a student myself." Another student said they "saw role-play exercises in executive education," and numerous students stated they used simulations in their MBA training.

Finally, 18.5% of respondents said they learned how to use experiential teaching approaches by watching others in their past roles as teachers, coaches, or trainers. "I learned about pedagogical techniques and practices through my master's degree in higher education," stated one student. "I had genuine teaching experiences before my program." It is common for students to participate in a practicum or a student teaching component as part of their previous

teaching experiences. "A training program manager" or "previously taught in the business sector—this is where before of my pedagogical talents came from" where some students' explanations for how they learned. It is clear from the statements made by these students that some of them benefited from a past job or teaching experience and that these experiences may be used to enhance experiential learning methodologies in business courses—these comments.

Discussion

Business school students are increasingly being asked to develop their interpersonal, communication, collaboration, and leadership abilities. Students learn better and retain more material when they engage in active learning activities like role-playing and computer simulations. However, professors in business schools tend to favor lecturing over functional approaches that stimulate the development of social and professional skills for professionals (Reid et al., 2020). It suggested that one explanation for this disparity is because educating student candidates in research methods "much surpasses attention to establishing good teaching abilities" (Anderson & Gold 2019). Furthermore, many schools prioritize research above teaching qualities in recruiting and tenure decisions (Krishnamurthy 2020). As a result, we set out to learn how business students understand and use hands-on activities. It investigated how students acquired and used these teaching strategies and pedagogical approaches using the Theory of Planned Behavior (Cheung & To, 2017) and Social Learning Theory (Chen et al., 2017) as frameworks. Because it used both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, it could make a lot of ground-breaking discoveries. It observed that when students teach business courses, they favor experiential exercises and role-play activities over technical simulations. According to our research, up to 15% of the variety in teaching methods may be explained by formal and informal training, department and university standards, and individual attitudes towards teaching. Experiential and role-play activities were more common among students who scored higher on their teaching attitudes toward conceptual development (i.e., a student-centered approach). Teaching strategies and tactics that

have proven successful in earlier classrooms must be used to benefit kids today. Formal and informal training is crucial for students, but our qualitative research revealed that most business students learn to teach by watching others. According to text replies, a student's own experiences with experiential learning activities may aid in learning. Additionally, students may be encouraged to participate in experiential learning activities because they have seen similar teaching strategies in their professional contexts. As one participant put it, "monkey see monkey do" appears to apply to students learning how to teach. Students in business administration are also actively encouraged to join teaching groups and use available resources (on-campus or from foreign teaching organizations) to improve their teaching approaches.

Implications

Our discussion of education today focuses on the growing demand for teacher preparation programs and the wide variety of programs available throughout the globe. It's also mentioned here how experiential teaching and learning relates to business education. All three of these factors play a role in the present and evolving environment of teaching education. It begins with a degree program. This trait alone is worth evaluating due to its influence on teacher evaluations. Based on their research quality and production, academics are frequently hired, tenured, and promoted in conventional research institutions. Teaching is less focused at more significant research institutions than at hybrid or teaching universities. These R1 and R2 institutions may not finance teaching development or assist students in attending teaching conferences, which vary significantly by the institution (Mu & Hatch, 2021). While not insurmountable, such institutional impediments may dissuade or prohibit student candidates from pursuing careers as teachers.

Although experiential exercises have become more popular and successful, there is a shortage of teachers skilled in their delivery. Consequently, most business student candidates are unlikely to be exposed to a critical mass of teachers capable of managing experiential activities. Furthermore, students would most

likely have exposure to experiential education from another member of the same faculty.

Second, it has increased focus paid to teach in recent years, both as part of training and beyond. An obvious caution here is to avoid using a potentially effective instructional method in an impulsive or unprepared manner. This might rapidly go bad if the facilitator is not adequately prepared. There seems to be renewed, or growing interest in improving the student experience from its present status, as significant business education magazines devote space and attention to the student experience. Another observation is the rise of educational organizations, as seen by the Management and Organizational Behavior Teaching Society's expansion into Oceania and Western Europe and its relationship with the Center for Management Education.

Third, in keeping with the journal's worldwide breadth and concentration, we notice the diversity of programs across the globe. A student in the United States may teach while completing their dissertation in the last years of their studies. A committee of academic members frequently has involvement on the dissertation at the end of the process. On the other hand, other nations do not follow this two-year coursework paradigm. Typically, these programs last three years, and candidates work nearly solely with a primary and secondary adviser. It's also unclear if teaching is included in these areas' programs. However, we underline the disparities in programs between regions since cross-cultural comparisons are impossible due to inherent variances. As a warning to other academics interested in doing similar research, we share this as a cautionary tale that structural discrepancies may result in significantly different student experiences in these programs. This isn't to imply that it shouldn't be tried. The majority of business students will get their degrees from research universities, but they will not be faculty members at those schools. As a result, there may be a gap between the focus on teaching and what is required for academic achievement. More generally, both the significance of instruction and teaching is being highlighted. As a result, we believe that the emphasis on education will continue to grow. Students are encouraged to continue their studies in programs from various cultures,

despite the differences in programs throughout the world.

Limitations

Several flaws have been found in this research. Due to the tiny sample size, the statistical power to identify effects at a usual analysis level may be questioned. It's also possible that our sample size is too small. However, teachers who are enthusiastic about learning more about teaching techniques may find that, even if they lack formal training, they are more likely to employ active applied methods in their classes. All the questions in the poll came from a single survey. It is difficult to draw causal conclusions from these findings on the influence of prior teaching experience, normative expectations, and teaching attitudes on current teaching practices (example of research that looks at how teachers modify their teaching approaches over time, Kolb et al., 2017). The data's generalizability to all business students or programs might be a third restriction. We recently discussed the disparities in program architecture throughout the globe. It's a concern of ours, but we believe that the inclusion of students from at least 54 colleges in seven nations (e.g., management, marketing, and accounting) provides some degree of generalizability.

Future research

Future research should examine the underlying causes of different teaching styles. For example, the study might look at motives at the characteristic level, such as personality, since it's possible that being open to new experiences leads to more adoption of experiential teaching methods. Because the components studied in this study featured more cognitively evaluated attitudes, additional emotional factors should be addressed in future research (i.e., perceived significance of the department, the value of teaching, whether as a teacher or a student). It's possible, for example, that teaching actions are motivated by energy levels or unique feelings regarding teaching and pupils. Additionally, more research should be done to understand better the constant battle that students have when determining whether or not to commit their time and energy to study and the knowledge of theory (for example, Wilkins et al., 2019). It would be

good to look at how new faculty members divide their time and energy between teaching and research to understand academic careers better.

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