HOW VARIOUS EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES AFFECTING ON STUDENTS' LEARNING MOVTIVATION AND SATISFATION IN BUSINESS EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

This mixed-method study investigates the impact of “real-world” and “hypothetical” experiential learning activities on student satisfaction and motivation among business undergraduates and postgraduates at The Chinese University of Hong Kong. Employing a sequential exploratory design, the study consisted of a qualitative phase involving semi-structured interviews with 7 course instructors and a quantitative phase surveying 426 business students.

The qualitative findings yielded four main themes: (1) diversity of experiential learning activities, (2) importance of balancing soft and hard skill development, (3) perceived impact on student motivation and satisfaction, and (4) challenges and support in implementing experiential learning. The quantitative results indicated that the formats and subject nature of experiential learning significantly predicted various aspects of student motivation and satisfaction, with real-world activities associated with higher levels of motivation, satisfaction, domain knowledge improvement, and positive influence on work and life aspects.

The study contributes to the literature by offering empirical evidence for the differential learning effects of individuals based on their gender and work experience, emphasizing the importance of considering individual differences in the design and implementation of experiential learning activities. The findings have significant implications for theory and practice in business education, providing support for key experiential learning theories and models while offering recommendations for educators, administrators, and policymakers.

Lastly, recommendations for future research are discussed.

Keywords:
#ExperientialLearning #BusinessEducation #StudentMotivation #StudentSatisfaction #HigherEducation #TeachingInnovation #EducationalPsychology #LearningOutcomes #EducationalResearch #MixedMethodsResearch #AuthenticLearningExperiences #Real-worldProjects #SoftSkillsDevelopment #HardSkillsAcquisition #GenderDifferencesInSelf-efficacy #LearningAnalyticsInExperientialLearning

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Background and Context

Several key milestones and influential theories or frameworks have marked the evolution of experiential learning in business education. Experiential learning theory (ELT), which was proposed by Kolb (1984), has been a cornerstone in the development of experiential learning practices in business education. Experiential learning refers to the process of learning through experience, whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. It is a general learning theory that emphasises the central role of experience in the learning process. Specifically, in the context of business education, experiential learning involved the active engagement of students in authentic, real-world learning activities. In this manner, it enabled them to apply theoretical concepts to practical situations, develop the relevant skills and competencies and reflect on their experiences to enhance their understanding and performance (McCarthy, 2016; Matsuo, 2015). ELT provides a foundational framework for understanding experiential learning across disciplines, including business education. The theory posits that learning is a dynamic process in which knowledge is created through the transformation of experience, which involves four key stages, namely, concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation (Kolb, 1984). By engaging in this cyclical process, learners develop an in-depth understanding of the subject matter and acquire practical skills that are transferable to real-world settings.

Scholars demonstrate that experiential learning exerts a significant positive impact on student motivation and satisfaction (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Lepper et al., 2005; Ryan & Deci, 2000). The current study focuses on student satisfaction and motivation as key learning outcomes, as they are crucial determinants of student engagement,

performance, and overall success in experiential learning (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Self-Determination Theory (SDT) provides a useful framework for understanding the impact of experiential learning on student motivation and satisfaction (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) are two influential frameworks that can be integrated to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that shape student motivation and learning outcomes in experiential learning settings. According to SDT, individuals have three basic psychological needs that must be satisfied for optimal motivation and well-being: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In the context of experiential learning, students' perceptions of autonomy, competence, and relatedness can be influenced by the design and implementation of experiential learning activities (Vansteenkiste et al., 2006). By engaging in hands-on, real-world learning activities, students gain opportunities to take an active role in the learning process, make meaningful choices, and explore various solutions to authentic problems (Thompson, 2022; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Experiential learning activities that provide students with opportunities for choice, self-direction, and ownership over their learning (autonomy), that challenge them to apply their knowledge and skills to real-world problems (competence), and that foster a sense of connection and belonging with peers, instructors, and community partners (relatedness) are more likely to promote intrinsic motivation and engagement (Deci et al., 1991; Ryan & Deci, 2000). These motivational factors, in turn, can enhance students' learning outcomes and satisfaction, as posited by ELT (Kolb, 1984). ELT emphasizes the importance of active engagement, reflection, and application in the learning process, and suggests that individuals learn best when they are able to connect abstract concepts to concrete experiences and to reflect

on their experiences in order to generate new knowledge and understanding (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). By integrating the principles of SDT and ELT, educators and researchers can design and evaluate experiential learning activities that not only promote student motivation and engagement, but also foster deep learning, knowledge transfer, and personal growth (Beard, 2010; Kolb & Kolb, 2005).

The ELT theory has provided a foundation for understanding the value of hands-on, practical learning experiences in business education and has influenced the design and implementation of experiential learning activities in various business disciplines. Specifically, in business education, experiential learning activities, such as internships, case studies, simulations and consulting projects, provide students with hands-on opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge to authentic business challenges (Kosnik et al., 2013). These experiences enable students to develop critical thinking, problem-solving, communication and teamwork skills, which are highly valued by employers (Canziani & Tullar, 2017; Ruhanen, 2005). Moreover, scholars demonstrate that experiential learning enhances student engagement, motivation and satisfaction by making the learning process more relevant, meaningful and enjoyable (Piercy, 2013; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Student motivation refers to the internal and external factors that drive students to engage in learning activities and persist in the face of challenges (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Pintrich, 2003; Ryan & Deci, 2000). In experiential learning, factors, such as the relevance and authenticity of the learning activities, level of autonomy and control over the learning process and perceived value and benefits of learning outcomes, influence student motivation (Lepper et al., 2005; Ryan & Deci, 2000). The satisfaction of students denotes the degree to which they feel fulfilled, pleased and content with learning experiences and outcomes (Bolliger & Martindale, 2004; Elliott & Shin, 2002; Smith,

2023). In experiential learning, factors, such as the quality and effectiveness of learning activities, levels of support and guidance provided by instructors and peers and alignment between learning activities to student goals and expectations, influence student satisfaction (Alqurashi, 2019; Bhagat et al., 2016).

In recent years, the demand for graduates with practical skills and real-world experience has driven business schools to incorporate further experiential learning opportunities into the curricula. Employers express a growing desire for business graduates who possess not only theoretical knowledge but also the ability to apply such knowledge to practical settings (Hodge et al., 2014). This industry expectation has prompted business schools to incorporate more experiential learning opportunities into their curricula such as internships, case studies, simulations and consulting projects (Kosnik et al., 2013). Experiential learning activities, such as internships, case studies, simulations and consulting projects, have been designed to provide students with authentic learning experiences that foster the development of essential skills and competencies such as problem-solving, critical thinking, teamwork and communication (Smith, 2023; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). These activities aim to bridge the gap between theory and practice and provide students with opportunities for developing relevant skills and competencies valued by employers.

The distinction between soft and hard skills has become increasingly important in the context of business education and experiential learning, because employers increasingly value soft skills as critical competencies for success in the modern workplace (Wats & Wats, 2022). Soft skills encompass interpersonal, communication, and social skills, such as teamwork, leadership, problem-solving, critical thinking, and emotional intelligence (Gitting et al., 2020; Robles, 2012; Wats & Wats, 2022). Hard skills refer to technical, functional, and domain-specific skills

required for specific jobs or industries, such as financial analysis, programming, project management, and marketing research (Gittings et al., 2020; Robles, 2012; Wats & Wats, 2022). Soft skills are typically developed through experiential learning activities that involve collaboration, negotiation and interaction with others and are highly valued by employers in the business sector (Hodge et al., 2014). These skills are typically self-developed, interactive and transferable across contexts and roles. Hard skills are typically developed through traditional classroom learning and training and are essential for performing specific tasks and roles in the business world (Hodge et al., 2014). In today's dynamic and complex business environment, technical expertise alone is no longer sufficient, because employers seek candidates who possess strong interpersonal, communication and problem-solving skills that enable them to effectively collaborate, lead and adapt to changing circumstances (Robles, 2012; Nealy, 2005). Experiential learning provides an ideal platform for developing soft skills by exposing students to real-world scenarios and challenges that require them to apply and refine interpersonal and communication abilities (Hawtrey, 2007; Leal-Rodríguez & Albort-Morant, 2019). Moreover, the distinction between soft and hard skills is crucial for designing effective experiential learning activities that target specific competencies valued and ensure that students are well-prepared for future careers (Alshare & Sewailem, 2018; Gitting et al., 2020). Although both types of skills are important for business graduates, employers increasingly emphasise the importance of soft skills in the hiring process and express the desire for candidates who possess strong interpersonal and communication abilities (Alshare & Sewailem, 2018).

Experiential learning activities can take various formats, including real-world, hypothetical, and hybrid forms that combine elements of both (Gosen & Washbush,

2004; Kosnik et al., 2013). Non-experiential learning methods limit the opportunities of students to practice and apply knowledge to authentic contexts, which leads to a disconnect between theory and practice (Wright, 2000; Wurdinger & Allison, 2017). Non-experiential learning approaches to business education typically focus on the dissemination of knowledge and the development of hard skills such as financial analysis or marketing research (Gitting et al., 2020). Although these technical competencies are undoubtedly important, they only partially prepare students for interpersonal and adaptive challenges that they will face in the real-world (Alshare & Sewailem, 2018). Experiential learning addresses these limitations by immersing students in real-world scenarios that require them to actively engage with the subject matter, collaborate with peers and navigate complex interpersonal dynamics (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; McCarthy, 2016). Experiential learning refers to the process of learning through direct experience in which knowledge is created through the transformation of experience (Kolb, 1984). In business education, experiential learning involves active student engagement with authentic, hands-on learning activities that enable them to apply theoretical concepts to practical situations, develop relevant skills and competencies and reflect on experiences to enhance understanding and performance (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; McCarthy, 2016; Nuruzzaman, 2016; Jarrettz et al., 2022). Scholars recognise experiential learning as a particularly effective approach for developing soft skills in business education. By engaging in practical, hands-on activities that simulate real-world business scenarios, students gain opportunities to practice and refine interpersonal, communication and problem-solving skills in a safe and supportive environment (Hawtrey, 2007). For example, participating in group projects, case study discussions or role-playing exercises helps students develop teamwork, leadership and conflict resolution skills, which

are highly valued by employers. Similarly, engaging in client-based consulting projects or presenting findings to external stakeholders enhances the communication and professionalism skills of students (Leal-Rodríguez & Albort-Morant, 2019). In addition to the benefits of experiential learning for skill development, previous studies demonstrate that this approach positively impacts student satisfaction and motivation. When students are actively engaged in their learning process and witness the relevance of their coursework to real-world challenges, they are more likely to be motivated and invested in education (Auster & Wylie, 2006; Kosnik et al., 2013). This increased engagement leads to better learning outcomes, high levels of satisfaction and a strong sense of personal and professional development (Grau et al., 2018; Helle et al., 2006).

Despite the recognised benefits of experiential learning for soft skill development, empirical research that examines the specific effects of various experiential learning activities on the acquisition of these skills by students in business education remains lacking (Gitting et al., 2020). Although many studies investigate the overall impact of experiential learning on student learning outcomes, less research focuses on the differential effects of specific learning formats (e.g. real versus hypothetical) or subject matter (e.g. soft versus hard skills) on student motivation, satisfaction and growth in domain knowledge, as well as positive influence on work and/or life aspects. This research gap highlights the need for further targeted research that can inform the design and implementation of effective experiential learning practices in business education.

1.2 Problem Statement

The lack of empirical evidence for the relationship between various formats of

experiential learning activities and student satisfaction and motivation in business education presents several challenges and limitations for educators and researchers. Real experiential learning denotes learning activities that involve the participation of actual clients, projects or cases from the business world (Grau et al., 2018; Kosnik et al., 2013; Obi et al., 2021). These activities provide students with authentic experiences that closely mirror the challenges and complexities of real-world business situations, which requires them to apply knowledge and skills to solve genuine problems and deliver tangible outcomes (Jackson, 2015; Riebe et al., 2013). Alternatively, hypothetical experiential learning refers to learning activities that involve simulated or fictional scenarios, cases or projects (Gittings et al., 2020; Lean et al., 2006; Salas et al., 2009). These activities provide students with opportunities for practicing and applying knowledge and skills in a controlled environment without the risks and uncertainties associated with real-world scenarios (Gosen & Washbush, 2004). Without a clear understanding of the impacts of different experiential learning approaches on student learning outcomes, designing and implementing effective learning activities that maximise student engagement and skill development are difficult. Student satisfaction and motivation are closely linked to engagement and skill development in experiential learning; when students are satisfied with learning experiences and are motivated to participate, they are more likely to actively engage in the learning process (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Ryan & Deci, 2000). In turn, this engagement leads to in-depth learning and the development of relevant skills and competencies (Burch et al., 2019; Bradberry & De Maio, 2019). Experiential learning activities perceived as meaningful, challenging and relevant to the personal and professional goals of students are more likely to foster motivation and promote active participation (Deci & Ryan, 2000;

Wlodkowski, 2008).

One of the primary limitations of the existing research on experiential learning in business education is the focus on overall outcomes instead of the differential effects of specific learning formats and subject matter. Many studies demonstrate the positive impact of experiential learning on student satisfaction, motivation and learning outcomes (Burch et al., 2019; Bradberry & De Maio, 2019). However, those that investigate variations in these outcomes according to the format of experiential learning activity (e.g. real versus hypothetical) or the nature of the skills being developed (e.g. soft versus hard skills) are few. This lack of granularity in research makes determining which specific experiential learning approaches are most effective for particular course objectives and student populations challenging for educators.

Although the stream of research that examines the impact of experiential learning on student learning outcomes is growing, systematic studies that specifically focus on student satisfaction and motivation in the context of various experiential learning formats remain scarce (Gittings et al., 2020). Much of the existing research investigates the overall effectiveness of experiential learning (Burch et al., 2019; Bradberry & De Maio, 2019), but studies that explore potential variations in student perceptions and experiences across the types of experiential learning activities, such as real versus hypothetical scenarios (Gittings et al., 2020), are few. Educators pose their assumptions and expectations about the effectiveness of various learning formats, but considering the experiences and perceptions of students is crucial for ensuring that experiential learning activities meet their needs and preferences (Gittings et al., 2020). Without a clear understanding of the factors that influence student satisfaction and motivation in experiential learning, educators struggle to

create learning environments that truly engage and inspire students (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; McCarthy, 2016).

If experiential learning activities are not designed and implemented in a manner that effectively engages and motivates students, then a risk exists that these activities may fail to achieve the intended learning outcomes or even discourage students from actively participating in the learning process (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; McCarthy, 2016). This notion can lead to missed opportunities for skill development, reduced student satisfaction and lack of preparedness for future careers, because students may not fully engage with experiential learning activities or may not perceive the relevance and value of these experiences for personal and professional growth (Obi et al., 2022). Moreover, if students are not satisfied with experiential learning experiences or do not perceive that these activities meet their needs and expectations, then they become demotivated and disengaged, which further hinders learning and development (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Obi et al., 2022). Without a clear understanding of the differential effects of various experiential learning formats and subject matter, educators struggle to allocate resources and design curricula that effectively prioritise the most impactful learning activities, which results in failure to capitalise on the potential benefits of experiential learning for student outcomes and employability (Murray, 2011). Instructors play a key role in designing and facilitating experiential learning activities and their expectations, goals and pedagogical approaches significantly impact student learning outcomes and experiences (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Gittings et al., 2020). By collecting empirical evidence on the relationship of specific experiential learning approaches to student motivation, satisfaction and skill development, researchers have identified key factors that contribute to positive learning outcomes and have provided actionable

recommendations for educators that intend to optimise their experiential learning practices (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; McCarthy, 2016). Although the current study may only indirectly evaluate skill development, understanding student motivation and satisfaction could provide valuable insights into the conditions that support engagement and learning, which are essential for skill acquisition and application (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Wlodkowski, 2008).

In summary, the problem statement can be articulated as follows. The lack of empirical evidence of the relationship of various formats of experiential learning activities and subject matter to student satisfaction and motivation in business education presents challenges in designing and implementing effective experiential learning activities that support student engagement, skill development and career readiness. Without a clear understanding of the factors that influence student motivation and satisfaction across experiential learning contexts, educators struggle to create learning environments that meet student needs and preferences, which leads to missed opportunities for learning and growth. To address these challenges, a need emerges for further targeted and comprehensive research that considers instructor and student perspectives, examines the differential effects of various experiential learning formats and subject matter on student learning outcomes and explores strategies for improving the effectiveness of experiential learning in business education.

1.3 Objective of the Study

This study aims to investigate the effect of various experiential learning activities on student satisfaction and motivation in business education with a specific focus on the differences between real and hypothetical learning formats and the subject

nature of focusing soft and/or hard skills teaching. Furthermore, this study intends to contribute to the theoretical understanding of experiential learning in business education and provide practical insights for educators that endeavour to optimise their experiential learning practices.

First, the study intends to examine differences in the effects of actual and hypothetical experiential learning formats on student satisfaction and motivation. Although previous research demonstrates the overall positive impact of experiential learning on student learning outcomes (Burch et al., 2019; Bradberry & De Maio, 2019), studies that investigate the variations in outcomes according to the type of experiential learning activity (e.g. real versus hypothetical) or the nature of the skills being developed (e.g. soft versus hard skills) are few.

Second, the study aims to explore whether or not experiential learning more strongly influences subject nature (i.e. hard and soft skills learning) in terms of student satisfaction and motivation. Although previous research demonstrates the overall benefits of experiential learning for skill development (Burch et al., 2019), few studies examine the degree of effectiveness of different types of experiential learning activities in fostering the development of specific skill sets. By comparing student motivation and satisfaction in relation to the development of soft versus hard skills, this study aims to provide insights into the optimal design and implementation of experiential learning to support the acquisition of the skills and competencies most valued by employers in the business world.

Third, the study seeks to investigate differences in changes in satisfaction and motivation across student characteristics (i.e. demographics, subjects and programmes. Previous research proposes that student characteristics, such as prior work experience, cultural background and learning style, may play a role in shaping

engagement and success in experiential learning (Gittings et al., 2020; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). By collecting and analysing data on these demographic variables, this study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the design and implementation of experiential learning to meet the needs and preferences of diverse student populations, which ultimately promotes equitable and inclusive learning opportunities.

Fourthly, the study endeavours to contrast and investigate student learning outcomes across formats of experiential learning activities; with the self-assessed changes in behaviour and in-depth understanding of the domain knowledge by the students, this research could contribute to the development of increasingly learner-centred and responsive pedagogical approaches (Kolb & Kolb, 2017; McCarthy, 2016). Domain knowledge refers to the specific knowledge in and understanding of a particular field or subject area (Entwistle & Ramsden, 1983; Marton & Säljö, 1976). In business education, domain knowledge encompasses the concepts, theories, principles and practices relevant to various business disciplines such as marketing, finance, operations and management. Scholars report that experiential learning activities facilitate the acquisition of an in-depth understanding of domain knowledge by providing students with opportunities to actively engage with the subject matter, apply knowledge to real-world situations and reflect on learning experiences (Asikainen & Gijbels, 2017; Baeten et al., 2010). Positive influence on work and life aspects refers to the potential benefits and impacts of experiential learning on the professional and personal development of students beyond the immediate learning context (Kirkpatrick, 1996; Noe, 1986). Research demonstrates that students who participated in experiential learning activities are more likely to transfer their learning to real-world scenarios, apply knowledge and skills in meaningful ways and

experience high levels of job satisfaction, work performance and career success (Alliger et al., 1997; Holton, 1996; Mathieu et al., 1992). The insights gained from the current study pose certain implications for course design and instructor training in business education. By understanding the differential effects of real and hypothetical experiential learning formats on student learning outcomes regarding the enhancement of their domain knowledge as well as the positive influence on their work and/or life aspects, educators can make informed decisions about the types of activities and assessments to be include in their courses. For example, if the study finds that real experiential learning activities are more effective than hypothetical ones in promoting student motivation and satisfaction, then educators may opt to prioritise client-based projects, internships or other forms of real authentic learning experiences in their curricula.

Ultimately, the insights gained from this study hold the potential to contribute to the broad discourse on effective pedagogy in business education and the role of experiential learning in preparing graduates for success in future careers. By providing empirical evidence on the factors that influence student motivation, satisfaction and growth in the domain knowledge as well as positive influence on work and/or life aspects in experiential learning, this study can help to build a strong case for the value and relevance of these approaches in business education and inform the development of best practices and guidelines for their implementation.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its potential to advance the theoretical understanding of experiential learning in business education, provide actionable insights for educators in optimising teaching practices, inform the decisions of

educational administrators and policy makers and benefit employers and industry partners who collaborate with business schools. By critically and systematically assessing the underlying constructs of the effectiveness of experiential learning activities in enhancing student satisfaction and motivation, this research contributes to the ongoing effort to improve the quality and impact of business education and prepare students for success in future careers.

From the theoretical perspective, this study addresses the key gaps in the existing literature on experiential learning in business education. Despite the increasing recognition of the importance of experiential learning, a paucity remains in empirical studies that examine the linkage between various types of experiential learning activities and student satisfaction and motivation in real and hypothetical activity formats for experiential learning (Gittings et al., 2020). By investigating this relationship and considering the impact on hard and soft skills development for business students at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels, this research expands the current understanding of the effect of experiential learning on learning outcomes in a nuanced and comprehensive manner.

Apart from its contribution to the literature, the practical implications of the study include the benefits of the findings for various stakeholders, including students, educators, administrators, policy makers, employers and society. For students, the findings can provide valuable insights into the formats of experiential learning activities that are most effective in enhancing motivation, satisfaction and growth in domain knowledge as well as positive influence on work and/or life aspects. By understanding the differential effects of real and hypothetical experiential learning formats as well as the impact of these activities on the acquisition of hard and soft skills, students can make informed decisions about the learning opportunities they

pursue and advocate for more engaging and relevant experiential learning experiences in business education programmes.

Moreover, the findings can provide valuable insights and recommendations for educators that intend to optimise experiential learning practices in business education. By understanding the differential effects of real and hypothetical experiential learning formats on student learning outcomes, educators can make informed decisions about the types of activities and assessments to include in their courses in the future. Similarly, by examining the impact of experiential learning on the development of hard and soft skills, educators can design activities and assessments that effectively target the skills and competencies most valued by employers and students. For educators, the insights from this study can inform the design and implementation of effective experiential learning activities that cater to the needs and preferences of diverse student populations.

Such insights can also inform the decisions of educational administrators and policy makers on the allocation of resources and support for experiential learning initiatives. By demonstrating the positive impact of experiential learning on student motivation, satisfaction and growth in domain knowledge as well as positive influence on work and/or life aspects, this research can help to build a strong case for the value and relevance of these approaches in business education and justify the investment of resources and infrastructure to support their implementation. For educational administrators and policy makers, the findings can provide empirical evidence to support the allocation of resources and the development of curricula in business education that prioritise experiential learning. By demonstrating the positive impact of experiential learning on student learning outcomes and employability, this research can help justify the investment in experiential learning initiatives and inform

the creation of institutional policies and guidelines that promote best practices in the design and implementation of experiential learning.

Moreover, the findings can benefit employers and industry partners who collaborate with business schools on experiential learning projects. By understanding the types of activities that are most effective in developing the hard and soft skills of students, employers can provide more targeted and meaningful opportunities for students to apply knowledge and gain practical experience in real-world settings. This scenario can help to bridge the gap between academia and industry and better prepare business graduates for success in their chosen fields. For employers and industry partners, the insights can inform the development of effective partnerships with business schools and the creation of meaningful opportunities for experiential learning for students. By understanding the types of experiential learning activities that are most effective in developing hard and soft skills valued in the workplace, employers can collaborate with educators to design and implement learning experiences that prepare students for success in future careers. Moreover, by providing feedback on the skills developed through experiential learning and the needs of the industry, employers can help ensure that business education programmes remain relevant and responsive to the changing demands of the job market.

Ultimately, the significance of this study lies in its potential to advance the understanding of experiential learning in business education in the literature. Meanwhile, the insights hold the potential to contribute to the broad discourse on effective pedagogy in business education and the role of experiential learning in preparing graduates for success in future careers. Thus, actionable insights are provided for a wide range of stakeholders, including students, educators,

administrators, policymakers, employers and society as a whole. By contributing to the ongoing effort to optimise experiential learning practices and prepare students for success in their personal and professional lives, this research holds the potential to make a lasting impact on the field of business education and beyond. Moreover, this study can help to build a strong case for the value and relevance of these approaches in business education and improve the development of best practices and guidelines for their implementation.

1.5 Research Questions

The research questions and sub-questions that guide this study are designed to address the key gaps and limitations identified in the existing literature on experiential learning in business education. These questions aim to provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the factors that influence the effectiveness of experiential learning activities on student motivation and satisfaction. Towards this end, the study examines the relationships among experiential learning formats, subject nature, student characteristics and learning outcomes, including domain knowledge, incremental growth and positive influence on their work and/or life aspects.

Based on the background, context and objectives, the study formulated the following research questions to guide the investigation.

Research Question 1: Are students more motivated and satisfied in real-world formats of experiential learning activities compared with their hypothetical counterparts?

This question focuses on the specific formats of experiential learning activities and

their influence on student motivation and satisfaction. By distinguishing between real-world (involving actual clients, projects or cases) and hypothetical (simulated or fictional scenarios) experiential learning activities, this study aims to investigate whether or not the authenticity of learning experiences influences student engagement and outcomes.

Research Question 2: Is the impact on student motivation and satisfaction in acquiring soft skills stronger than that in acquiring hard skills when using experiential learning?

This question explores the potential differential effects of experiential learning on the development of soft skills (e.g. communication, teamwork and leadership) and hard skills (e.g. technical knowledge and analytical skills) in business education. By examining student motivation and satisfaction in relation to these two types of skills, this study intends to determine whether or not experiential learning is more effective in fostering the acquisition of certain skill sets over others.

In addition to these major research questions, the study also investigated the following sub-questions.

Research Question 3: How do the demographic characteristics of students (e.g. age, gender and proximity between course completion) affect their satisfaction and motivation in experiential learning activities?

This question and its corresponding hypotheses aim to explore the potential moderating effects of the demographic factors of students on learning experiences and outcomes in experiential learning activities. By examining the relationship between these characteristics and student motivation and satisfaction, this study seeks to identify any significant differences or patterns that may inform the design

and implementation of experiential learning activities for diverse student populations.

Research Question 4: What is the relationship between the format of experiential learning activities and the incremental domain knowledge and positive influence on work/life aspect in experiential learning activities?

This question and its corresponding hypotheses investigate the relationship between the formats of experiential learning activities (real versus hypothetical) on the incremental domain knowledge and positive influence on the work/life aspects of students. By examining this relationship, the study aims to provide insights into the optimal design of experiential learning activities that enhance the domain knowledge of students and positive influence on work/life aspects, which also reflect student satisfaction and motivation in business education.

Research Question 5: What is the relationship between the expected learning outcomes of instructors of the nature of the subject and the self-reported improvement of students in incremental domain knowledge and positive influence on work/life aspects in experiential learning activities?

This question and its corresponding hypotheses explore the relationship between the nature of the subject (soft versus hard skills) on incremental domain knowledge and positive influence on work/life aspects. The study aims to provide insights into the optimal design of experiential learning activities that enhance the domain knowledge and positive influence on work/life aspects of students, which also reflect student satisfaction and motivation in business education.

These research questions and sub-questions are designed to address the key gaps and limitations identified in the existing literature on experiential learning in business education. By providing a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the factors

that influence the effectiveness of experiential learning, the study aims to inform the design and implementation of targeted and impactful educational interventions that optimize student motivation, satisfaction, and learning outcomes. Besides, this could contribute to the development of increasingly learner-centred and responsive pedagogical approaches.

These research questions and hypotheses will be tested using the appropriate statistical methods, such as multiple regression analysis, to examine the relationships between the independent variables (format of experiential learning activities, nature of the subject and demographic characteristics of the students) and the dependent variables (satisfaction, motivation, domain knowledge and positive influence). At the same time, it will consider the relationship between formats of experiential learning activities and the nature of the subject.

The result will contribute to the existing literature on experiential learning and provide valuable insights for educators, researchers and other stakeholders in business education. By addressing these research questions and testing corresponding hypotheses, this study aims to inform the design and implementation of effective experiential learning activities that enhance student satisfaction, motivation, domain knowledge and positive influence, which ultimately improves the quality and outcome of business education programmes.

1.6 Research Design and Methodology

This study employs a mixed-method research approach, which specifically adopts a partially mixed sequential exploratory design, to investigate the impact of experiential learning activities on student motivation and satisfaction in business

education at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK). The choice of a mixed-method approach was grounded in the recognition that combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies could provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of complex educational phenomena (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Chan, 2022). The sequential exploratory design is carefully selected to provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the factors that influence the effectiveness of experiential learning activities in business education. By combining qualitative and quantitative research methods in a sequential manner, this design enables an in-depth and contextualised exploration of the research questions, while enabling the researcher to test and validate the initial findings using a large and more representative sample of participants (Creswell, 2003; Chan, 2022).

The research design is structured in two distinct phases.

The first phase employed a qualitative approach to gain in-depth insights into the design, implementation, and perceived impact of experiential learning activities in business education at CUHK. This phase involved semi-structured interviews with seven course instructors from the Faculty of Business Administration, who were selected based on their experience and expertise in the implementation of experiential learning activities (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; McCarthy, 2016).

Building on the insights gained from first phase, the second phase employed a quantitative approach to examine the relationships between experiential learning activities and student motivation and satisfaction. This phase involved the development and administration of a questionnaire to a large sample of undergraduate and graduate business students at CUHK (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Chan, 2022).

Following the sequential exploratory design, the findings from both phases were

integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of experiential learning activities on student motivation and satisfaction in business education at CUHK. This integration involved comparing and contrasting the qualitative and quantitative results, identifying areas of convergence and divergence and developing a holistic interpretation of the findings in light of the research objectives and the existing literature (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Chan, 2022). The mixed-method approach enabled a more nuanced and comprehensive examination of experiential learning in business education by combining the depth and richness of qualitative insights with the breadth and generalisability of quantitative data. This approach enabled the researcher to address the complexity of the research problem and provide a robust and meaningful contribution to the field of business education (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Hodge et al., 2014).

Throughout the research process, ethical considerations were paramount. The study adhered to the ethical guidelines and principles outlined by the Regulations and Codes of Practice of the university, Research Data Management Policy, General Data Protection Regulation 2016 (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act (2018). Key ethical considerations included:

1. Informed consent: The participants were provided with detailed information about the objective, procedures and potential risks and benefits of the study. Written informed consent was obtained from the participants prior to the study.

2. Confidentiality and anonymity: Measures were taken to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of the data. All personally identifiable information was omitted from the data files and reports and the participants were assigned unique identification codes.

3. Data protection: All data collected through the interviews and questionnaires were

stored securely on password-protected, encrypted cloud-based platforms. Access to data was restricted to the researcher and authorised members of the research team.

4. Voluntary participation: The participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without negative consequences.

5. Ethical approval: The study underwent a rigorous ethical review process and obtained approval from the ethics committee of the university prior to the commencement of data collection.

By adhering to these ethical principles, the researcher aimed to ensure the integrity of the research process and protect the rights and well-being of the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

1.7 Assumptions, Limitations and Delimitations

1.7.1 Assumptions

This study is based on several assumptions:

1. Honesty and accuracy of responses: The study assumed that all participants (instructors and students), provided honest and accurate responses, which is crucial for the validity of the data collected and the subsequent analysis and interpretation of the findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

2. Representativeness of the sample: The study assumed that the selected samples of instructors and students were representative of the broader population of business educators and students at CUHK, which was necessary for generalising the findings to the wider context of business education at the institution (Creswell & Clark, 2018).

3. Validity of self-reported measures: The study relied on self-reported measures of

motivation, satisfaction and learning outcomes, assuming they accurately reflect the true experiences and perceptions of the participants (Sverdlik et al., 2018).

4. Stability of perceptions: The research assumed that the perceptions of the participants of their experiences with experiential learning activities remained relatively stable during the period of data collection. This assumption was necessary given the cross-sectional nature of the study (Kolb & Kolb, 2005).

5. Relevance of experiential learning: The study assumed that experiential learning is a relevant and important aspect of business education at CUHK, which aligns with the educational philosophy and practices of the institution.

6. Comparability of experiential learning activities: The study assumed that the various experiential learning activities implemented across courses and programmes at CUHK were sufficiently comparable to be meaningfully analysed together despite potential variations in specific content or implementation (Hodge et al., 2014).

1.7.2 Limitations

To manage the scope and focus of the study, several delimitations were established:1. Single institution focus: the study was conducted at a single institution, namely, CUHK, which may limit the generalisability of the findings to other educational contexts or institutions. The unique characteristics of business education programmes and student population in the CUHK may influence the results in ways that are not representative of business education more broadly (Hodge et al., 2014).

2. Cross-sectional design: the study employed a cross-sectional design and collected data at a single point in time. This approach limited the ability to examine causal relationships or changes in motivation and satisfaction over time. Thus,

longitudinal research would be necessary to fully understand the long-term impact of experiential learning activities (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

3. Self-reported data: Reliance on self-reported data for the qualitative and quantitative phases may introduce potential biases, such as social desirability or recall bias. The responses may be influenced by the perceptions of aspects considered socially acceptable or by inaccuracies in the recall of previous experiences (Sverdlik et al., 2018).

4. Limited sample size in the qualitative phase: although they provide valuable insights, the qualitative phase included interviews with seven course instructors, which may not capture the full range of perspectives and experiences related to experiential learning at the CUHK (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

5. Potential for non-response bias: In the quantitative phase, a potential exists for non-response bias, because students who opted to participate in the survey may exhibit different characteristics or experiences compared with those who did not participate (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

6. Lack of objective measures: The study primarily relied on subjective, self-reported measures of motivation, satisfaction and learning outcomes. The inclusion of objective measures, such as academic performance or employer evaluation, could have provided a comprehensive assessment of the impact of experiential learning (Kolb & Kolb, 2005).

1.7.3 Delimitations

To manage the scope and focus of the study, several delimitations were established.

1. Time frame: The data collection for the qualitative and quantitative phases was conducted within a specific time frame (February 2023 to March 2023), which provides a snapshot of experiential learning practices and perceptions at CUHK

during this period. This delimitation was necessary due to practical constraints but limited the ability to capture potential changes or trends over time (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

2. Focus on motivation and satisfaction: while the study examined various aspects of experiential learning, it primarily focused on student motivation and satisfaction as key outcome variables. Other potential outcomes, such as skill development or career readiness, were indirectly measured, although they were explored through self-reported measures of domain knowledge improvement and positive influence on work/life aspects (Sverdlik et al., 2018; Kolb & Kolb, 2005).

3. Formats of experiential learning activities: the study focused on specific formats of experiential learning activities, which were broadly categorised as real and hypothetical. Although this categorisation enabled meaningful comparisons, it captures only a partial spectrum of experiential learning approaches used in business education (Gosen & Washbush, 2004; Kosnik et al., 2013).

4. Age range of participants: the study included participants aged 18 years and above, especially undergraduate and graduate students. This delimitation excluded younger students or pre-university programmes that may incorporate experiential learning elements (Kolb & Kolb, 2017).

1.8 Organisation of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organised into five chapters that presented the background, methods, findings and implications of the study on experiential learning in business education. Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the research problem, purpose and significance of the study as well as the research design and methodology. Chapter 2 presents a comprehensive review of the literature related to experiential learning

in business education with a focus on the theoretical foundation, empirical evidence and gap in the existing research. Chapter 3 describes the sequential exploratory mixed-method research design, including data collection and analysis in the qualitative and quantitative phases . Chapter 4 highlights the findings, including key themes and patterns identified through the instructor interviews and student surveys, as well as the results of statistical analyses and hypothesis tests. Finally, Chapter 5 discusses the implications and significance of the findings for theory, practice and future research in the field of experiential learning in business education and poses recommendations for educators, administrators and policymakers who seek to enhance the effectiveness and impact of experiential learning activities in their contexts.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Experiential Learning

2.1.1 Definition of Experiential Learning

As originally proposed by Kolb (1984), experiential learning embodies an educational philosophy and a methodological approach that underscores the vital role of generating knowledge through direct, hands-on experience (Kolb, 1984; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) posits that learning occurs through a dynamic process in which knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. This approach is in sharp contrast to traditional, didactic methods of learning that typically involve a one-way transmission of information from teachers to students without necessitating student engagement or critical reflection (Kolb, 2014; Beard & Wilson, 2013). Instead, experiential learning is designed to involve learners in a deeply participatory and introspective educational process.

While Kolb's work has been seminal in the development of experiential learning, other theories and research have also contributed to the understanding and implementation of experiential learning activities in business education. Self-Determination Theory (SDT), Expectancy-Value Theory (EVT), and Goal-Orientation Theory (GOT) can provide a theoretical foundation for understanding how experiential learning enhances student satisfaction and motivation to learn (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Dweck, 1986). These theories offer complementary perspectives on the psychological processes and factors that influence students' engagement, persistence, and performance in learning activities (Ryan & Deci, 2017; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000; Dweck & Leggett, 1988).

The experiential learning process is characterised by active engagement, critical reflection and the application of knowledge to real-world contexts as opposed to passively thinking about an issue or hypothesising about actions they may take. In this context, learners were encouraged to directly interact with the phenomena they are studying, addressing authentic challenges and constructing meaning from experiences (Johnson, 2022; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Through direct engagement, learners encounter and address real-life phenomena, which makes the learning experience more vivid and ingrained compared with theoretical contemplation or tentative planning without action. Moreover, this hands-on approach enables an in-depth, nuanced understanding of complex concepts and the development of practical skills relevant to real-world settings (Smith, 2023; Wurdinger & Carlson, 2010).

2.1.2 Experiential Learning Theory (ELT)

ELT, as articulated in the landmark book by Kolb (1984) entitled, *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*, views learning as a cyclical process. It provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the cyclical nature of the experiential learning process, which defines learning as a dynamic process wherein knowledge emerges from the transformation of experiences. This theory postulates that learning eventuated through a combination of understanding and transforming experiences results in the creation of knowledge.

Kolb (1984) outlines a sequential and spiral four-stage cycle that characterises the experiential learning process, namely, concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation. The sequential nature of this cycle enables the transformation of experiences into knowledge, while the spiral

aspect facilitates an ongoing deepening of understanding as theories and practices are continuously conceptualised and reconceptualised (Kolb & Fry, 1975; Kolb & Kolb, 2005, Bartle, 2015; Matsuo, 2015).

The first stage of ELT (concrete experience) serves as the cornerstone of the entire learning process. This stage involves the direct participation of learners in a specific situation, event or activity, which provides them with a tangible, real-world encounter that forms the basis of subsequent learning (Kolb, 1984; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). During this stage, learners immerse in the experience and engage their senses, emotions and physical presence to fully absorb the nuances and complexities of a situation (Boud et al., 1993; Beard & Wilson, 2013). The importance of the concrete experience stage lies in its ability to create a powerful, memorable encounter that learners could draw on as they progress through the subsequent stages of the learning cycle (Kolb, 1984; Boud et al., 1993). By directly engaging with the phenomenon under study, learners develop a personal connection to the subject matter, which makes the learning experience more meaningful, relevant and impactful (Beard & Wilson, 2013; Morris, 2020). This personal connection serves as a catalyst for the reflective observation stage, as learners are more likely to invest time and effort in critically analysing an experience that resonates with them at a deeper level (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Schön, 1983).

As learners transition into the reflective observation stage, they begin to critically examine and analyse concrete experiences to extract meaning and gain insights (Kolb, 1984; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). This stage involves taking a step back from the direct experience and adopting an objective, contemplative stance, which enables learners to process the information collected and consider the implications of such

encounters (Boud et al., 1985; Mezirow, 1991). During reflective observation, learners engage in various metacognitive activities, such as questioning assumptions, comparing experiences with prior knowledge and exploring alternative perspectives (Flavell, 1979; Schön, 1983). To facilitate effective reflective observation, learners can employ a range of strategies and tools such as journaling, mind mapping, peer discussion or structured debriefing session (Ash & Clayton, 2009; Nesbit & Martin, 2012). These activities provide learners with a framework for organising thoughts, articulating reflections and engaging in meaningful dialogue with others, which, thereby, deepens their understanding of an experience and its implications (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Schön, 1983). The reflective observation stage is crucial for the development of critical thinking skills, because it encourages learners to question assumptions, consider multiple perspectives and develop a nuanced understanding of complex situations (Brookfield, 1987; Mezirow, 1991). By engaging in reflective observation, learners begin to identify patterns, connections and discrepancies between experiences and existing knowledge, which sets the stage for the abstract conceptualisation phase (Kolb, 1984; Kolb & Kolb, 2005).

In the abstract conceptualisation stage, learners build on reflections and observations to form theories, generalisations and concepts that help them make sense of experiences (Kolb, 1984; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). This stage involves a shift from the concrete and specific to the abstract and general, as learners seek to identify overarching principles, models or frameworks that could be applied to a broad range of situations (Kolb, 1984; Boud et al., 1985). During abstract conceptualisation, learners engage in various cognitive processes, such as categorisation, comparison and synthesis, to organise and integrate the insights gained from reflections (Bloom et al., 1956; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). They may draw on

existing theories, models or concepts from prior knowledge or generate new ideas and hypotheses based on recent experiences (Kolb, 1984; Mezirow, 1991). The abstract conceptualisation stage is essential for the development of problem-solving skills and the ability to transfer learning to new situations (Kolb, 1984; Bransford et al., 2000). By forming generalisations and theories based on experiences, learners create a framework for understanding and addressing similar challenges in the future, which enhances their adaptability and resilience in the face of novel situations (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Morris, 2020).

Finally, in the active experimentation stage, learners apply newly formed concepts, theories and generalisations to new situations, which tests understanding and refines knowledge through an iterative process (Kolb, 1984; McCarthy, 2016). This stage involves a return to action, as learners actively seek for opportunities to put learning into practice and experiment with different approaches to problem-solving (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Beard & Wilson, 2013). During active experimentation, learners engage in various hands-on activities that enable them to apply knowledge and skills in authentic contexts (McCarthy, 2016; Kosnik et al., 2013). These activities provide learners with a safe space to take risks, make mistakes and learn from experiences, which fosters a growth mindset and willingness to embrace challenges (Dweck, 2006; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). The active experimentation stage is crucial for the development of self-efficacy and the ability to apply learning in real-world contexts (Bandura, 1977; Kolb, 1984). By actively engaging in the application of knowledge and skills, learners gain confidence in their ability to navigate complex situations, solve problems and make meaningful contributions to their field (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Morris, 2020). Moreover, the active experimentation stage serves as a bridge between the learning cycle and future concrete experiences, as the actions and

outcomes of learners generate new encounters and situations that could be reflected on and be conceptualised and experimented with in the subsequent iterations of the learning cycle (Kolb, 1984; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). This iterative process enables learners to continuously refine understanding, adapt to new challenges and develop a comprehensive and flexible knowledge base (Kolb, 1984; Beard & Wilson, 2013).

Kolb (1984) emphasised that the four stages are not necessarily linear; instead, they form a continuous cycle with each iteration deepening the understanding of learners and facilitating the transformation of experience into knowledge (Kolb & Kolb, 2009; Abdulwahed & Nagy, 2009). The interconnectedness of the four stages in ELT highlights the dynamic and cyclical nature of the learning process (Kolb, 1984; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Each stage builds on the previous one, which creates a continuous feedback loop that facilitates the integration of new experiences, reflections, conceptualisations and experimentations (Kolb, 1984; Boud et al., 1985). This cyclical process enables learners to develop a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the subject matter, as they repeatedly engage with materials through different lenses and modes of learning (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Beard & Wilson, 2013). The experiential learning cycle also emphasises the importance of striking a balance among the four learning modes: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation (Kolb, 1984; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Alternatively, individual learners may have preferences for certain stages of the cycle; thus, effective learning requires the integration of the four modes (Kolb, 1984; McCarthy, 2016). By engaging in each stage of the learning cycle, learners can develop a holistic and flexible approach to learning, which enhances their ability to adapt to new situations and challenges (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Morris, 2020).

Furthermore, the experiential learning cycle highlights the significance of the active involvement of learners in the learning process (Kolb, 1984; Boud et al., 1993). This active engagement fosters a deeper, more meaningful learning experience, as learners can connect new information to existing knowledge and experiences, which creates a more robust and enduring understanding of the subject matter (Kolb, 1984; Bransford et al., 2000).

In addition to promoting active learning, the experiential learning cycle also supports the development of metacognitive skills such as self-awareness, self-regulation and reflective practice (Flavell, 1979; Schön, 1983). By engaging in the reflective observation and abstract conceptualisation stages, learners become more aware of their thought processes, learning strategies and areas for improvement (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Mezirow, 1991). This heightened self-awareness enables learners to take greater control of learning, thus, adapting their approaches to meet the demands of various situations and challenges (Kolb, 1984; Boud et al., 1985). The experiential learning cycle provides a framework for designing effective learning experiences that cater to the diverse needs and preferences of learners (Kolb, 1984; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). By incorporating the elements of each stage of the learning cycle into educational programmes and interventions, educators and trainers can create more engaging, inclusive and impactful learning environments that foster the development of a wide range of skills and competencies (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; McCarthy, 2016). This approach to learning design can be applied across domains (e.g. from formal education settings to professional development and organisational learning contexts), which enables learners to benefit from the transformative power of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984; Beard & Wilson, 2013).

2.1.3 Contextual Factors that Influence the Implementation and Effectiveness of Experiential Learning

Several contextual factors play a crucial role in shaping the implementation and effectiveness of experiential learning in various educational settings. These factors include learner characteristics, the role of instructors, the learning environment and the nature of the experiential activities (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Beard & Wilson, 2013).

Learner characteristics, such as prior knowledge, learning style and motivation, can significantly influence the success of experiential learning initiatives. Learners with diverse backgrounds and experiences may differently approach experiential activities, which requires adaptable instructional strategies to accommodate individual needs (Kolb & Kolb, 2013; McCarthy, 2016). Additionally, learners' willingness to engage in the experiential process, take risks and critically reflect on experiences could impact the depth and quality of learning (Wurdinger & Carlson, 2010; Morris, 2020). Apart from domain knowledge, learning activities, and practical skills, several learner characteristics may affect the learning outcomes in the context of experiential learning in business education. These characteristics include demographic factors, such as age and gender (Kolb & Kolb, 2013; Kayes & Kayes, 2007; Huang, 2013). Age is a learner characteristic that may influence the learning outcomes of experiential learning in business education. Studies have shown that adult learners tend to have different learning needs, preferences, and motivations compared to traditional college-aged students (Knowles et al., 2012; Wlodkowski, 2008). Adult learners often bring a wealth of life and work experiences to the learning situation, which can shape their expectations, goals, and approaches to learning (Merriam & Bierema, 2013). Experiential learning activities that are designed to

accommodate the unique needs and experiences of adult learners, such as problem-based learning, case studies, and reflective practice, can enhance their engagement, satisfaction, and performance (Ambrose et al., 2010; McCarthy, 2016). Gender is another learner characteristic that may affect the learning outcomes of experiential learning in business education. Research has demonstrated that male and female students may have different learning styles, preferences, and approaches to problem-solving (Kolb & Kolb, 2013; Fallan & Opstad, 2016). For example, studies have shown that female students tend to prefer collaborative learning environments and value interpersonal relationships more than male students (Kaenzig et al., 2007; Severiens & ten Dam, 2012). Experiential learning activities that are designed to accommodate these gender differences, such as team-based projects, peer mentoring, and social learning, can promote a more inclusive and supportive learning environment that enhances student satisfaction and motivation (Beard, 2010; Kosnik et al., 2013).

The role of instructors in experiential learning is that of a facilitator by guiding learners through the process of experience, reflection and application. Thus, instructors need to create a supportive learning environment that encourages active participation, open dialogue and critical thinking (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Breunig, 2017). They also need to provide structured opportunities for reflection, such as guided journaling or group discussion, to help learners derive meaning from experiences and connect them to broad concepts (Ash & Clayton, 2009; Lorusso & Sisto, 2018).

The learning environment could significantly impact the effectiveness of experiential learning: authentic, real-world contexts that mirror professional settings can enhance the relevance and applicability of learning experiences (Beard & Wilson,

2013; Morris, 2020). Access to resources, such as technology, materials and industry partnerships, can also enrich experiential learning opportunities (Wurdinger & Carlson, 2010; Gosen & Washbush, 2004).

The nature and design of experiential activities play a crucial role in determining learning outcomes. Well-structured activities that align with learning objectives, provide opportunities for reflection and incorporate feedback mechanisms were more likely to yield meaningful learning experiences (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; McCarthy, 2016). The complexity, duration and scope of experiential activities need to be carefully considered to ensure that they challenge learners while remaining achievable (Wurdinger & Carlson, 2010; Morris, 2020).

By understanding and addressing these contextual factors, educators can create effective and impactful experiential learning initiatives that cater to the unique needs of learners and learning environments (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Beard & Wilson, 2013).

2.2 Impact of Experiential Learning on Student Motivation and Satisfaction

2.2.1 Motivation and Satisfaction in Academic Learning

In the realm of educational research, the constructs of student motivation and satisfaction are frequently examined to gauge the efficacy of various pedagogical approaches, such as blended learning, across educational pedagogies (Nurfina Aznam et al., 2021; Moskal et al., 2013; Wallace & Young, 2010; Dziuban et al., 2007; Bold, 2005; Caruso & Kravik, 2005; Dziuban et al., 2004; Rivera & Rice, 2002). The dynamic interplay between these constructs offers insights to educators and researchers on the optimisation of teaching methodologies to enhance student

learning outcomes (Skinner & Belmont, 1993; Hodge et al., 2014).

2.2.1.1 Definition of Motivation in Learning

Motivation in the educational context is a critical determinant of student engagement and success, which refer to the driving force that propels students to engage in learning activities, sustain effort and persist in the face of challenges and interest required for academic achievement (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Pintrich, 2003). It encompasses intrinsic (derived from an inherent interest or enjoyment in the learning process) and extrinsic (driven by external rewards or pressures) motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). Motivated learners are more likely to actively participate in learning activities, set meaningful goals and employ effective learning strategies (Zimmerman, 2000; Schunk & Zimmerman, 2012). They also tend to exhibit greater resilience, adaptability and persistence when confronted with difficulties (Dweck, 2006; Duckworth et al., 2007).

2.2.1.2 Multidimensionality of Satisfaction

Learning satisfaction is a multidimensional construct that reflects the overall contentment of students with educational experiences (Elliott & Shin, 2002; Bolliger & Martindale, 2004; Smith, 2023). It includes various aspects of the learning process, including the quality of instruction, relevance of course content, level of engagement and sense of achievement (Wiers-Jenssen et al., 2002; Dziuban et al., 2015; Kuo et al., 2014; Smith, 2023). A complex interplay of factors, such as the expectations and perceived value of students and congruence between learning preferences and instructional methods, influences satisfaction (Alqurashi, 2019; Bhagat et al., 2016). High levels of satisfaction are typically associated with increased motivation, deeper learning and better academic performance (Biner et al., 1997; Gray & DiLoreto,

2016).

2.2.2 Impact of Experiential Learning on Student Motivation

By participating in experiential learning classes, students increase their level of motivation for learning and gain freedom to choose from various solutions to issues that emerge throughout the learning process (Wilson, 2023; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). This process promotes a strong connection among learning involvement, practice and reality, which are key roles in learning motivation (Smith, 2023; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). The theories of motivation hold a profound significance in understanding and enhancing the efficacy of experiential learning (Ryan & Deci, 2020; Kolb, 2014).

2.2.2.1 Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Self-determination theory (SDT), which was developed by Deci and Ryan (1985), is a macro-theory of human motivation that emphasises the importance of innate psychological needs in driving self-motivation and personal growth. SDT posits that individuals have three fundamental psychological needs, namely, autonomy, competence and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Autonomy refers to the need to control one's behaviour and to act in accordance with one's values and interests. Competence denotes the need to feel effective and capable in one's interactions with the environment. Lastly, relatedness pertains to the need to feel connected to others and to have a sense of belonging. According to SDT, when these three psychological needs are satisfied, individuals are more likely to be motivated and to experience positive outcomes such as enhanced learning, creativity and well-being (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

In the context of experiential learning, SDT proposes that learning activities that support student autonomy, provide opportunities for competence development and

foster a sense of relatedness are more likely to enhance student motivation and commitment (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Klaeijsen et al., 2017; Leptokaridou et al., 2016). SDT provides a useful framework for understanding how experiential learning enhances student motivation: when the three needs are met, students are more likely to be motivated and to experience positive learning outcomes (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Klaeijsen et al., 2017; Leptokaridou et al., 2016). Various studies report that experiential learning exerts a significant impact on the learning motivation of students (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Deci et al., 1999; Lepper et al., 2005; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

By engaging in experiential learning activities, students gain opportunities to take an active role in the learning process, make meaningful choices and explore various solutions to real-world problems (Thompson, 2022; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). This sense of autonomy and ownership over the learning process could be a powerful driver of motivation, because it satisfies the innate need of students for self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000). When students feel that they hold a degree of control over learning outcomes and can make meaningful contributions to educational experiences, then they are more likely to be motivated and invested in the learning process (Reeve, 2018; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). For example, experiential learning activities that enable students to make meaningful choices and take ownership of the learning process can support their need for autonomy (McCarthy, 2016; Morris, 2020; Kolb & Kolb, 2005).

Experiential learning activities also play a crucial role in satisfying the need of students for competence, as posited by SDT, experiential learning provides numerous opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate their skills and

knowledge (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Through hands-on activities, real-world projects and problem-solving exercises, students can apply their learning in authentic contexts, receive feedback on performance and refine abilities over time (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; McCarthy, 2016; Morris, 2020). This process of active engagement, practice and mastery fosters a sense of competence and self-efficacy, which are essential for maintaining motivation and perseverance in the face of challenges (Bandura, 1986; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Moreover, experiential learning activities frequently use a scaffolded approach in which students gradually take on more complex tasks and responsibilities with the increase in their skills and knowledge (Vygotsky, 1978; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). This progressive development of competence further reinforces student motivation and commitment to learning, as they experience a sense of accomplishment and personal growth (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Reeve, 2018).

Experiential learning activities typically involve collaboration and social interaction with peers, instructors and industry professionals (Smith, 2022; Wurdinger & Carlson, 2010). This sense of relatedness and connection to others can further enhance student motivation, because it satisfies the need for belonging and social support (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000). For example, collaborative projects, simulations and reflective exercises could promote sense of ownership, skill mastery and social connectedness, which, thereby, satisfies the basic psychological needs of students (Auster & Wylie, 2006; Kosnik et al., 2013; McCarthy, 2016).

2.2.2.2 Expectancy–Value Theory (EVT)

Expectancy–value theory (EVT), which was developed by Eccles (1983) and Eccles

and Wigfield (2002), provides a valuable framework for understanding the influence of experiential learning on student motivation. According to EVT, two major factors determine student motivation, namely, expectancy beliefs and subjective task values. Expectancy beliefs refer to the perceptions of students of their ability to succeed in a given task or domain. Factors, such as past experience, self-concept and social comparison, influence these beliefs. In the context of experiential learning, activities that are designed to be challenging but achievable could enhance the expectancy beliefs and self-efficacy of students, which, thereby, contributes to motivation (Bandura, 1997; McCarthy, 2016; Morris, 2020; Kolb & Kolb, 2005).

Alternatively, subjective task values denote the perceived importance, usefulness and interest of a task. Factors, such as personal goals, cultural norms and societal expectations, influence these values (Eccles, 1983; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). Experiential learning activities that align with the personal and professional goals of students and demonstrate the relevance and applicability of learning to future careers are more likely to increase the perceived value of the learning experience, which enhances motivation and engagement (Auster & Wylie, 2006; Goodwin & Kosnik, 2013; McCarthy, 2016). For example, case studies and simulations based on real-world business scenarios can help students recognise the practical significance of learning, which makes experience increasingly valuable and engaging (Auster & Wylie, 2006; Goodwin & Kosnik, 2013; McCarthy, 2016). Similarly, experiential learning activities that provide opportunities for skill development and mastery experience could bolster the expectancy beliefs and self-efficacy of students, which further contributes to motivation (Bandura, 1997; McCarthy, 2016; Morris, 2020; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Moreover, EVT postulates that the interaction between expectancy beliefs and subjective task values plays a

crucial role in determining the overall motivation of students (Eccles, 1983; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). Experiential learning activities that successfully address both factors are more likely to foster sustained motivation and engagement. For instance, a well-designed internship programme that provides students with challenging but manageable tasks, opportunities for skill development and exposure to the real-world application of knowledge could simultaneously enhance expectancy beliefs and subjective task values, which leads to increased motivation and commitment to learning (Guo et al., 2015; Jones et al., 2010). By designing learning activities that positively influence the expectancy beliefs and subjective task values of students, educators can create engaging and motivating learning experiences that promote student success and personal growth (Eccles, 1983; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Kolb & Kolb, 2005).

2.2.2.3 Goal Orientation Theory (GOT)

Goal orientation theory (GOT), which was developed by Dweck and colleagues, provides valuable insights into the reasons why individuals engage in achievement-related behaviours. The theory distinguishes between two major types of goal orientation, namely, mastery and performance goals (Dweck, 1986; Dweck & Leggett, 1988).

Mastery goals, which are also known as learning goals, are characterised by the focus on the development of competence, acquisition of new skills and knowledge and mastery of challenging tasks. In this context, individuals with the mastery goal orientation view challenges as opportunities for growth and learning and are more likely to persist in the face of setbacks (Dweck, 1986; Dweck & Leggett, 1988). This orientation aligns well with the principles of experiential learning, which emphasises

the importance of active engagement, reflection and continuous improvement (Kolb & Kolb, 2005).

In contrast, performance goals are characterised by the focus on demonstrating competence and outperforming others. Individuals with the performance goal orientation are more concerned with the demonstration of their abilities and avoidance of negative judgements and are more likely to avoid challenging tasks that may reveal weaknesses (Dweck, 1986; Dweck & Leggett, 1988). This orientation could be detrimental to the experiential learning process, because it may discourage students from taking risks, exploring new ideas and learning from mistakes (McCarthy, 2016; Morris, 2020).

In the context of experiential learning, GOT posits that learning activities that promote the mastery goal orientation are more likely to enhance student motivation and engagement (Belenky & Nokes-Malach, 2012; Huang, 2011; Liem et al., 2008; Pintrich, 2000). Experiential learning activities that emphasise the development of skills, acquisition of knowledge and mastery of challenging tasks could foster the mastery goal orientation among students (McCarthy, 2016; Morris, 2020; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). For example, problem-based learning activities that require students to analyse complex business cases and develop innovative solutions can promote the mastery goal orientation by focusing on the development of critical thinking, problem-solving and creativity skills (Auster & Wylie, 2006; Kosnik et al., 2013; McCarthy, 2016). Similarly, reflective learning activities, such as journaling and self-assessment, can help students focus on personal growth and development instead of comparing themselves with others (McCarthy, 2016; Morris, 2020; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). By designing experiential learning activities that prioritise mastery goals,

educators can create learning environments that foster motivation, perseverance and love for learning (Dweck, 1986; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Kolb & Kolb, 2005).

2.2.3 Impact of Experiential Learning on the Learning Satisfaction of Students

Scholars demonstrate that experiential learning exerts a significant positive effect on the learning satisfaction of students (Carini et al., 2006; Dewey, 1938; Kolb, 1984; McCarthy, 2016). Learning satisfaction refers to the overall contentment of students with educational experiences, including perceptions of the quality of instruction, relevance of course content and levels of engagement and support they receive (Appleton-Knapp & Krentler, 2006; Gruber et al., 2010; Paechter et al., 2010). By providing opportunities for active engagement, real-world application, social interaction and reflection, experiential learning activities could enhance the overall satisfaction of students with learning experiences (Appleton-Knapp & Krentler, 2006; Gruber et al., 2010; Paechter et al., 2010).

Experiential learning enhances the learning satisfaction of students by providing opportunities for active engagement and participation, while the related activities make the learning process more enjoyable and rewarding for students (Carini et al., 2006; Dewey, 1938; Kolb, 1984). When students are actively involved in learning, they are more likely to find the experience satisfying and fulfilling compared with passive, lecture-based instruction (McCarthy, 2016; Prince, 2004). Experiential learning activities frequently involve real-world scenarios and problems, which makes the learning content more relevant and applicable to the future careers of students (Auster & Wylie, 2006; Kosnik et al., 2013; McCarthy, 2016). When students perceive learning as useful and valuable, they were more likely to be satisfied with educational experiences (Astin, 1984; Ewell, 2010; Kuh, 2008).

Experiential learning fosters a sense of community and social support among students, because they frequently collaborate on projects and engage in peer learning (Auster & Wylie, 2006; Kosnik et al., 2013; McCarthy, 2016). This sense of belonging and connection to others contribute to the overall satisfaction of students with learning environments (Astin, 1984; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Experiential learning activities typically provide students with opportunities to receive feedback and reflect on learning (Kolb, 1984; McCarthy, 2016; Morris, 2020). This ongoing dialogue and self-assessment help students track their progress, identify areas for improvement and develop an in-depth understanding of their unique learning processes, which leads to increased satisfaction with educational experiences (Boud et al., 1985; Schön, 1983; Kolb & Kolb, 2005).

Several studies empirically demonstrated the positive relationship between experiential learning and student satisfaction in business education. For example, Camarero et al. (2010) found that business students who participate in experiential learning projects reported higher levels of satisfaction with learning compared with those in traditional classroom settings. Similarly, Kosnik et al. (2013) indicated that students in an experiential marketing course expressed greater satisfaction with the learning experience and felt better prepared for future careers.

Notably, the impact of experiential learning on student satisfaction could vary dependent on several factors such as the quality of the learning experience, level of student engagement and individual student preferences (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; McCarthy, 2016). To maximise student satisfaction, ensuring that experiential learning activities are well-designed, properly facilitated and aligned with learning objectives is crucial (Auster & Wylie, 2006; Kosnik et al., 2013; McCarthy, 2016).

Moreover, experiential learning can contribute to student satisfaction by promoting a sense of autonomy and ownership over the learning process (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000). When students gain opportunities to make meaningful choices, take initiative and direct their learning, they are more likely to feel invested in the experience and satisfied with the outcomes (Reeve, 2009; Reeve & Tseng, 2011). Experiential learning activities that provide students with degrees of control and flexibility, such as self-directed projects, simulations and internships, can foster a sense of autonomy and enhance overall satisfaction with the learning experience (Auster & Wylie, 2006; Kosnik et al., 2013; McCarthy, 2016). Educators who incorporate well-designed experiential learning activities into their courses can create more engaging, relevant and satisfying learning experiences for students, which ultimately contributes to their overall success and well-being (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; McCarthy, 2016).

2.2.3.1 ELT and Student Satisfaction

According to ELT, each stage of the experiential learning cycle (i.e. concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation) can enhance different aspects of the learning experience, which leads to greater overall satisfaction (Kolb, 1984; Kolb & Kolb, 2005).

In the context of student satisfaction, the concrete experience stage, which involves hands-on learning activities, could render the learning process more enjoyable and relevant for students. By engaging in real-world projects, case studies and simulations, students could witness the practical application of their knowledge and skills, which leads to a more fulfilling learning experience (Kolb, 1984; McCarthy, 2016; Morris, 2020).

The reflective observation stage, which involves the reflection on and observation of the learning experience, could help students develop an in-depth understanding of their learning processes and identify areas for improvement (Kolb, 1984; Boud et al., 1985). Reflection is a key component of experiential learning that could significantly enhance student satisfaction (Boud et al., 1985; Dewey, 1938; Kolb, 1984; Schön, 1983). When students perceive learning as meaningful and applicable to their personal and professional goals, they are more likely to be satisfied with educational experiences (Astin, 1984; Ewell, 2010; Kuh, 2008). By incorporating structured opportunities for reflection, educators can help students derive greater meaning and satisfaction from experiential learning activities (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; McCarthy, 2016).

The abstract conceptualisation stage, which involves the formation of theories and generalisations based on learning experiences, could help students identify the broad relevance and applicability of their learning (Kolb, 1984; McCarthy, 2016). By connecting experiences to theoretical concepts and frameworks, students develop a more comprehensive understanding of their field of study, which leads to increased intellectual satisfaction (Kolb, 1984; Kolb & Kolb, 2005).

Finally, the active experimentation stage, which denotes the testing of theories and applying knowledge to new situations, could help students develop a sense of competence and mastery, which leads to greater satisfaction with learning (Kolb, 1984; Morris, 2020). By engaging in problem-solving activities, group projects and real-world applications of knowledge, students could build confidence in their abilities and feel a sense of accomplishment, which further enhances their overall satisfaction with learning experiences (Kolb, 1984; McCarthy, 2016).

Using experiential learning activities that incorporate the four stages of the learning cycle, educators can create more engaging and satisfying learning experiences for students (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; McCarthy, 2016). This holistic approach to experiential learning ensures that students gain opportunities to actively engage with learning contents, reflect on experiences, conceptualise learning and apply knowledge to new situations, which ultimately leads to well-rounded and fulfilling educational experiences (Kolb, 1984; Kolb & Kolb, 2005).

The experiential learning cycle could be viewed as an iterative process in which each stage builds on the previous one and informs the next (Kolb, 1984). As students progress through multiple cycles of experiential learning, they continually refine their understanding, skills and perspectives, which leads to a deeper sense of personal and professional growth (Kolb, 1984; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). This ongoing process of learning and development could contribute to long-term student satisfaction, because individuals recognise the value of educational experiences in shaping future success (Kolb, 1984; McCarthy, 2016; Morris, 2020). This approach to experiential learning could lead to increased student satisfaction, as they recognise the value and applicability of education to personal and professional goals (Astin, 1984; Ewell, 2010; Kuh, 2008).

2.2.4 Role of the Acquisition of In-Depth Understanding of Domain Knowledge in Experiential Learning

The literature illustrates that experiential learning facilitates the acquisition of an in-depth understanding of domain knowledge (Entwistle & Ramsden, 1983; Marton & Säljö, 1976). Previous studies demonstrate that students engage in experiential learning activities are more likely to actively seeking to understand the meaning and

significance of the subject matter by deep learning approaches (Biggs, 1987; Prosser & Trigwell, 1999; Ramsden, 2003). Deep learning approaches are characterised by the focus on understanding the concepts, principles and relationships that underline a domain instead of simply memorising facts or procedures (Biggs & Tang, 2011; Trigwell et al., 1999).

Experiential learning activities, such as problem-based learning, case studies and simulations, provided students with opportunities to actively engage with the subject matter, apply knowledge to real-world situations and reflected on learning experiences (Baeten et al., 2010; Asikainen & Gijbels, 2017). These activities encourage students to think critically, question assumptions and integrate new knowledge with the existing understanding (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). By engaging in these processes, students can construct a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the domain knowledge (Entwistle & Ramsden, 1983; Marton & Säljö, 1976). These interactions expose students to diverse perspectives, ideas and experiences, which could further deepen their understanding of the subject matter (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Through discussions, debates and feedback, students gain the opportunity to refine their knowledge, challenge assumptions and develop a sophisticated understanding of the domain (Auster & Wylie, 2006; Kosnik et al., 2013; McCarthy, 2016).

Acquiring an in-depth understanding of the domain knowledge is a crucial factor in experiential learning, because it significantly impacts the learning motivation and satisfaction of students. Conversely, experiential learning activities provide students with opportunities to apply theoretical concepts to real-world situations, which facilitates an in-depth understanding of the subject matter (Kolb, 1984; McCarthy,

2016).

2.2.4.1 Relationship Between the Acquisition of In-Depth Understanding of Domain Knowledge and Learning Motivation

SDT (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000) provides a framework for understanding the positive relationship between the acquisition of an in-depth understanding of the domain knowledge and learning motivation. According to this theory, individuals are more likely motivated when they experience feelings of competence, autonomy and relatedness. When students acquire an in-depth understanding of the domain knowledge through experiential learning, they feel more competent in their abilities, which leads to increased motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Kolb, 1984; McCarthy, 2016).

Similarly, the Attention, Relevance, Confidence and Satisfaction model of motivational design (Keller, 1987) proposes that four factors, namely, attention, relevance, confidence and satisfaction, positively influence learning motivation. Acquiring an in-depth understanding of the domain knowledge through experiential learning contributes to each of these factors. As students develop a deeper understanding of the subject matter, they feel more confident in their abilities and find learning contents more relevant to their interests and goals, which leads to increased motivation (Keller, 1987; Kolb, 1984; McCarthy, 2016).

Empirical studies supported the positive relationship between the acquisition of an in-depth understanding of the domain knowledge and learning motivation. For example, Guo et al. (2020) found that business students engage in experiential learning activities, such as case studies and simulations, demonstrate increased motivation and a deeper understanding of management concepts. Similarly, Breunig

(2017) reported that students who participated in an outdoor experiential learning programme exhibited high levels of motivation and acquired an in-depth understanding of environmental and social justice issues.

2.2.4.2 Relationship Between the Acquisition of an In-depth Understanding of Domain Knowledge and Learning Satisfaction

Acquiring an in-depth understanding of the domain knowledge through experiential learning also contributes to the learning satisfaction of students. ELT emphasises that effective learning occurs through a four-stage cycle, namely, concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation. As students progress through these stages and develop an in-depth understanding of the subject matter, they feel a sense of personal growth and fulfilment, which leads to increased satisfaction with learning experiences (Kolb, 1984; McCarthy, 2016).

Cognitive evaluation theory, a sub-theory of SDT (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000), also supports the idea that acquiring an in-depth understanding of domain knowledge contributes to learning satisfaction. This theory posits that individuals experience greater satisfaction when they feel competent and self-determined in their activities. Specifically, as students acquire an in-depth understanding of the subject matter through experiential learning, they feel more competent and autonomous in learning, which leads to increased satisfaction (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Kolb, 1984; McCarthy, 2016).

Research studies investigated the positive relationship between the acquisition of in-depth understanding of domain knowledge and learning satisfaction in experiential learning contexts. Manolis et al. (2013) found that students who engage

in hands-on projects and real-world applications of marketing concepts reported greater satisfaction with learning experiences and acquired an in-depth understanding of the subject matter. Shin (2018) cited that nursing students who acquired an in-depth understanding of nursing concepts through hands-on activities and simulations experienced high levels of satisfaction with learning experiences. Theoretical frameworks and empirical studies supported the positive relationship between the acquisition of an in-depth understanding of domain knowledge and learning motivation and satisfaction. (Kolb, 1984; McCarthy, 2016).

2.3 Experiential Learning in Business Education

2.3.1 Brief Historical Overview of the Development of Experiential Learning in Business Education

Experiential learning has a long and rich history in business education with its roots dating back to the early 20th century (Kolb, 2009; Kolb et al., 2014). Educators and industry professionals alike recognised the importance of practical, hands-on learning experiences in preparing students for the complexity of the business world (Hodge et al., 2014; Kolb & Kolb, 2005).

One of the earliest examples of experiential learning in business education could be traced back to the establishment of the Harvard Business School in 1908. The case method of the school, which involved the analysis and discussion of the students of real-world business scenarios, was a pioneering approach to bridging the gap between theory and practice (Garvin, 2003; Mesny, 2013). Throughout the 20th century, business schools increasingly incorporated experiential learning activities into the curricula such as internships, simulations and consulting projects (Gosen &

Washbush, 2004; Kosnik et al., 2013). These initiatives aimed to provide students with authentic learning experiences that would better prepare them for challenges and opportunities in the business world (McCarthy, 2016; Wurdinger & Carlson, 2010).

In recent decades, the demand for experiential learning in business education exponentially increased, which was driven by the rapidly changing landscape of global business and the increasing expectations of employers (Hodge et al., 2014; Jackson, 2015). Business schools responded by developing increasingly diverse and innovative experiential learning programmes frequently in collaboration with industry partners (Finch et al., 2016; Riebe et al., 2013). Currently, experiential learning is widely recognised as an essential component of business education with a growing body of research that demonstrates its positive impact on student learning outcomes, employability and career success (Bielefeldt, 2013; Gault et al., 2000; Grau et al., 2018). As the business world continues to evolve, the role of experiential learning in preparing the next generation of business leaders is likely to become even more critical (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; McCarthy, 2016).

2.3.2 Essence of Experiential Learning in Business Education

Experiential learning plays a vital role in business education, because it enables students to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. By engaging in hands-on, real-world learning experiences, students could develop the skills, competencies and mindsets necessary to succeed in the dynamic and complex world of business (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; McCarthy, 2016). The essence of experiential learning in business education is rooted in its ability to provide students with authentic, contextually relevant learning opportunities that mirror the challenges

and opportunities of the business world (Auster & Wylie, 2006; Kosnik et al., 2013). Through experiential activities, such as case studies, simulations, consulting projects and internships, students apply theoretical concepts to real-world scenarios, developed critical thinking and problem-solving skills and gained valuable insights into the internal operation of organisations (Grau et al., 2018; Helle et al., 2006). These learning experiences not only deepen the understanding of students of business concepts but also fosters the development of essential soft skills, such as communication, teamwork, leadership and adaptability, which employers highly value (Pfeffer & Fong, 2002; Robles, 2012). Experiential learning activities in business education provide students with opportunities to collaborate on projects, present ideas to stakeholders and navigate complex interpersonal dynamics. These experiences enable students to cultivate interpersonal and professional competencies necessary to thrive in the business world (Grau et al., 2018; Jackson, 2015). By engaging in experiential learning, students develop a deeper understanding of their strengths, weaknesses and learning preferences, which enhance self-awareness and metacognitive abilities (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; McCarthy, 2016).

Experiential learning in business education fosters a sense of engagement and ownership among students. When they are actively involved in their learning processes, they can perceive the relevance of their coursework to real-world challenges; thus, they are more likely to be motivated and invested in education (Auster & Wylie, 2006; Kosnik et al., 2013). This increased engagement leads to improved learning outcomes, high levels of satisfaction and a strong sense of personal and professional development (Grau et al., 2018; Helle et al., 2006). Through experiential activities, students develop critical thinking, problem-solving

and soft skills, while cultivating a sense of engagement and ownership in their learning processes. These outcomes highlight the crucial role of experiential learning in preparing business students for the challenges and opportunities of the modern workforce (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; McCarthy, 2016).

2.2.3 Teaching Framework of Experiential Learning in Business Education

The application of ELT in business education provides a robust framework for the design and implementation of effective learning experiences that foster the development of practical skills and knowledge. It includes the incorporation of teaching activities corresponding to each stage of the experiential learning cycle. Business educators create dynamic and engaging learning environments that support the active involvement, reflection and the acquisition of competencies necessary for success in the business world among students (Wurdinger & Carlson, 2010; Gentry, 1990). This approach enables students to explore, experiment and develop a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter while cultivating the competencies necessary for success in the business world (Kolb, 1984; Kolb & Kolb, 2017). The learning design prepares students for the challenges and opportunities of the modern business landscape, which enables them to become reflective, adaptable and competent professionals (Wurdinger & Carlson, 2010; Gentry, 1990).

In the concrete experience stage, business educators employ various activities that provide students with firsthand exposure to real-world business scenarios (Gentry, 1990; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Field trips and site visits enable students to observe and interact with professionals in action; thus, they gain practical insights into the internal operation of organisations and the application of theoretical concepts (Guo et al., 2016; Ruhanen, 2005). Business simulation and role-play immerse students in

realistic scenarios, which enables them to assume specific roles, make decisions and experience the consequences of their actions in a safe learning environment (Salas et al., 2009; Gilgeous & D'Cruz, 1996). Meanwhile, entrepreneurial projects provide students with hands-on experience in developing and running small businesses and applying concepts such as market analysis, financial management and marketing strategies (Kuckertz, 2013; Kickul et al., 2010).

During the reflective observation stage, business educators facilitate activities that encourage students to critically examine and analyse concrete experiences (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Boud et al., 1985). Journaling and reflective writing exercises enable students to document their thoughts, observations and emotions, thus, identifying patterns and themes that emerge from their experiences (Dehler & Edmonds, 2006; Pavlovich, 2007). Group discussion and debriefing provide opportunities for students to share insights, exchange perspectives and engage in collective sense-making, which deepens their understanding of the subject matter and its implications (Breunig, 2017; Borredon et al., 2011).

In the abstract conceptualisation stage, business educators employ activities that helped students organise and synthesise insights gained from their reflections, thus, forming theories and generalisations that could be applied to a broad range of situations (Kolb, 1984; Mezirow, 1991). Concept and mind mapping exercises enable students to visually represent relationships and interconnections among different concepts, theories and ideas (Novak, 1990; Eriksson & Hauer, 2004). Case studies and problem-solving exercises challenge students to analyse real or hypothetical business scenarios, apply theoretical concepts to identify problems, evaluate alternatives and propose solutions (Krain, 2016; Popil, 2011).

During the active experimentation stage, business educators provide opportunities for students to apply newly formed concepts and theories to new situations, which tests understanding and refines knowledge through an iterative process (Kolb, 1984; Beard & Wilson, 2013). Business projects and ventures allow students to develop and execute their initiatives, create business plans, conduct market research and implement strategies, which, thereby, refines practical skills and learning from the outcomes (Pittaway & Cope, 2007; Neck & Greene, 2011). Business consulting projects enable students to work with real organisations, apply knowledge and skills to solve specific challenges and provide recommendations (Heriot et al., 2008; Sciglimpaglia & Toole, 2009). Internship and work placement provide students with immersive experiences in actual business settings, which enable them to gain practical experience, apply their learning and build professional networks (Divine et al., 2007; Hergert, 2009).

Integrating these teaching activities within the experiential learning framework in business education fosters a comprehensive and holistic approach to learning that emphasises the interconnectedness between theory and practice (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Wurdinger & Carlson, 2010). This approach to learning design caters to the diverse needs and preferences of learners, which creates more engaging, inclusive and impactful learning environments that prepare students for the challenges and opportunities of the business world (Kolb, 1984; Beard & Wilson, 2013). Moreover, applying the experiential learning framework in business education promotes the development of metacognitive skills such as self-awareness, self-regulation and reflective practice (Flavell, 1979; Schön, 1983). By engaging in reflective observation and abstract conceptualisation, students became more aware of their thought processes, learning strategies and areas for improvement (Kolb & Kolb,

2005; Mezirow, 1991). This heightened self-awareness enables students to take greater control of their learning and adapt their approaches to meet the demands of different situations and challenges encountered in the business world (Kolb, 1984; Boud et al., 1985).

2.4 Key Formats and Methods of Experiential Learning in the Current Curricula for Business Education

2.4.1 Real-World Experiential Learning Activities

Real-world experiential learning activities form the cornerstone of contemporary business education by providing students with authentic, hands-on learning experiences that bridge the gap between theory and practice (Grau et al., 2018; Kosnik et al., 2013). These activities typically involve collaboration with industry partners, which enables students to engage with real businesses, solve genuine challenges and develop the skills and competencies valued by employers (Jackson, 2015; Riebe et al., 2013).

A few of the key formats and methods for real-world experiential learning in business education include the following:

(a) Industry-sponsored projects: students work on real projects provided by industry partners by applying knowledge and skills to solve authentic business problems. These projects may involve market research, product development, supply chain optimisation or other business functions (Cooper et al., 2004; Helle et al., 2006).

(b) Consulting projects: students act as consultants to real businesses by analysing organisational challenges and providing recommendations for improvement. This

format enables students to develop problem-solving, communication and project management skills while gaining exposure to various industries (Heriot et al., 2008; Sciglimpaglia & Toole, 2009).

(c) Internships and work placements: students undertake supervised work experiences in actual business settings, apply their learning in real-world contexts and gain valuable professional experience. This format helps students build networks, develop job-specific skills and enhance employability (Divine et al., 2007; Hergert, 2009).

(d) Service learning: students engage in community-based projects that address real-world issues while applying business concepts and skills. Towards this end, service learning projects may involve the development of marketing plans for non-profit organisations, creation of financial literacy programmes for underserved communities or other socially responsible initiatives (Godfrey et al., 2005; Yorio & Ye, 2012).

(e) Study abroad and international experiences: students gain exposure to diverse business practices, cultures and global perspectives if they participate in international study programmes or work experiences. In turn, these experiences help students develop cross-cultural competency, adaptability and a global mindset (Beddie et al., 2014; Tarrant et al., 2014).

2.4.2 Hypothetical Experiential Learning Activities

In addition to real-world experiential learning activities, the curricula for business education incorporate hypothetical experiential learning activities, which provide students with simulated learning experiences that mimic real-world scenarios (Salas et al., 2009; Lean et al., 2006). These activities offer a controlled environment in

which students apply theoretical concepts, develop skills and learn from experiences without the risk or constraint imposed by real-world engagement (Gosen & Washbush, 2004; Salas et al., 2009).

A few common hypothetical experiential learning activities in business education include the following:

(a) Case studies: students analyse real or fictional business scenarios, identify problems, evaluate alternatives and propose solutions. Case studies help students develop analytical, critical thinking and decision-making skills (Krain, 2016; Popil, 2011).

(b) Business simulations: students participate in computer-based or role-play simulations that mimic real-world business environments, make decisions and experience the consequences of their actions. Simulations help students develop strategic thinking, problem-solving and teamwork skills (Salas et al., 2009; Gilgeous & D'Cruz, 1996).

(c) Role-playing exercises: students assume specific roles, such as managers, customers or stakeholders and engage in simulated interactions or negotiations. Role-playing exercises help students develop communication, empathy and conflict resolution skills (Ruben, 1999; Sogunro, 2004).

(d) Business plan competitions: students develop and present business plans for hypothetical ventures and compete against peers. These competitions promote the development of entrepreneurial skills among students such as opportunity recognition, market analysis and pitch development (Bell et al., 2005; Honig, 2004).

(e) Capstone projects: students work on comprehensive, integrative projects that

required them to apply the knowledge and skills acquired throughout their business education. Capstone projects may involve the development of a new product, creation of a marketing campaign or analysis of the financial performance of a company (Gorman & Hanlon, 2005; Aller et al., 2008).

2.4.2.1 Benefits of Hypothetical Experiential Learning Activities to Students

Hypothetical experiential learning activities offer business students with several benefits that complement the learning outcomes of real-world experiential learning (Gosen & Washbush, 2004; Salas et al., 2009) as follows:

(a) Controlled learning environment: hypothetical activities provide a safe, controlled environment for students to experiment with different strategies, make decisions and learn from mistakes without real-world consequences (Gosen & Washbush, 2004; Salas et al., 2009).

(b) Focused skill development: Hypothetical activities can be designed to target specific skills or learning objectives, which allows students to focus on developing particular competencies such as decision-making, problem-solving or communication skills (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Kolb & Kolb, 2005).

c) Accessibility and scalability: hypothetical activities could be easily implemented in classroom settings, which requires less resources and logistical arrangements compared with real-world engagements. This aspect renders them more accessible and scalable, which enables a large number of students to participate (Gosen & Washbush, 2004; Lean et al., 2006).

(d) Standardisation and consistency: hypothetical activities could be standardised and replicated across student groups or cohorts, which ensures a consistent

learning experience and facilitates assessment and evaluation (Gosen & Washbush, 2004; Salas et al., 2009).

2.4.2.2 Limitations of Hypothetical Experiential Learning Activities to Students

Despite their benefits, hypothetical experiential learning activities have certain limitations compared with real-world experiential learning (Wurdinger & Carlson, 2009; Kolb & Kolb, 2005) as follows:

a) Lack of real-world complexity: hypothetical activities frequently simplify real-world scenarios by omitting the complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty that characterise actual business environments. Doing so may limit the ability of the students to develop the adaptability and contextual thinking skills required in the real-world (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Gosen & Washbush, 2004).

(b) Limited stakeholder interaction: hypothetical activities typically lack opportunities for students to interact with real stakeholders such as clients, customers or industry professionals. This aspect may limit the ability of students to develop interpersonal, communication and networking skills, which are critical for success in the business world (Dede, 1996; Gosen & Washbush, 2004).

(c) Decreased motivation and engagement: hypothetical activities may fail to provide the same level of motivation and engagement as those offered by real-world experiences. The reason is that students may perceive them as less relevant or impactful, which may limit the investment of students in the learning process and their ability to transfer learning to real-world contexts (Amabile & Kramer, 2011; Gosen & Washbush, 2004).

(d) Lack of industry-specific knowledge: hypothetical activities mainly focus on the

development of general business skills instead of specialised technical skills or industry-specific knowledge, which are valued by employers. As a result, the ability of students to develop job-specific competencies required for employability may be limited (Alshare & Sewailem, 2018; Salas et al., 2009).

2.4.3 Industry–Education Collaboration for Real-World Experiential Learning

2.4.3.1 Emergence of Industry–Education Partnerships in Business Education

The increasing demand for job-ready graduates has led to a significant increase in industry–education partnerships in business education (Bruneel et al., 2010; Perkmann et al., 2013). These partnerships offer a range of opportunities for students to engage in real-world experiential learning such as internships, consulting projects and mentorship programmes (Faria et al., 2009; Ankrah & Omar, 2015).

Industry–education partnerships benefit all stakeholders involved. Specifically, students gain exposure to real-world scenarios, networking opportunities and market-relevant experiences, which enhances employability and professional growth (Tomlinson, 2012; Tran, 2016). Employers could recruit job-ready graduates who possess an in-depth understanding of their operations, which ensures a seamless transition into the workforce (Bock & Chapman, 2018; Cappelli, 2008). Educational institutions could align their programmes with the evolving needs of the labour market, which enhances the success of graduates (Schneider & Deane, 2014; Artess et al., 2017).

2.4.3.2 Benefits of Industry–Education Collaboration with Real-World Experiential Learning to Students

Industry–education partnerships offer students with invaluable opportunities to interact with industry leaders, work on real organisational projects and gain exposure to the latest business practices and trends (Eyler, 2009; Grossman et al., 2001). A few of the key benefits of these collaborations are as follows:

a) Access to authentic projects and environments: collaboration with industry partners provides students with access to real-world projects, case studies and field experiences, which connects classroom concepts to professional practice (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Papamarcos, 2005).

(b) Mentorship from industry professionals: Students could benefit from guidance and insights from experienced professionals who share their expertise, leadership perspectives and advice on navigating contemporary career challenges (Rothman, 2020; Finley & McNair, 2013).

(c) Exposure to real-world complexity: engaging with live company projects immerse students in solving real organisational problems and operating in actual industry contexts, which prepares them for the complexity and uncertainty of the business world (Kolmos & Holgaard, 2010; Marsick & Watkins, 2001).

(d) Industry-specific knowledge and networks: collaboration with industry partners enables students to develop a specialised understanding of particular sectors, gain insider vocabulary and expand professional networks, which enhances their employability and career advancement opportunities (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Hoyle & Goffnett, 2013).

2.4.3.3 Challenges in Developing Experiential Learning With Industry Partnerships in the Business World

Despite the numerous benefits of industry–education partnerships, developing and sustaining meaningful collaborations could present the following challenges (Leidner & Kayworth, 2006; Cyert & Goodman, 1997):

(a) Cultural and institutional differences: reconciling the different priorities, timelines and organisational cultures of industry partners and educational institutions could be challenging, which requires mutual understanding and clear frameworks for partnerships (Bryson, 2018; Rosen & Digh, 2001).

(b) Legal and administrative challenges: collaboration may involve complex legal issues related to intellectual property, confidentiality and liability, which requires formal agreements and dedicated partnership managers to streamline processes (Galán-Muros & Plewa, 2016; Saunders & Bagilhole, 2000).

(c) Balance between educational objectives and industry needs: ensuring that experiential learning activities prioritise student learning outcomes while meeting the expectations of industry partners could be challenging and requires clear learning agreements and faculty oversight (Emslie, 2011; Bok, 2003).

(d) Sustainability and continuity: maintaining long-term partnerships amidst shifting industry priorities, economic fluctuations and leadership changes could be difficult. This aspect requires a strong relationship management and diversified partner networks (Perkmann et al., 2013; Cyert & Goodman, 1997).

2.4.3.4 Strategies for Building Successful Industry Partnerships for Experiential Learning in Business Education

To establish successful industry partnerships that provide enriching experiential learning opportunities, business educators could employ several strategies

(Cummings & Worley, 2014; Cyert & Goodman, 1997):

(a) Fostering open communication and shared vision: establishing a foundation of open communication and developing a shared vision for the partnership help align expectations and maintain focus on educational objectives (Riege & Lindsay, 2006; Rosen & Digh, 2001).

(b) Developing formal partnership agreements: codifying project parameters, learning objectives, responsibilities and intellectual property conditions in formal agreements provide structure and clarity for all stakeholders (Van der Valk & Constantelou, 2016; Saunders & Bagilhole, 2000).

(c) Ensuring strong faculty participation: maintaining strong faculty involvement in establishing educational foundations, constructing learning plans, monitoring student progress and integrating reflection are critical for ensuring that experiential learning activities meet academic standards (Knouse & Fontenot, 2008; Divine et al., 2007).

(d) Emphasising mutual value creation: highlighting the reciprocal benefits of the partnership, such as talent recruitment, faculty consultation and public relations, help sustain long-term commitments and expand collaboration opportunities (Freudenreich et al., 2020; Plewa et al., 2013).

2.4.3.5 Models of Successful Industry Partnerships in Business Education

Several institutions have developed thriving industry collaborations that serve as models for structured partner engagements centred on the enrichment of experiential learning (Wilson & Beard, 2013; Roodhouse, 2009).

(a) A cooperative education programme by Northeastern University: this programme

integrated six-month paid placements into degree programmes through long-term corporate partnerships. It offered career services coaching to students to extract learning while meeting employer needs (Sovilla & Varty, 2011).

(b) The School of Business of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology University: the school employed dedicated industry engagement professionals to cultivate strategic corporate relationships that facilitate student projects, competitions and mentoring and site visits with structured projects centred on partner goals while ensuring that learning objectives are met (Male & King, 2014).

(c) The co-op programme of the University of Waterloo: this programme used extensive co-op partnerships to provide career-relevant experiential learning with a dedicated co-op office that supported students and employers throughout placement (Donohue, 2010; Pretti & Fannon, 2018).

These cases illustrate that realising the full potential of industry collaboration requires the investment of resources and strategy into the continual fostering of mutually beneficial engagements with purposeful coordination grounded in educational objectives. In turn, industry partnerships provide an invaluable enrichment of experiential learning and career preparation (Finch et al., 2016; Roodhouse, 2009).

2.4.3.6 Challenges in Sustaining Meaningful Partnerships

Sustaining impactful collaborations requires the acknowledgement of the abovementioned challenges and the mindful promotion of a shared vision, trust and flexibility between partners. Thus, it focuses on the advancement of mutually beneficial educational goals (Rubin, 2009; Amey et al., 2007). Maintaining industry–education partnerships that provide enriching experiential learning over the long-

term requires the proactive mitigation of common obstacles (Chrislip, 2002; Amey et al., 2007) as follows:

(a) Ensuring meaningful learning experiences: activities need to be carefully monitored to ensure they provide valuable learning experiences for students instead of simply benefitting industry partners. Well-structured learning agreements, close faculty supervision and regular reviews based on learning rubrics are vital for the maintenance of the integrity of the experiential learning process (Emslie, 2011; Perlin, 2011).

(b) Preserving faculty governance and priorities: faculty need to arbitrate industry desires against academic goals by upholding educational standards. Curriculum advisory boards with diverse stakeholders could help secure balanced input, while institutional policies should prevent external funding from skewing teaching priorities (Emslie, 2011; Bok, 2003).

(c) Mitigating faculty burnout: the intensive coordination demands of experiential partnerships could lead to faculty burnout. Providing logistical support, streamlining administrative processes and maintaining reasonable activity loads can help sustain faculty commitment (Simons et al., 2012; Eyler, 2009).

(d) Ensuring partnership continuity: shifts in company priorities, economic fluctuations and leadership changes could threaten partnership continuity. Memorandums of understanding, dedicated relationship managers and multi-partner networks can help foster long-term bonds and provide sustainability through diversification (Perkmann et al., 2013; Cyert & Goodman, 1997).

Table 2.1 Compares and contrasts between the major characteristics of real-world and hypothetical experiential learning activities along several dimensions.

Dimension	Real-World Experiential Learning Activities	Hypothetical Experiential Learning Activities
Focal persons	Involves interaction with real clients, customers or industry professionals	Typically involves simulated or fictional characters
Context	Authentic, real-world business environments	Controlled, simulated environments that mimic real-world situations
Complexity	Exposes students to real-world complexities, ambiguities and uncertainties	Typically simplifies real-world situations by omitting certain complexities
Stakeholder interaction	Provides opportunities to interact with real stakeholders	Typically lacks interaction with real stakeholders
Risk	Involves real risks and consequences	Provides a safe space to experiment without real-world consequences
Skill development	Develops job-specific technical skills and industry-specific knowledge	Typically focuses on the development of general business skills instead of specialised knowledge

Motivation and engagement	Provides high levels of motivation and engagement due to real-world relevance	May not provide the same levels of motivation and engagement as those of real-world experiences
Feedback	Real-time, typically from actual stakeholders	Delayed, typically from instructors or peers
Accessibility	May pose logistical constraints and resource requirements	Easily implemented in classroom settings; more accessible and scalable
Consistency	Each experience is unique with variations in learning outcomes	Can be standardised and replicated across student groups
Resource requirements	High, including time, money and real-world resources	Variable; typically lower; can be conducted with minimal resources

2.5 Role of Experiential Learning in Developing Soft and Hard Skills in Business Education

2.5.1 Critical Role of Soft and Hard Skills in Business Education

In the contemporary business landscape, the development of soft and hard skills is crucial for the success of business professionals (Wats & Wats, 2022; Robles, 2012). Soft skills encompass personal attributes, social skills, communication abilities and emotional intelligence, which enable individuals to collaborate effectively, demonstrate leadership, solve problems and adapt to change. Alternatively, hard

skills refer to technical competencies and knowledge specific to a particular job or industry such as financial analysis, market research and project management (Wats & Wats, 2022; Robles, 2012).

The distinction between soft and hard skills is a fundamental concept in business education, as employers increasingly recognise the value of well-rounded graduates who possessed technical expertise and interpersonal competency (Gitting et al., 2020; Robles, 2012). The evolving job market places a premium on soft skills that enable individuals to navigate complex organisational dynamics and thrive in collaborative work environments (Wats & Wats, 2022; Robles, 2012).

2.5.2 Role of Experiential Learning in Developing Hard and Soft Real-World Practical Skills

Experiential learning plays a vital role in fostering the development of hard and soft skills in business education (Robles, 2012; Hodge et al., 2014). By engaging students in hands-on learning activities that mirror real-world scenarios, experiential learning challenges students to apply theoretical knowledge, develop practical skills and cultivate essential interpersonal competencies (Budhai, 2021; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Through experiential learning, students can acquire and refine hard skills, such as financial modelling, data analysis and marketing campaign development, by working on authentic business projects and case studies (Lee et al., 1995; Beard & Wilson, 2013). These experiences enable students to bridge the gap between theory and practice; as such, they develop the technical proficiency and problem-solving abilities valued by employers (Gitting et al., 2020; Hodge et al., 2014).

Experiential learning activities provide opportunities for students to develop crucial soft skills such as communication, teamwork, leadership and adaptability (Kolb &

Kolb, 2005; Beard & Wilson, 2013). By collaborating on group projects, presenting ideas to stakeholders and navigating complex interpersonal dynamics, students can cultivate the emotional intelligence and social competencies necessary for success in the business world (Gitting et al., 2020; Hodge et al., 2014). Despite the recognised importance of experiential learning in developing hard and soft skills, a research gap remains in examining the specific impacts of different experiential learning activities on skill acquisition (Gitting et al., 2020; Hodge et al., 2014). Thus, further studies are required to assess the optimisation of various experiential learning formats to enhance the development of technical and interpersonal competencies within the curricula for business education (Gitting et al., 2020; Hodge et al., 2014).

2.5.3 Integration of Hard and Soft Skills in Business Education Programmes

The integration of hard and soft skills is a cornerstone of effective business education (Cimatti, 2016; Robles, 2012). Educational programmes and strategies need to strike a balance between these skill sets to produce well-rounded graduates who could thrive in diverse business contexts (Schoemaker, 2008; Hodge et al., 2014). Instructional approaches, such as project-based learning, case study, internship and simulation are increasingly being used to foster the development of hard and soft skills (Steinert et al., 2006; Beard & Wilson, 2013). These experiential learning activities provide students with opportunities to apply theoretical concepts, collaborate and engage in problem-solving and decision-making processes that emulate real-world business challenges (Schoemaker, 2008; Hodge et al., 2014).

To ensure the effectiveness of these approaches, business education programmes need to continuously evaluate and refine teaching methods and assessment tools

(Steinert et al., 2006; Beard & Wilson, 2013). The integration of reflection activities, feedback mechanisms and skill-based assessments can help educators track student progress, identify areas for improvement and adapt the curricula to meet the evolving needs of the business world (Benjamin & O'Reilly, 2011; Robles, 2012).

2.5.4 The Research Gap in Soft and Hard Skill Focuses on Experiential Learning in Business Education

Research should examine the potential differences in the impacts of experiential learning on the development of hard and soft skill across student populations and business disciplines (Gitting et al., 2020; Hodge et al., 2014). Understanding the influence of factors, such as student demographics, learning style and programme specialisation, on the effectiveness of experiential learning in fostering specific skills could help educators tailor approaches to meet the diverse needs of students (Gitting et al., 2020; Hodge et al., 2014).

Addressing these research gaps is crucial for advancing the field of business education and ensuring that graduates are equipped with the appropriate combination of hard and soft skills to succeed in the rapidly evolving business landscape (Gitting et al., 2020; Hodge et al., 2014). By providing empirical evidence on the impact of experiential learning on skill development, researchers could inform the design and implementation of effective business education programmes that prepare students for the challenges and opportunities of the modern workplace (Gitting et al., 2020; Hodge et al., 2014).

2.6 Benefits and Challenges of Integrating Experiential Learning in Business Education

2.6.1 Meeting the Demands of Stakeholders and the Job Market

The integration of experiential learning in business education is driven by the increasing demands of various stakeholders, including students, employers and educational institutions (Kang et al., 2010; Hodge et al., 2014; Leal-Rodriguex et al., 2017). Business schools are under pressure to provide learning experiences that effectively bridge the gap between the classroom and the real business world, thus, preparing graduates to excel in a rapidly changing and complex business environment (Kang et al., 2010; Hodge et al., 2014; Smith & Worsfold, 2015).

Students and employers hold high expectations for the integration of experiential learning activities within business curricula, because these activities are viewed as crucial for developing the practical skills and competencies necessary for success in the business landscape (Hakeem, 2001; Kang et al., 2010; Hodge et al., 2014; Obi et al., 2021). Experiential learning enables students to actively engage with the subject matter, which enhances their understanding and application of key concepts (Hakeem, 2001; Kang et al., 2010; Hodge et al., 2014; Obi et al., 2021).

2.6.2 Meeting the Demand for Real-World Practical Skills Through the Experiential Learning Approach

The integration of experiential learning in business education is also driven by the recognition that students need to acquire practical skills and hands-on experience to thrive in the dynamic and highly competitive business world (Kang et al., 2010; Kolb & Kolb, 2006; Matsuo, 2015). Traditional classroom instruction alone is typically insufficient in preparing students for the multifaceted challenges that they will encounter in their careers (Kang et al., 2010; Kolb & Kolb, 2006; Matsuo, 2015).

Experiential learning enables students to apply theoretical knowledge to real-life

scenarios by developing problem-solving abilities, adaptability and effective communication skills (Kolb & Kolb, 2006; Matsuo, 2015). These activities also promote the development of transferable skills, such as teamwork, leadership and project management, which employers across industries highly value (Rexeisen & Garrison, 2013; Stirling et al., 2016).

As students engage in group projects, case studies, simulations, internships and other experiential learning initiatives, they gain exposure to real-world challenges and learn to navigate complex business scenarios (Bliemel & Ali-Hassan, 2014; Pratt & Verreault, 2016). This hands-on approach to learning equips students with the skills and competencies sought by employers, which ultimately enhances employability and career prospects (Helyer & Lee, 2014; Jackson, 2013; Alpert et al., 2009).

2.6.3 Experiential Learning and Employability

Enhancing graduate employability is a key driver for the adoption of experiential learning in business education (Andrews & Higson, 2008; Jackson, 2016). Experiential learning not only build the technical capabilities of students but also cultivates the soft skills and real-world experience demanded by employers (Seow et al., 2019). Employer surveys consistently rank skills, such as communication, teamwork, critical thinking and intercultural fluency, along with field-specific technical aptitudes as key requirements for hiring (Hirudayaraj et al., 2021; Succi & Canovi, 2020). Experiential learning organically develops these competencies through group projects, presentations, simulations and reflections (Budhai, 2021; Jackson, 2016).

However, students require guidance in understanding and articulating the career-

relevant skills gained from experiential activities (Knemeyer & Murphy, 2002; Beard, 2007). Reflection needs to connect experiences to employability competencies and career services should assist students in framing experiential activities in resumes and interviews to signal readiness (Smith et al., 2009; Stirling et al., 2016).

Collaboration between experiential programmes and career services is vital for maximising employability (Dacre Pool & Sewell, 2007; Blackwell et al., 2001). Coordinated messaging between departments raises student awareness of the workplace benefits of experiential learning, while shared employer pipelines provide talent and experiential opportunities (Jackson, 2016; Lowden et al., 2011). Although experiential learning is widely recognised to improve graduate employability, assessing the direct impact of specific activities on job placement is challenging (Beard & Wilson, 2006; Wilton, 2012).

Qualitative data, such as surveys that elicit student perceptions of the contribution of experiential activities to career readiness competencies and interviews with graduates and employers on the perceived strengths of experiential learning, could provide valuable insights (Kayes, 2002; Beard, 2007). Surveys consistently demonstrate that employers prefer to hire graduates with internship, extracurricular leadership and study abroad experience (Gault et al., 2010; Molseed et al., 2003). Job placement rates also tend to be higher for co-op programmes that integrate work experiences (Weisz & Smith, 2011; Drysdale et al., 2015). Moreover, students report that internships and service projects improved career preparation (Eyler et al., 2001; Knouse & Fontenot, 2008). Project-based learning exhibit empirical links to teamwork, problem-solving and self-efficacy gains that underlie employability (Thomas, 2001; Bell, 2010). Studying abroad also correlates with improved

communication skills, cultural awareness and adaptability, which aided in success in the workplace (Paige et al., 2009; Potts, 2015). Despite the existence of confounding variables, these trends point to targeted competency development through experiential learning (Knouse et al., 1999; Wilton, 2012).

2.6.4 Benefits of Experiential Learning for Business Students

2.6.4.1 Positive Influence of Experiential Learning on the Behaviour of Students Towards Work and Life Aspects

Scholars have found that experiential learning exerts have a positive influence on the behaviour of students towards various aspects of work and life (Kirkpatrick, 1996; Noe, 1986). The literature has pointed out that students who participated in experiential learning activities are more likely to transfer their learning to real-world situations and apply their knowledge and skills in meaningful ways (Mathieu et al., 1992; Holton, 1996; Alliger et al., 1997). This transfer of learning is facilitated by the authentic nature of experiential learning activities, which provides students with opportunities to practice and refine their skills in contexts that closely resemble those that they will encounter in their professional and personal lives (Cheng & Ho, 2001; Sitzmann et al., 2008). By engaging in hands-on, real-world learning experiences, students develop valuable skills and competencies that contribute to professional development and personal growth (Kolb, 1984; McCarthy, 2016).

Experiential learning was associated with increased job satisfaction, work performance and career success (Kirkpatrick, 1996; Noe, 1986). Students who engage in experiential learning activities are more likely to develop a range of transferable skills, such as problem-solving, critical thinking, communication and teamwork, which are highly valued by employers (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Smith, 2022).

These skills not only enhance the employability of students but also contribute to overall success and satisfaction in their selected careers (Mathieu et al., 1992; Holton, 1996). Empirical studies supported the positive impact of experiential learning on the professional development of students. For example, Burch et al. (2019) found that business students who participated in experiential learning activities, such as internships and consulting projects, demonstrated improved job performance and career advancement. Jackson (2015) reported that graduates who engaged in work-integrated learning experiences during their studies displayed high levels of employability and job satisfaction.

In addition to the benefits for the workplace, previous studies demonstrated that experiential learning exerts a positive impact on the personal growth and development of students (Boud et al., 1985; Dewey, 1938). By engaging in experiential learning activities, students gain opportunities to explore their interests, values and strengths and to develop an increased sense of self-awareness and personal identity (Jarvis, 1987; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). This self-discovery process could lead to increased confidence, resilience and adaptability, which are essential qualities for navigating the complexities of modern life (Boud et al., 1985; Dewey, 1938). Other studies investigated the positive influence of experiential learning on the personal growth and life skills of students. In particular, Fede et al. (2018) mentioned that students who participated in service learning projects displayed increased self-awareness, empathy and civic engagement. Moreover, Liang et al. (2020) cited that business students who engaged in experiential learning activities, such as case competitions and entrepreneurial ventures, demonstrated improved communication, collaboration and leadership skills.

2.6.4.2 Enhanced Engagement and Retention

Experiential learning initiatives increase student engagement and information retention (Kolb, 1984; Astin, 1993). In other words, by directly involving students in the learning process, they are more likely to internalise and remember information (Kolb, 1984; Astin, 1993). This hands-on approach ensures that students are active participants in their educational journey instead of passive recipients of information (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Stirling et al., 2016).

2.6.4.3 Development of Critical Transferable Skills

The development of transferable skills, such as problem-solving, adaptability and collaboration, is a core advantage of experiential learning (Sroufe & Ramos, 2015; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). These skills are applicable not only within the business sector but also across industries and roles, which renders students more versatile and marketable (Sroufe & Ramos, 2015; Kolb & Kolb, 2005).

2.6.4.4 Bridging Theory and Practice

Experiential learning serves as a bridge between theoretical concepts and practical application (Khasawneh, 2024; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). This aspect is crucial in business education in which understanding the practical implications of theoretical knowledge is essential for success in the professional realm (Khasawneh, 2024; Kolb & Kolb, 2005).

2.6.4.5 Preparation for Real-World Challenges

By simulating real-world challenges, experiential learning prepares students for the complexities of the business world (Avramenko, 2012; Beard & Wilson, 2013). This preparation is invaluable, because it equips students with firsthand experience and

insight into the dynamics of the business environment (Avramenko, 2012; Beard & Wilson, 2013).

2.6.5 Challenges of Experiential Learning for Existing Business Curricula

Although the benefits of experiential learning are well-established, effectively implementing experiential activities within business curricula presents several challenges (Wurdinger & Carlson, 2010; Eyler, 2009).

One major constraint is the extensive time and resource required to organise impactful experiential learning initiatives (Wurdinger & Carlson, 2010; Eyler, 2009). Activities, such as simulations, collaborative projects, competitions and field trips, involve a considerable effort from instructors in terms of design, preparation and facilitation (Divine et al., 2007; Hynie et al., 2011). Without adequate institutional support and incentives, faculty may be deterred from adopting experiential approaches (Wurdinger & Carlson, 2010; Eyler, 2009).

The assessment of experiential learning presents another hurdle in implementation (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Beard, 2010). In contrast to traditional testing methods, experiential learning requires an authentic, performance-based assessment of skills and competencies (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Beard, 2010). Thus, developing appropriate evaluation rubrics that aligns with learning outcomes requires expertise; in this context, the lack of academic rigour is a common criticism of experiential learning activities (Huba & Freed, 2000; Qualters, 2010). Faculty may struggle to achieve balance between concrete experiential development and the fulfilment of defined curricular standards and benchmarks (Thomas, 2000; Gentry, 1990).

Experiential learning inherently involves uncertainty and risk compared with structured classroom lessons. Open-ended projects may not progress as

envisioned, while internships could involve negative experiences. For this reason, educators need to formulate contingency plans and support structures to mitigate issues (Garvey, 2004; Wurdinger & Carlson, 2010). Students accustomed to traditional methods may also resist the self-directedness of experiential learning. ,adopting experiential approaches may also lead to wide inequities, if access to activities, such as unpaid internships, are dependent on socioeconomic status, then underserved students lose opportunities to develop critical skills, programmes need to address barriers to inclusion and provide need-based scholarships or alternative options (Perna, 2011; Winkler, 2009).

While experiential learning delivers immense value, it requires careful planning, resource and continued adjustment to maximise benefits while overcoming potential pitfalls. Business educators need to navigate these challenges to effectively integrate experiential learning into the curricula and provide students with the skills and experiences necessary for success in the modern business world (Wurdinger & Carlson, 2010; Eyler, 2009).

2.7 Conclusion and Research Gaps

The transformative potential of experiential learning in equipping students with the skills, knowledge and competencies necessary to succeed in the dynamic and ever-evolving business world highlights its significance and impact on business education (Davis, 2022; Hodge et al., 2014). The literature demonstrates the multifaceted benefits of experiential learning, including enhanced student engagement, improved academic performance, development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills and increased employability prospects (Wilson, 2021; Hodge et al., 2014). By

immersing students in authentic business contexts and challenging them to apply knowledge to real-world situations, experiential learning promotes an in-depth understanding of business concepts and fosters the practical skills that are highly sought by employers (Smith, 2023; Kolb & Kolb, 2005).

The literature on business education has played a crucial role in shaping the design of the current research, particularly in terms of the focus on experiential learning and its impact on student motivation and satisfaction. Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) (Kolb, 1984) and Dewey's theory of experience and education (Dewey, 1938) have provided the foundational framework for understanding the importance of authentic, meaningful, and reflective learning experiences in promoting student engagement and growth (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Beard, 2010). These theories emphasize the central role of experience in the learning process and highlight the need for learners to actively engage with their environment, reflect on their experiences, and construct new knowledge and skills (Kolb & Kolb, 2017).

Moreover, the literature on the effectiveness of experiential learning in business education has informed the selection of key variables and relationships to be examined in the current study. Previous research has demonstrated the positive impact of experiential learning activities on various student outcomes, such as motivation, satisfaction, skill development, and career readiness (Hodge et al., 2014; Jackson, 2015; Burch et al., 2019). These findings have guided the inclusion of motivation and satisfaction as primary dependent variables in the current study, as well as the examination of domain knowledge improvement and positive influence on work/life aspects as additional outcomes of interest.

The literature has also highlighted the importance of considering individual

differences and contextual factors in the design and implementation of experiential learning activities (Kolb & Kolb, 2013; McCarthy, 2016). Studies have shown that factors such as gender, work experience, learning styles, and cultural background can influence students' preferences, perceptions, and outcomes in experiential learning settings (Fallan & Opstad, 2016; Huang, 2013; Kayes & Kayes, 2007). These findings have informed the inclusion of gender and years of working experience as independent variables in the current study, as well as the exploration of potential differences across educational programmes and levels.The abovementioned studies consistently highlighted the positive impact of experiential learning on student motivation and satisfaction, which are two crucial factors that play a significant role in determining the overall success and effectiveness of any educational endeavour (Sverdlik et al., 2018; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Research grounded in SDT indicated that experiential learning activities that foster autonomy, competence and relatedness could significantly enhance student motivation, which encourages them to take a more active and engaged role in the learning process (Davis, 2023; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Studies that drew on EVT and GOT further supported these findings, which demonstrates that experiential learning activities that are aligned with the personal and professional goals of students and that provide opportunities for skill development and mastery experience are more likely to enhance motivation and engagement (Eccles, 1983; Dweck, 1986; McCarthy, 2016; Morris, 2020).

Despite the growing body of evidence that supports the effectiveness of experiential learning in business education, this literature review also identified several notable research gaps that warrant further investigation. First, a scarcity exists in empirical studies that examine differences in the impacts of various formats of experiential

learning activities on student satisfaction and motivation (Lim & Morris, 2009; Hodge et al., 2014). Although the existing research established the overall benefits of experiential learning, a need emerged for more a nuanced investigation into the differential influence of specific types of activities, such as simulations, case studies, internships and service learning projects, on student outcomes (Gosen & Washbush, 2004; Kosnik et al., 2013; Helle et al., 2006). The current study aims to address these research gap by investigating the relationship between different experiential learning activities (real and hypothetical) and student motivation and satisfaction with learning. It also intends to explore the impact of experiential learning on the development of hard and soft skills in business courses. By providing a granular understanding of the relative effectiveness of various formats of experiential learning, the current study could inform the design and implementation of targeted and impactful educational interventions (McCarthy, 2016; Morris, 2020).

Second, the literature review revealed the need for a comprehensive understanding of the influence of the characteristics of students, such as demographics, subjects and programmes, on the outcomes of experiential learning activities (Hodge et al., 2014; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). While a few studies demonstrated the role of individual differences in experiential learning (Kolb & Kolb, 2013; McCarthy, 2016), studies that systematically examined the interaction of these factors with different types of activities to shape student motivation, satisfaction and learning outcomes remain few. By evaluating student motivation and satisfaction across control groups, the current study aims to provide a nuanced and contextualised understanding of the impact of experiential learning on diverse student populations. At the same time, this knowledge could inform the development of inclusive and equitable experiential learning practices that cater to the needs of all learners (Perna, 2011; Winkler, 2009).

In addition to addressing these specific research gaps, the study also aims to contribute to the broad theoretical discourse on experiential learning in higher education. By grounding the investigation in well-established theories, such as SDT (Deci & Ryan, 1985; 2018), EVT (Eccles, 1983) and GOT (Dweck, 1986), the study endeavours to provide a robust and integrative framework for understanding the complex interplay among experiential learning, student motivation, satisfaction and self-efficacy. This theoretical integration could advance the current understanding of the psychological mechanisms that underlie the effectiveness of experiential learning and inform the development of comprehensive and evidence-based models (Kolb & Kolb, 2017; Morris, 2020).

The multifaceted aims of the study reflect the complexity and multidimensional nature of experiential learning in business education. This study endeavours to provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the factors that influence the effectiveness of experiential learning (Kolb, 2014; Hodge et al., 2014). Towards this end, it systematically investigated the relationships among levels of satisfaction and motivation in students, impacts of the nature of the subject on experiential learning outcomes, differences in changes in satisfaction and motivation across student characteristics and the self-assessed outcomes of students. These insights could inform the design and implementation of targeted, learner-centred and contextually relevant experiential learning initiatives that optimise learning outcomes and prepare students for the challenges of the modern business world (McCarthy, 2016; Morris, 2020).

The contributions of this research encompass literature contributions and implications for educators in the business field. By addressing the scarcity of

empirical evidence on the link between various types of experiential learning activities and student motivation and satisfaction and by providing a comprehensive and theoretically grounded analysis, these insights could contribute to the development of refined and integrative theoretical models of experiential education that consider the complex interplay among individual, contextual and pedagogical factors (Kolb & Kolb, 2017; Morris, 2020).

For business educators, the findings could provide valuable insights for understanding the link between learning motivation and satisfaction in experiential learning. The results could also be used to identify effective strategies for adopting experiential learning approaches and facilitate the adjustment and selection of effective course designs for relevant experiential learning activities. By highlighting the relative effectiveness of different formats of experiential learning, the study could help educators make informed decisions about the types of activities to incorporate into courses on the basis of specific learning objectives and student populations (McCarthy, 2016; Morris, 2020). Furthermore, by shedding light on potential discrepancies between instructor goals and student experiences, the research could encourage educators to engage in reflective and responsive teaching practices that prioritise the needs and perspectives of learners (Kolb & Kolb, 2017; Biggs & Tang, 2011).

In conclusion, the literature review highlighted the transformative potential of experiential learning in business education and identified critical gaps in the literature. Thus, the current study aims to address these gaps by providing empirical evidence on the relationship of experiential learning activities with student motivation and satisfaction with the consideration of the influence of nature of the

subject, student characteristics and the self-assessed outcomes of students. By critically and systematically assessing the underlying constructs of the effectiveness of experiential learning, this research intends to contribute to the advancement of experiential learning practices in business education and provide valuable insights for educators in the field.

The significance of this research lies in its potential to shape the future of business education by promoting a more evidence-based and student-centred approach to experiential learning. The findings could contribute to the ongoing efforts to cultivate more effective experiential learning outcomes and enhance the training of instructors in business education. In this manner, doing so could help to ensure that the next generation of business leaders is equipped with the skills, knowledge and competencies required to thrive in an ever-changing and increasingly complex business world (Beard & Wilson, 2006; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). By providing a nuanced and contextualised understanding of the factors that influence the effectiveness of experiential learning, the study could inform the development of targeted and responsive educational interventions that cater to the diverse needs of learners and optimise motivation, satisfaction and learning outcome (McCarthy, 2016; Morris, 2020).

Furthermore, the insights gained from this research hold the potential to extend beyond the realm of business education and contribute to the broad discourse on experiential learning in higher education. The study could provide valuable guidance for educators and administrators who seek to implement experiential learning initiatives in other fields, which highlights the importance of the consideration of student characteristics and the adoption of experiential learning activities to specific

needs across disciplines (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Hodge et al., 2014). By advancing the understanding of the psychological mechanisms that underlie the effectiveness of experiential learning, the study could contribute to the development of comprehensive and evidence-based models for experiential education that are applicable to various educational contexts (Kolb & Kolb, 2017; Morris, 2020).

In addition to its academic contributions, this research poses significant practical implications for the business world. By providing an in-depth understanding of how experiential learning could be leveraged to promote the development of key competencies and skills, this study could help inform the development of effective partnerships between business schools and industry partners. Doing so could lead to the creation of meaningful and impactful experiential learning opportunities for students (Sattler et al., 2011; Hodge et al., 2014). These collaborations could foster the development of work-ready graduates who possess the practical skills, knowledge and attributes valued by employers, which, thereby, enhances employability and career prospects (Jackson, 2015; Riebe et al., 2013).

Moreover, the findings could present implications for policymakers and accreditation bodies in the field of business education. By providing empirical evidence on the factors that influence the success of experiential learning activities, the study could help to inform the development of robust and evidence-based policies and accreditation criteria for experiential learning in business education. In this manner, it contributes to the overall advancement of the field and the promotion of best practices across business schools and programmes (Hodge et al., 2014; Kolb & Kolb, 2017). These policies could encourage the adoption of learner-centred and contextually relevant experiential learning practices that prioritise student motivation,

satisfaction and learning outcomes, such that the quality and impact of business education are enhanced (McCarthy, 2016; Morris, 2020).

In summary, the literature review underscored the vital role of experiential learning in business education and highlighted the need for further research to address critical gaps in the understanding of the factors that influence its effectiveness. The study aims to make significant contributions to theory and practice by providing a comprehensive and nuanced investigation of the relationships between the nature and format of the experiential learning activities, student characteristics, instructors' objectives and learning outcomes. This research holds the potential to shape the future of business education and contribute to the broad discourse on experiential learning in higher education. To do so, it intends to advance knowledge on the psychological mechanisms that underlie the effectiveness of experiential learning and inform the development of targeted and responsive educational interventions. Ultimately, the insights gained from this study could help to ensure that business students are equipped with the skills, knowledge and competencies needed to thrive in an ever-changing and increasingly complex business world. At the same time, they could help inform the development of effective partnerships between business schools, industry partners and policymakers to promote the adoption of best practices in experiential learning.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1 Research Design

3.1.1 Introduction: Mixed Methods

This chapter provides a detailed account of the research methodology and design used to investigate the impact of various experiential learning activities on student motivation and satisfaction in business education. The research design integrates quantitative and qualitative methods, which, thereby, provides a comprehensive examination of the research problem.

Previous studies recognised the missing constructs of the format of experiential course learning and the subject nature in pedagogical studies on experiential learning in business education, which vary according to student motivation and satisfaction. To mitigate this research gap, this study adopted the mixed-method approach to validate the missing constructs.

The mixed-method research is a type of investigation that incorporates quantitative and qualitative data collection, analysis and interpretation in a single or multiple studies to examine the same subject matter (Leech, 2006). It exists on a spectrum, which ranges from unmixed (or single-method designs) to entirely mixed methods in which designs that are partially mixed are located elsewhere in between single- and fully mixed method designs (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2004).

As Creswell and Clark (2018) emphasise a mixed methods study will call for complete and rigorous qualitative and quantitative research methods, which includes the process of collecting data. When designing a mixed-method inquiry, researchers must adhere to this standard. Specifically, Creswell and Clark (2018) advise researchers to ‘advance a qualitative strand that includes rigorous qualitative

data collection procedures and a quantitative strand that incorporates rigorous quantitative data collection procedures'. By following this guidance, the research intends to embrace high levels of methodological rigour in the qualitative and quantitative *strands* or components of the mixed design.

Grounding the study in robust data collection techniques across interpretive and positivistic approaches ensures that the mixed-method approach fulfils scientific standards. In summary, according to methodological authorities, the mixed-method design necessitates the rigorous application of the principles of qualitative and quantitative data acquisition throughout the research process (Creswell & Clark, 2018).

Instead of fully mixed designs from the research objective to data collection, analytics and the type of inference, the selected mixed-method approach is called 'partially mixed sequential exploratory design' with reference to the three-dimensional typology of mixed-method design by Leech et al. (2006). The sequential exploratory design is a two-phase approach in which qualitative data are first collected followed by the collection and analysis of quantitative data (Creswell, 2003, Chan, 2022).

The decision to use a partially mixed sequential exploratory design is based on its capacity to use the advantages of qualitative and quantitative approaches while mitigating their individual limitations. Prioritising the collection of qualitative data enables researchers to obtain a more profound comprehension of the phenomena under study (Chan, 2022). This approach facilitates the identification of crucial themes, patterns and factors that may not have been evident when merely relying on quantitative analysis. This first qualitative phase may also assist in guiding the

creation of specific and pertinent quantitative measures to ensure that the succeeding quantitative phase is firmly based on the practical experiences and viewpoints of the people involved in the research (Creswell, 2003; Chan, 2022).

3.1.2 Partially Mixed Sequential Exploratory Approach

The partially mixed sequential exploratory strategy is a robust research design that combines the advantages of qualitative and quantitative methodologies to obtain a thorough comprehension of a phenomena (Creswell, 2003; Chan, 2022).

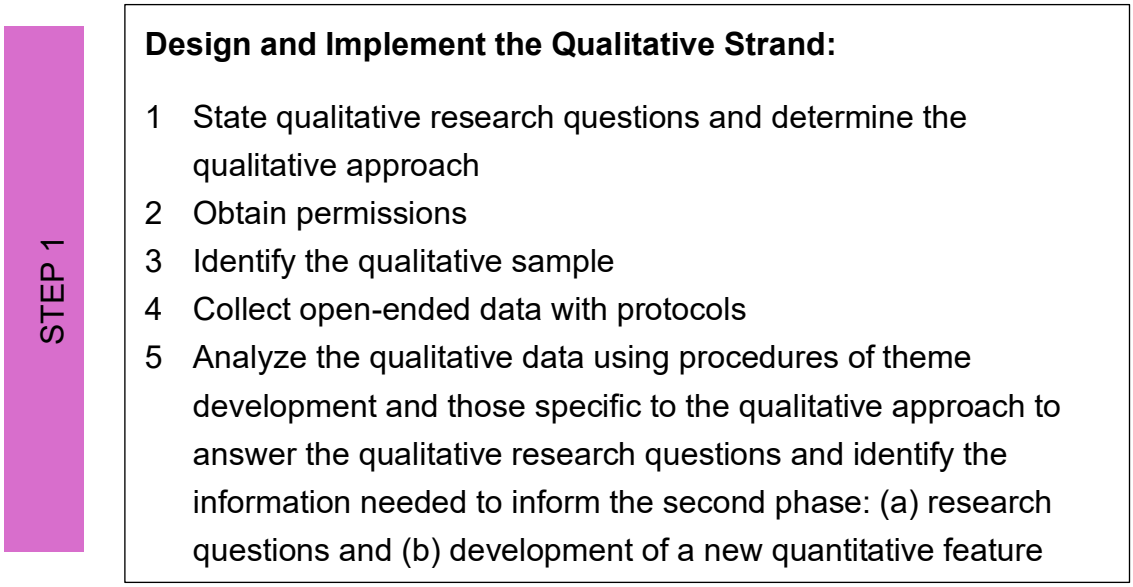
The intent of this design is to leverage the first stage of the qualitative study to shape and develop the subsequent questionnaire content of the quantitative phase (Greene et al., 1989). This design primarily aims to create and implement quantitative measures, surveys, interventions, digital tools or new variables rooted in the qualitative data. An important benefit of this strategy is that it enables researchers to include the quantitative portion of the study in accordance with the culture or setting of the participants instead of only adopting measures from the existing literature without the necessary adjustments. Researchers can use this approach to enhance the probability of the constructs being assessed as relevant and significant using the sample group (Creswell et al, 2017). Considering various contextual aspects while studying complicated and diverse phenomena is crucial.

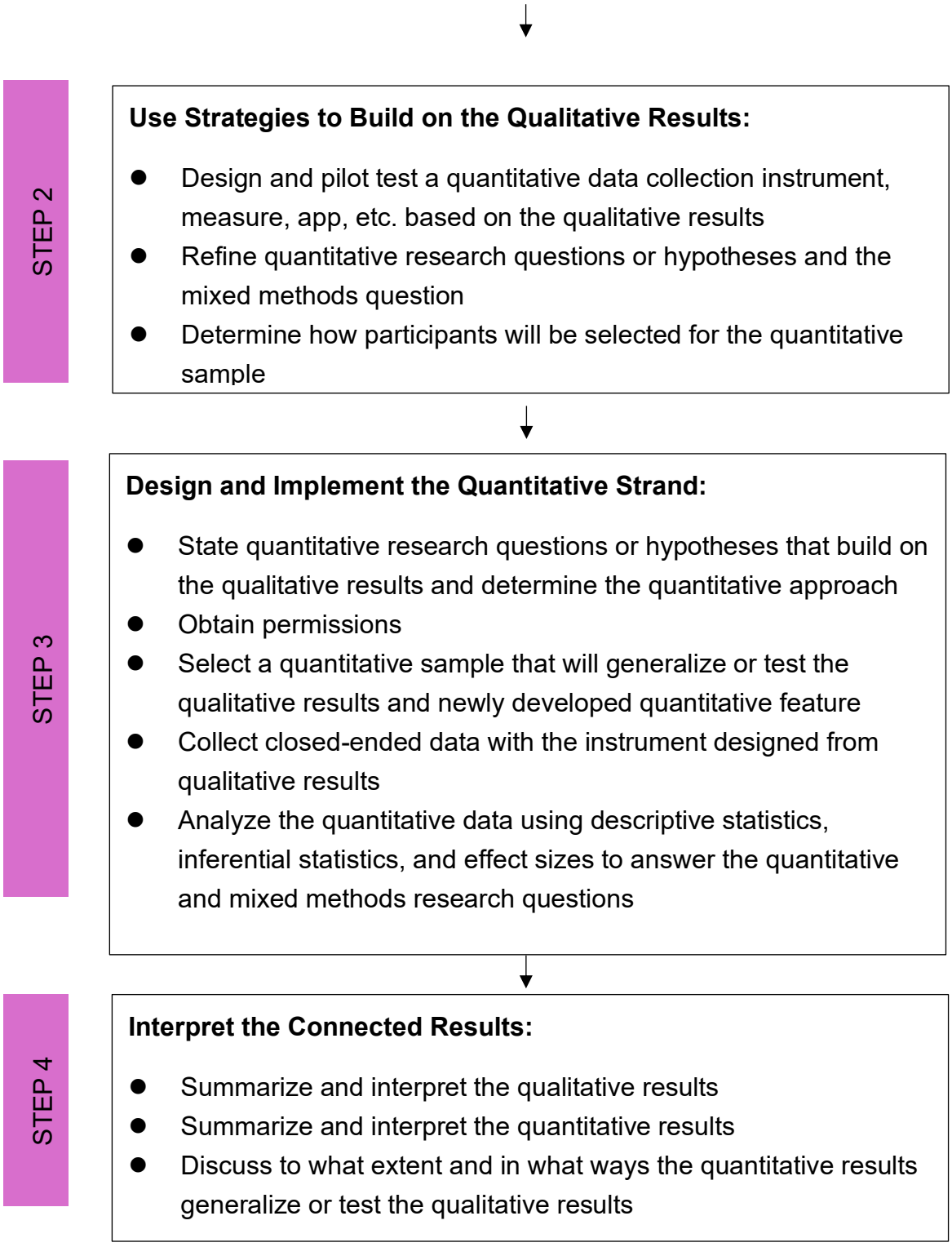
The partially mixed sequential exploratory technique is particularly advantageous when researchers intend to examine a topic that lacks comprehensive understanding or when they need to develop and assess of a novel research instrument due to the absence of existing ones (Creswell, 1999; Creswell et al., 2004). During such instances, the preliminary qualitative stage enables researchers to obtain a profound and nuanced comprehension of the subject matter using

techniques such as interviews, focus groups or observations. The resulting extensive and detailed data may be used to discover crucial features and variables that should be included in the succeeding quantitative phase (Creswell et al., 2004).

After collecting and analysing qualitative data, researchers can conduct the quantitative phase. The insights gained from the qualitative phase are used to guide the development of suitable survey or questionnaire instruments, experimental designs or other methods for collecting quantitative data. This technique enables a concentrated and effective procedure for collecting quantitative data, because researchers may concentrate on certain factors or correlations that emerged as potentially relevant during the qualitative phase (Creswell et al., 2017). The design of this instrument should be meticulous to capture the fundamental themes and ideas that emerged from the qualitative phase, while continuing to being straightforward and manageable for a larger sample. Prior to executing the quantitative phase, conducting a small-scale pilot test is prudent to verify the reliability, validity and absence of potential misunderstanding or ambiguity in the instrument (Creswell, 2003; Chan, 2022).

Figure 1: Flowchart of the basic procedures in implementing an explanatory sequential mixed-method design (adapted from Creswell & Clark, 2018, p. 17).





Creswell and Clark (2018) outlined a sequential mixed-method approach using the abovementioned chart with steps for a sequential exploratory research design, which is a type of mixed-method strategy. In this design, researchers first conduct a

qualitative study followed by a quantitative study. The most common objective is to use the qualitative findings to help design or inform the subsequent quantitative phase. The subsequent text outlines the four-step approach of Creswell and Clark (2018).

Step 1: Design and Implement the Qualitative Strand

The initial phase of the sequential exploratory mixed-method research design involves the meticulous planning and execution of a qualitative study. This crucial step lays the foundation for the entire research process and sets the stage for the subsequent quantitative phase. The primary objective of this phase is to gain a deep, nuanced understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, which, in this case, is the impact of experiential learning activities on student motivation and satisfaction in business education.

To begin, the researcher must formulate a set of research questions that will guide the inquiry. These questions should be open-ended, exploratory in nature and designed to elicit rich, detailed responses. In the context of experiential learning in business education, the research questions could focus on the lived experiences of students and instructors, the perceived benefits and challenges of different types of experiential learning activities and the factors that contribute to student motivation and satisfaction.

After establishing the research questions, the researcher must determine the appropriate qualitative approach to address these questions. Several qualitative methodologies can be selected, each with its strengths and limitations. For example, phenomenology focuses on the essence of lived experiences, while grounded theory is used to develop a theory based on the data; additionally, case studies

provide an in-depth exploration of a specific case or set of cases (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The research questions, nature of the phenomenon under study and the epistemological and ontological assumptions of researchers should guide the choice of approach.

After selecting the qualitative approach, researchers must obtain the necessary permissions to conduct the study. This step may involve seeking approval from institutional review boards, obtaining informed consent from participants and ensuring that all ethical guidelines and regulations are followed throughout the research process. Researchers must also identify the qualitative sample, which should be purposefully selected to provide rich and diverse perspectives on a phenomenon. In the case of experiential learning in business education, the sample could include students who have participated in various types of experiential learning activities and instructors who have designed and facilitated these activities.

After establishing the research questions, approach, permissions and sample, researchers can begin the collection of open-ended data using appropriate methodologies. In-depth interviews are a common method for collecting qualitative data, because they enable participants to share experiences, perceptions and insights using their own words (Seidman, 2019). Focus groups can also be useful for exploring collective experiences and generating discussions (Krueger & Casey, 2015). Observations, field notes and document analyses can provide additional context and triangulation of data sources (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

During data collection, researchers must engage in a rigorous process of qualitative data analysis. This process involves the identification of key themes, patterns and categories that emerge from the data and the use using specific procedures and

techniques associated with the selected qualitative approach to answer the research questions. For example, in a phenomenological study, researchers could use the process of horizonalisation to identify significant statements and cluster them into themes (Moustakas, 1994). In grounded theory studies, researchers could engage in constant comparative analysis to develop a theory that is grounded in the data (Charmaz, 2014).

The findings from the qualitative phase are crucial for informing the subsequent quantitative phase. The themes, patterns and insights that emerge from the qualitative data can help in refining research questions, develop new hypotheses and identify key variables and constructs to be measured in the quantitative phase. For example, if the qualitative findings suggest that certain types of experiential learning activities are particularly effective in promoting student motivation and satisfaction, then researchers could design a survey instrument to test these relationships using a large sample.

Moreover, the qualitative findings can inform the development of new quantitative features or measures. If the qualitative data reveal important aspects of experiential learning that the existing measures cannot adequately capture. Researchers may create new survey items or scales to assess these constructs. This process of using qualitative findings to inform the design and development of the instruments for the quantitative phase is a key strength of the sequential exploratory mixed-method approach. The reason is that it ensures that the quantitative phase is grounded in the rich, contextualised data provided by the qualitative phase.

In summary, the first step of designing and implementing the qualitative strand is a critical component of the sequential exploratory mixed-method research design. By

carefully crafting research questions, selecting an appropriate qualitative approach, obtaining necessary permissions, identifying a purposeful sample, collecting open-ended data and engaging in rigorous data analysis, the researcher lays the groundwork for a deep, nuanced understanding of the phenomenon under study. The findings from this phase not only provide valuable insights but also serve as the foundation for the subsequent quantitative phase, which ensures that the entire research process is cohesive, integrated and firmly rooted in the experiences and perspectives of the participants.

Step 2: Use Strategies to Build on the Qualitative Results

The second step in the sequential exploratory mixed-method research design involves using the findings from the qualitative phase to inform and shape the subsequent quantitative phase. This crucial step serves as a bridge between the two phases that ensures that the quantitative data collection and analysis are firmly grounded in the rich, contextualised insights provided by the qualitative data. By strategically building on the qualitative results, researchers can develop a targeted, refined and meaningful quantitative investigation that is directly relevant to the experiences and perspectives of the participants.

One of the primary strategies for building on the qualitative results is to use the findings to design and pilot test an instrument for quantitative data collection. This instrument could be a survey questionnaire, a measurement scale, a mobile application or other tools that enable the systematic collection of numerical data. The themes, patterns and insights that emerged from the qualitative data analysis should directly inform the development of this instrument.

For example, if the qualitative findings suggest that certain types of experiential

learning activities are particularly effective in promoting student motivation and satisfaction, then researchers could design survey items or scales that specifically assess these activities. The wording of these items should be carefully crafted to reflect the language and terminology used by the participants in the qualitative phase, which ensures that the instrument is valid and meaningful to the target population.

In addition to informing the content of the quantitative instrument, the qualitative findings can also help to refine the overall structure and format of the instrument. For instance, if the qualitative data reveal that participants experience difficulty understanding certain concepts or terminologies, then researchers could include definitions or explanations within the survey to clarify these points. Similarly, if the qualitative findings suggest that certain topics or issues are particularly sensitive or emotionally charged, then researchers could consider the use of neutral or indirect language in the survey items to minimise potential discomfort or bias.

After developing the initial draft of the quantitative instrument, conducting pilot testing is essential using a small sample of participants. This process serves several important purposes.

First, it enables researchers to assess the clarity, comprehensibility and face validity of the instrument. By soliciting feedback from the pilot participants, researchers can identify any items or instructions that are unclear, confusing or misleading and make the necessary revisions to improve the overall quality of the instrument.

Second, pilot testing provides an opportunity to assess the reliability and validity of the instrument. By analysing the pilot data, researchers can determine whether or not (a) items are internally consistent, (b) they measure the intended constructs and

(c) they are producing meaningful and interpretable results. This process of psychometric evaluation is critical to ensure that the final instrument is sound, robust and capable of yielding valid and reliable data.

Third, pilot testing enables researchers to identify any logistical or practical issues that may emerge during the actual data collection process. For example, researchers can assess whether or not (a) the survey platform is functioning properly, (b) instructions are clear and easy to follow and (c) the overall length and format of the survey are appropriate for the target population. By addressing these issues during pilot testing, researchers can minimise potential problems and ensure a smooth and efficient data collection process in the main study.

Another key strategy for building on the qualitative results is to use the findings to refine the quantitative research questions and hypotheses. Qualitative data analysis may reveal new insights or perspectives that were not initially considered in the research design or it may have called a few of the original assumptions or expectations into question. By carefully reviewing the qualitative findings and considering their implications for the quantitative phase, researchers can develop focused, relevant and empirically grounded research questions and hypotheses.

For example, if the qualitative findings suggest that the relationship between experiential learning activities and student motivation is more complex or nuanced than that originally anticipated, then researchers could refine the research questions to explore these complexities in greater depth. This process may involve the development of more specific hypotheses about the moderating or mediating effects of certain variables or the incorporation of additional constructs or measures to capture the full range of relevant factors.

Similarly, the qualitative findings can inform the mixed-method research question, which seeks to integrate insights from both phases. By considering how the qualitative and quantitative findings complement, contradict or expand upon each other, researchers can develop a more comprehensive and holistic understanding of the phenomenon. This process of integration is a key strength of mixed-method research, because it promotes a complete and nuanced understanding than those that could be provided by either approach alone.

Finally, the qualitative findings can guide the selection process of the quantitative sample. Although the qualitative sample is typically purposive and focused on depth instead of breadth, the quantitative sample should be larger, more representative and more capable of supporting statistical inference. However, the qualitative findings can help to inform the specific characteristics or criteria that should be used to select the quantitative sample.

For example, if the qualitative findings imply that certain demographic or experiential factors are particularly relevant to a phenomenon, then researchers could use these factors to stratify or quota the quantitative sample. Doing so can help to ensure that the sample is diverse and representative of the key subgroups or populations of interest, which enhances the external validity and generalisability of the findings.

In summary, the second step of using Strategies to Build on the Qualitative Results is a critical component of the sequential exploratory mixed-method research design. By using the qualitative findings to inform the design and pilot testing of the quantitative instrument, refine the research questions and hypotheses, guide the selection of the quantitative sample and integrate the insights from both phases, researchers can develop a targeted, meaningful and robust quantitative

investigation. This process of strategic integration can help to ensure that the quantitative phase is firmly grounded in the experiences and perspectives of the participants, while extending and expanding on the insights gained from the qualitative phase.

Step 3: Design and Implement the Quantitative Strand

The third step involves the design and implementation of the quantitative phase, which builds on the insights and findings from the qualitative phase, using the strategies outlined in Step 2 to develop a targeted, meaningful and empirically grounded quantitative investigation. The quantitative phase is designed to test, refine and extend the qualitative findings, which provides a generalisable and statistically robust understanding of the phenomenon.

The first step in designing the quantitative strand is to clearly articulate the research questions and hypotheses, which will guide the investigation. The findings from the qualitative phase, which reflect the key themes, patterns and insights that emerged from data analysis, should directly inform these questions and hypotheses. The research questions should be specific, measurable and amenable to statistical testing, while the hypotheses should be clear, directional and grounded in the relevant literature and theoretical frameworks.

For example, in the context of experiential learning in business education, the qualitative findings may suggest that certain types of experiential learning activities are particularly effective in promoting student motivation and satisfaction. Based on these findings, the corresponding hypothesis could be: ‘Experiential learning activities that involve real-world projects and client interactions will be more strongly associated with student motivation and satisfaction than those that are simulated or

hypothetical’.

After establishing the research questions and hypotheses, the appropriate quantitative approach to address these questions can be determined. Several quantitative methodologies can be selected, each with its strengths and limitations.

The research questions, hypotheses and the nature of the variables should guide the choice of the quantitative approach. In the case of experiential learning in business education, a cross-sectional survey design could be most appropriate for assessing the relationships between the formats of experiential learning activities and student motivation and satisfaction. This approach could enable the study to collect data from a large, representative sample of business students and to use statistical techniques such as regression analysis to test the hypothesised relationships.

After selecting the quantitative approach, necessary permissions and approvals to conduct the study must be obtained. This step may involve seeking approval from institutional review boards, obtaining informed consent from participants and ensuring that ethical guidelines and regulations are followed throughout the research process. Researchers must also carefully consider issues of data security, confidentiality and privacy, particularly when addressing sensitive or personally identifiable information.

After establishing the research questions, hypotheses, approach and permissions, researchers can begin the process of selecting the sample. Selection should be conducting using probability sampling techniques, such as random sampling or stratified sampling, to ensure that it is representative of the target population and that the results can be generalised beyond the immediate sample. Sample size

should be determined based on power analysis that considers the desired level of statistical significance, expected effect size and data variability.

In the context of experiential learning in business education, the target population could be undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in business programmes at a particular university or a set of universities. The stratified sampling approach can be used to ensure that the sample includes proportional representation from different types of business programmes (e.g. accounting, finance and marketing) as well as from different demographic groups (e.g. gender, race/ethnicity and age). The sample size should be sufficiently large to detect meaningful differences between groups and to provide sufficient statistical power for the planned analyses.

Afterwards, the process of data collection using the quantitative instrument should be developed. This aspect may involve the administration of an online survey. The data collection process should be standardised and consistent across participants and provide clear instructions and protocols to ensure the reliability and validity of the data.

Data collection includes a rigorous process of quantitative data analysis, which involves the use of statistical techniques to describe the characteristics of the sample, test the research hypotheses and explore the relationships between variables. The common statistical techniques used in quantitative research include descriptive statistics (e.g. means and standard deviations), inferential statistics (e.g. t-test, ANOVA and regression analysis) and multivariate techniques (e.g. factor analysis and structural equation modelling).

In the context of experiential learning in business education, researchers could use descriptive statistics to summarise the characteristics of the sample such as the

distribution of students across the types of business programmes and demographic groups. Inferential statistics could be used to test the hypothesised relationships between experiential learning activities and student motivation and satisfaction after controlling for relevant covariates such as prior academic performance or work experience. Multivariate techniques could be used to explore the underlying factor structure of the variables or to test other complex models of the relationships between constructs.

The findings from the quantitative analysis should be interpreted in light of the original research questions, hypotheses and insights gained from the qualitative phase. Researchers should consider the statistical significance of the results followed by their practical significance and relevance to the field of business education. The quantitative findings should be presented in a clear, concise and meaningful manner using tables, graphs and other visual aids to illustrate key points and relationships.

In summary, the third step of designing and implementing the quantitative strand is a critical component of the sequential exploratory mixed-method research design. By building on the insights and findings from the qualitative phase, researchers can develop a targeted, meaningful and empirically grounded quantitative investigation that tests, refines and extends the initial qualitative insights. Thus, researchers provide a generalisable and statistically robust understanding of the phenomenon, while maintaining a strong connection to the rich, contextualised insights gained from the qualitative phase through the careful selection of research questions, hypotheses, approach, sample and analytic techniques.

Step 4: Interpret the Connected Results

The final step involves the interpretation of the connected results from the qualitative and quantitative phases. This step is crucial for developing a comprehensive, nuanced and integrated understanding of the phenomenon under study by drawing on the strengths of both approaches. By carefully examining the findings from each phase and considering their relationship to one another, researchers can generate new insights, challenge existing assumptions and develop a holistic and contextually grounded understanding of the research problem.

The process of interpreting the connected results begins with a thorough review and summary of the key findings from each phase. For the qualitative phase, this process may involve revisiting the themes, patterns and insights that emerged from the data analysis and considering their implications for the research questions and the broader field of inquiry. Researchers should also consider the limitations and potential biases of the qualitative approach and their potential influence on the findings.

For the quantitative phase, the review and summary should focus on the statistical results and their interpretation based on the research hypotheses and questions. Researchers should consider the strength and direction of the relationships between variables, the magnitude and practical significance of the effects and the potential for alternative explanations or confounding factors. They should also assess the reliability and validity of the quantitative measures and consider the limitations and generalisability of the findings.

After summarising and reviewing the key findings from each phase, researchers should consider how the findings from each phase complement, contradict or expand on one another and what new insights or questions have emerged from this

integration.

One key aspect of interpreting the connected results is to examine the extent to which the quantitative findings generalise or confirm the qualitative findings. This aspect involves considering whether or not the statistical results of the quantitative phase support the relationships and patterns identified in the qualitative phase. For example, if the qualitative findings imply that certain types of experiential learning activities are particularly effective in promoting student motivation and satisfaction, then whether or not these activities were, indeed, associated with the high levels of motivation and satisfaction in the quantitative analysis should be examined.

If the quantitative findings are consistent with the qualitative findings, then it provides strong evidence for the validity and generalisability of the initial insights. Researchers can then use the quantitative results to refine and extend the qualitative findings, which provides a precise and statistically robust understanding of the relationships between variables.

Alternatively, if the quantitative findings are inconsistent or contradictory with the qualitative findings, then further investigation or reinterpretation of the initial insights is required. Researchers should carefully consider the reasons for the discrepancy and whether or not it reflects limitations or biases in either phase of the study. For example, the qualitative findings may have been based on a small, non-representative sample of students, while measurement errors or confounding variables may have influenced the quantitative findings.

In such cases, researchers should use the discrepancy as an opportunity for further exploration and analysis. This notion may involve revisiting the qualitative data to identify alternative explanations or perspectives or conducting additional

quantitative analyses to test for moderating or mediating effects. The goal is to develop a nuanced and contextualised understanding of the phenomenon that acknowledges the complexity and variability of the relationships between variables.

Another important aspect of the interpretation of the connected results is to consider the implications of the findings for theory, practice and future research. Researchers should situate the results within the broad context of the field and consider their contribution to existing knowledge and understanding. This aspect may involve comparing the findings to those of previous research on experiential learning in business education and exploring how they support, challenge or extend the current theories and models.

Researchers should also consider the practical implications of the findings for educators, administrator and policymakers. For example, the results may indicate that certain types of experiential learning activities are particularly effective in promoting student motivation and satisfaction and should be prioritised in curriculum design and resource allocation. Alternatively, the results may highlight the importance of considering individual differences and contextual factors in the implementation of experiential learning and the need for more personalised and adaptive approaches.

Finally, researchers should consider the implications of the findings for future research and identify new questions and directions for inquiry. The integrated results could point to the need for further fine-grained analyses of the relationships between variables or the exploration of additional factors that may moderate or mediate these relationships. Researchers may also identify new methodological or theoretical approaches that could be used to further investigate the phenomenon or propose

new interventions or strategies that could be tested in future studies.

In summary, the fourth step of interpreting the connected results is a critical component of the sequential exploratory mixed-method research design. By carefully examining the findings from the qualitative and quantitative phases of the study and considering their relation with one another, researchers can develop a comprehensive, nuanced and integrated understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. This process involves summarising and reviewing the key findings from each phase, examining the extent to which the quantitative findings generalise or confirm the qualitative findings, considering the implications of the findings for theory, practice and future research and identifying new questions and directions for inquiry. Through this process of integration and interpretation, researchers can generate new insights, challenge existing assumptions and contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the field of business education and beyond.

The partially mixed sequential exploratory strategy is an effective research design that integrates the advantages of the qualitative and quantitative methodologies to present a thorough comprehension of phenomena. By commencing through an initial qualitative phase and utilising the results to guide the subsequent quantitative phase, researchers can guarantee that their study is firmly rooted in the experiences and viewpoints of the participants. At the same time, they assess the applicability of the findings to a wider population. This method is especially efficient for examining complex, multiple phenomena that require a thorough, nuanced comprehension of related aspects and variables. Researchers may achieve the efficient implementation of this design and gain significant insights into the issue under study by adhering to the detailed instructions outlined in the guide by Creswell and Clark

(2018).

3.1.3 Adoption of the Research Design Framework

The research systematically investigated the relationships amongst levels of satisfaction and motivation in students, impacts of the subject nature on experiential learning outcomes, differences in changes in satisfaction and motivation across student characteristics and the self-assessed outcomes of students. Based on the literature review, the research objective that guide this study are as follows.

(1) examine differences in the effects of the formats of actual and hypothetical experiential course learning on student satisfaction and motivation;

(2) examine whether the subject nature (i.e. hard and soft skills) would be impacted by experiential learning stronger on student satisfaction and motivation;

(3) investigate differences in the changes in satisfaction and motivation across student characteristics (e.g. gender and years of working experience);

(4) contrast and investigate the expected learning outcomes of students using various formats of experiential learning activities with changes in the self-assessed behaviour of students and in-depth understanding of the domain knowledge.

By employing this sequential exploratory design, this methodology is intended to acquire a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter, while simultaneously assessing the applicability of the qualitative findings to a larger population. This approach agrees with the established principles of mixed-method research and enables a thorough and nuanced comprehension of the topic under investigation (Creswell & Clark, 2018). The objective of the current study is to exploratorily

elucidate the two underlying constructs of experiential learning activities, namely, format of experiential learning activities and subject nature and their impact on student satisfaction and motivation in business education. Towards this end, the study employed the mixed-method research approach, which involves a sequential exploratory design adapted from Creswell and Clark (2018). Within the framework of this mixed-method research, this study used a two-stage design. As such, the study will be conducted in two phases.

Phase 1: Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis

In the first step, the study formulated the qualitative research objectives that aim to elucidate the formats of experiential learning activities and the nature of subjects used in experiential learning activities (Creswell, 2018). To collect this information, interviews with course instructors with firsthand knowledge and expertise of the course structure and the nature of subjects taught were conducted. These qualitative data provide in-depth insights into the constructs under study and serve as the foundation for the subsequent phase of the research.

Seven present educators were interviewed using qualitative techniques, which enabled a thorough investigation of their experiences and perspectives to thoroughly analyse their perspectives on the impact of experiential learning on student motivation and satisfaction.

Between Phase 1: Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis and Phase 2: Quantitative Data Collection and Analysis

Following the qualitative data collection and analysis, the insights were utilised to design a questionnaire for the quantitative phase. The qualitative findings help to ensure the construct validity of the questionnaire, that is, to ensure that the items

measure what they are intended to measure (i.e. formats of experiential learning activities and nature of the subject). Moreover, they can help to identify the appropriate set of items with the correct constructs based on the insights from the seven educators in the interviews.

Phase 2: Quantitative data collection and analysis

The findings from the qualitative phase will inform the development of a questionnaire for the quantitative phase. The questionnaire will be administered to a large sample of students to validate the qualitative findings and examine the relationship between the identified constructs and student satisfaction and motivation in business education.

The questionnaire developed in the previous phase was used to collect data on a larger scale to validate the findings of the qualitative phase. By doing so, the study aimed to confirm the constructs identified in the qualitative phase and to examine their relation to student satisfaction and motivation in business learning (Creswell & Clark, 2018). Prior to implementing the questionnaire, a preliminary pilot test was conducted on a small sample size ($N_p = 7$). The pilot test aims at checking if there are any possible misinterpretations and to confirm any ambiguity exists in the understanding and interpretation of the meanings (Chan, 2023).

After receiving input, the questionnaire underwent refinement and enhancement prior to its administration to the larger sample (Creswell & Clark, 2018). A much larger cohort (N = 426) of students was polled using the quantitative questionnaire that was constructed on the basis of the themes and ideas that emerged during the qualitative phase to determine whether or not the qualitative observations obtained from the teacher interviews could be applied to the entire population of students

enrolled in different business school programmes. The researchers conducted a quantitative phase to assess the generalisability of the results using a larger and more representative sample.

Lastly, Step 4 was implemented and adopted. The results from the qualitative and quantitative phases were interpreted and connected. The summary and interpretation of the findings from both phases could provide a comprehensive understanding of the influence of the formats of experiential learning activities and nature of the subject on student satisfaction and motivation in business learning. The extent to which the quantitative results generalise or validate the qualitative findings will be discussed (Creswell & Clark, 2018).

Using this sequential strategy, this research acquired a comprehensive and complex comprehension of the subject matter during the first qualitative phase. At the same time, it assessed the applicability of the results during the quantitative phase. This technique aligns with the established principles of mixed-method research and enables a thorough and nuanced comprehension of the topic (Creswell & Clark, 2018).

3.1.4 Conceptual Framework

By thoroughly examining this correlation, the study endeavours to construct a comprehensive framework that pinpoints the most impactful and efficient types of experiential learning activities specifically tailored for business education. This assessment encompasses a wide array of factors, including learning format, nature of the subject and the demographic characteristics of the students. This all-encompassing approach will yield invaluable insights into the multifaceted dynamics that mould the experiences and outcomes of students in experiential learning

environments, which will provide a holistic understanding of the learning process. Based on the prior discussion in the previous session, the study puts forward the following hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1

Students are more motivated and satisfied in real-world experiential learning formats compared with hypothetical formats.

Hypothesis 2

The impact of student motivation and satisfaction in the acquisition of soft skills is stronger than that on hard skills via experiential learning.

Hypothesis 3

Student characteristics (e.g. gender, year of working experience and proximity between the graduation year) exert an impact on student motivation and satisfaction.

Hypothesis 4

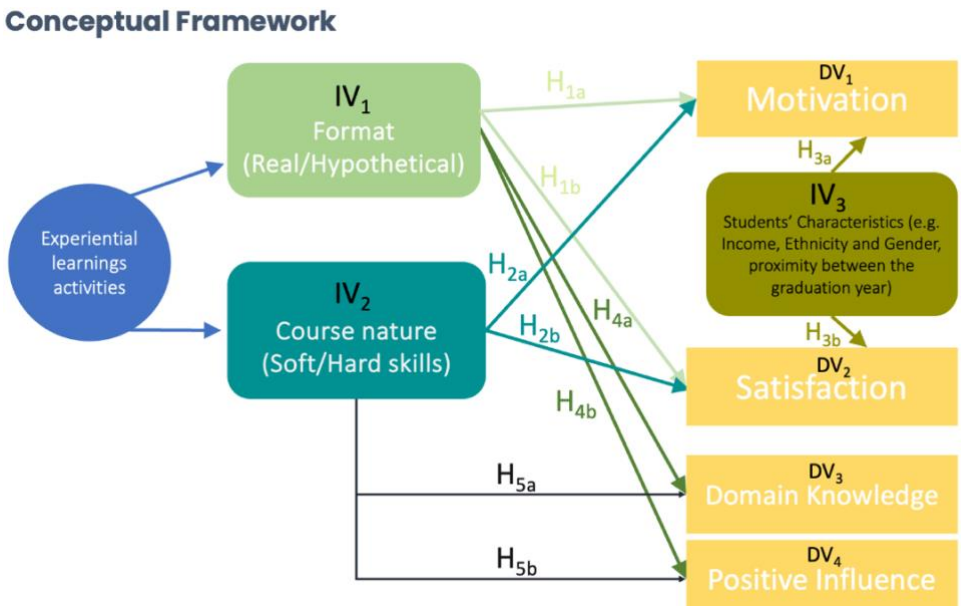
Students exhibit incremental growth in domain knowledge and positive influence in work/life aspects through real-world experiential learning formats comparing with hypothetical formats.

Hypothesis 5

Students exhibit high levels of enhancement in domain knowledge and positive influence in work/life aspects when acquiring soft skills compared with hard skills through experiential learning.

Based on the above 5 hypotheses, conceptual framework had been developed:

Figure 2:



Hypothesis 1

H1a: Experiential course learning format (real-world versus hypothetical) exerts a stronger impact on student motivation.

H1b: Experiential course learning format (real-world versus hypothetical) exerts stronger impact on student satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2:

H2a: The nature of the subject (soft versus hard skills) exerts a stronger impact on

student motivation.

H2b: The nature of the subject (soft versus hard skills) exerts a stronger impact on student satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3:

H3a: Student characteristics exert a stronger impact on motivation with experiential learning activities.

H3b: Student characteristics exert a stronger impact on satisfaction for experiential learning activities.

Hypothesis 4:

H4a: Experiential course learning format (real-world versus hypothetical) exerts stronger impact on the domain knowledge of students.

H4b: Experiential course learning format (real-world versus hypothetical) exerts a stronger impact on the positive influence of students.

Hypothesis 5:

H5a: The nature of the subject (soft versus hard skills) exerts a stronger impact on the domain knowledge of students..

H5b: The nature of the subject (soft versus hard skills) exerts a stronger impact on the positive influence of students.

3.1.5 Research Setting

3.1.5.1 Qualitative Phase: Semi-Structured Interview

3.1.5.1.1 Qualitative Research Paradigm and Literature

In qualitative epistemological paradigms, researchers employ premeditated sampling procedures to deliberately select persons and contexts that can furnish the indispensable insights to comprehend the central ontological substance. This purposeful sampling approach, which is also referred to as purposive sampling, signifies that qualitative researchers consciously recruit participants who have undergone the core phenomenon or key conceptual domain. Various purposeful sampling strategies exist, which each possesses divergent objectives related to the production of divergent insights into the core construct. By utilising purposeful selection strategies that are intentionally aligned with elucidating the central construct, qualitative researchers can access information-rich sources to develop an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in line with the interpretive research design praxis (Creswell, 2012). Qualitative research is scientific in terms of worthy topic, rich rigour, sincerity, credibility, resonance, significant contribution and ethical and meaningful coherence (Tracy, 2020).

Developing qualitative research questions is a reflective and dynamic inquiry process that can help researchers to ‘clarify purpose, make connections with a field of study and interrogate the impact of trajectory on participations’ (Agee, 2009). The current study followed the five-step process framework for the development of a systematic guide for semi-structured interviews (qualitative phase) by Kallio et al. (2016). The guid includes the dentification of the prerequisites of using a semi-structured interview, (2) retrieval and utilisation of previous knowledge with a

literature review, (3) formulation of the preliminary interview guide by operationalising previous knowledge in a structural, logical and coherent form, (4) conduct of pilot testing with internal testing, expert assessment and field testing and, finally, (5) presentation of the complete interview guide by producing a clear and logical guide for data collection.

Regarding the research methodology and the design of personal interview questions, the semi-structured interview with open-ended questions is one of the most widely used methods for qualitative research. According to Smith (2011), it aims to identify the characteristics and motivations for a designed topic. Meanwhile, Merriam (2009) mentions that, ‘qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds and what meaning they attribute to their experience’.

3.1.5.1.2 Qualitative Phase

(i) Sampling Methods

The researchers invited seven course instructors who are currently teaching at the Faculty of Business Administration of the CUHK to participate in the study to assess the validity of the construct. The selection of these educators was predicated on their proficiency and track record in instructing diverse business courses that integrate experiential learning elements. To provide a thorough understanding of the landscape of experiential learning in business education, the selection procedure attempted to ensure a diversified representation of teachers from various topic areas within the business faculty.

The study used purposive sampling and selected course instructors on the basis of their expertise and experience in teaching business courses using experiential

learning elements. This approach aligns with purposive sampling, which involves the deliberate selection of participants who can provide rich information and insights relevant to the research question (Patton, 2002). As Creswell and Poth (2018) explained, purposive sampling enables researchers to select individuals who can contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the central phenomenon under study.

A sample size of seven is consistent with the recommendations for qualitative research. As Morse (1994) propose, a minimum of six participants is necessary for achieving data saturation in qualitative studies. Similarly, Guest et al. (2006) find that data saturation frequently occurs within the first 12 interviews with basic themes emerging as early as six interviews. Creswell (1998) also recommends 5–25 participants for qualitative research according to the approach used.

The selection process aimed to ensure a diverse representation of instructors from various subject areas within the business faculty. The concept of maximum variation sampling, which is intended to capture a wide range of perspectives and experiences related to a phenomenon supported this approach (Patton, 2002). By including instructors from different subject areas, the study can provide a comprehensive understanding of experiential learning in business education.

(ii) Design of the Interview Questionnaire

To learn more about the experiential learning styles used by the instructors in instruction, we conducted semi-structured, one-on-one interviews. To provide students with a hands-on learning experience, these formats contained hypothetical and real-world experiential learning tasks. Understanding the subject matter taught by instructors—which mainly concentrated on the development of hard or soft

skills—was another goal of the interviews. This distinction is important, because it makes pinpointing the precise areas in business education in which experiential learning can be used most successfully easy.

Additionally, the research sought to examine the influence of experiential learning activities on the evaluation of the instructors of student motivation and level of pleasure in business studies. We invited the teachers to describe their observation and learnings about the interactions of and responses to the elements of experiential learning in class. Thus, this study further explored the impact of experiential learning on student motivation and satisfaction, which are two important variables for assessing the efficacy and success of business education programmes.

Apart from examining the advantages and results of experiential learning, the study investigated the challenges and limitations encountered by educators in implementing experiential learning programmes. This part of the research is essential for determining the obstacles that must be overcome to enable the successful adoption and growth of experiential learning in business education. Educational institutions can design strategies and support systems to overcome these challenges and create an environment that is conducive to experiential learning by understanding the challenges faced by instructors.

(iii) Sample Employment and Data Collection

A widely utilised purposeful sampling technique is maximal variation sampling in which demographically diverse participants are deliberately selected. They are expected to espouse divergent viewpoints regarding the central phenomenon. The defining traits that maximise heterogeneity are contingent on specific research objectives but may encompass characteristics such as race, gender identification,

level of education or alternative demographic typology, to differentiate participants (Creswell & Clark, 2018). The fundamental premise is that their perspectives mirror the said dissimilarity and furnish the qualitative investigation with a rich and complex elucidation of the phenomenon through the intentional recruitment of subjects who are divergent at the outset (Creswell, 2012). By purposefully recruiting participants with varied profiles who are expected to narrate contrasting standpoints, maximal variation sampling aims to provide a multilayered account of the different experiences of the core concept, which is dependent on sociocultural positioning (Creswell & Clark, 2018).

In this phase, the teaching offerings of the respondents include various undergraduates and postgraduates programmes, including Integrated Bachelor of Business Administration (IBBA), Master in Management, Master of Business Administration (MBA) and Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA) programmes. This coverage is sufficient for unveiling the effectiveness of experiential learning in driving learning motivation and satisfaction in business education, which ranges from undergraduate studies (IBBA) to pre-matured master programmes in which students have no or less than 2 years of work experience (MiM) to experienced students (MBA) and senior management (EMBA), which are veterans in the business field. The teaching experience of the instructors ranged from 2 to 19 years across departments, which illustrates a good diversity that covers content validity.

The interviewees were fully informed about the invitation with a list of interview questions (Exhibit 1), objectives, venue, time, duration, format of meeting (Zoom or face-to-face) and other details of the interview. The interviews would only be

conducted after obtaining consent from the participants. They were well informed that the interviews would be recorded through note-taking and audio recording before the interview.

The interviews were conducted in a private space in the Business School of the CUHK by first obtaining signed consent forms (Exhibit 2) from the interviewees, who were also well informed that all personally identifiable information, if needed to be discussed in the dissertation, will be fictionalised. They were reassured that data collection and reporting would be conducted anonymously and all information would be encrypted prior to storage on cloud-based high-privacy protection platforms, including Microsoft One Drive and Google Drive with passwords and a two-step authentication. Participants were informed about the storage methods and all data will be destroyed after the required storage periods.

3.1.5.1.3 Interim Phase: Development of the Quantitative Questionnaire

This study offers a thorough analysis of the function and significance of experiential learning in business education. We obtain important insights into the different forms of experiential learning, subject matters, expected learning outcomes, student motivation and satisfaction and the challenges and limitations related to the integration of experiential learning in business courses by conducting in-depth interviews with instructors. The results add to the expanding corpus of information on experiential learning and its capacity to improve the calibre and efficacy of business education, which will eventually equip students for professional success.

The qualitative phase, which involved semi-structured interviews with course instructors, provided invaluable insights into the experiential learning activities employed in business education at the CUHK. Through these interviews, we gained

a nuanced understanding of the various formats, nature of the subject and intended learning outcomes associated with the business courses offered at the university.

Two additional measures of the self-assessed behaviour changes and in-depth understanding of the students were also examined after collecting learnings from the qualitative phase. Learnings were mainly gleaned from coding the semi-structured interviews, namely, the students' self-reported increase in the domain knowledge and positive influence on behaviour changes in work/life aspects.

However, to truly validate and generalise the findings from the qualitative phase, collecting data from a large sample of students who directly participated in these experiential learning activities is essential. This aspect forms the quantitative phase, which will enables the assessment of the extent to which the themes and patterns identified in the interviews resonate with the actual experiences and perceptions of students.

The collected data and learnings from the qualitative phase were utilised to modify the questionnaire in Phase 2.

3.1.5.1.4 Quantitative Phase: Questionnaire

3.1.5.1.4.1 Quantitative Research Paradigm and Literature

The data collected during the quantitative phase will not only serve to corroborate or refute the qualitative findings but will also enable the examination of the relationships between various factors such as the formats of experiential learning activities, the nature of the subject, student demographics and student motivation and satisfaction. By utilising rigorous statistical analyses, we can quantify the strength and significance of these relationships, which could provide a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the complex interplay between these

variables.

Moreover, the quantitative phase will enable the exploration of potential moderating or mediating effects that may exist among the variables. For instance, we could determine that the impact of formats of experiential learning activities on student motivation is moderated by the nature of the subject. Another possibility is that certain demographic characteristics mediate the relationship between the nature of the subject and student satisfaction.

The primary objective of the quantitative phase is to employ a customised design for the questionnaire that are relevant and suitable for the learning culture in the Business Faculty in the CUHK. The designed survey instruments can then generalise the findings in the qualitative research phase to a larger population (Chan, 2022).

3.1.5.1.5 Quantitative Research Phase

The quantitative phase aims to validate and generalise the findings from the qualitative phase by surveying a larger sample of business students who have participated in experiential learning activities. This phase employs a cross-sectional survey design, which is a commonly used method in educational research, to collect data from a large population at a single point in time (Creswell, 2012). The survey is designed based on the themes and constructs identified in the qualitative phase as well as the relevant literature on experiential learning, student motivation and satisfaction.

(i) Defining the Research Objectives and Target Samples

The previous section clearly outlined the research objective of the quantitative phase, which is to examine the relationships among the formats of experiential

learning activities, the nature of the subject, student demographics and student motivation and satisfaction in business education. The target sample is composed of undergraduate and graduate students who are enrolled in business programmes at the CUHK and have participated in experiential learning activities as part of coursework.

Target Samples

The study recruited students from various programmes in business disciplines from the CUHK for the following reasons. First, it intends to minimise the confounding effects of diversification due to, for example, various teaching cultures and learning expectations in different faculties of disciplines across universities (Mihanović et al., 2016). Second, it aims to ensure a minimal degree of homogeneity among the respondents, because they are from the IBBA and other bachelor programmes under the Business Administration faculty, Master of Science programmes in any business field, and MBA and EMBA programmes.

(ii) Survey Design and Measures

The survey will be designed following the principles of effective survey research, which includes (1) clearly defining the research objectives and target population, (2) developing valid and reliable survey items that align with the research objectives, (3) using appropriate sampling techniques to ensure representativeness and generalisability, (4) minimising survey errors and biases and (5) conducting pilot testing to refine the survey instrument (Fowler, 2014).

The survey items will be developed based on the findings from the qualitative phase as well as the relevant literature on experiential learning, student motivation and satisfaction. The qualitative findings will provide rich, contextualised information

about the key constructs and themes that are relevant to the research objectives, which will be used to generate specific survey items. The literature review will provide established scales and measures that have been validated in previous studies, which can be adapted or incorporated into the survey design.

The survey will include the following sections:

1. Demographic information: This section will collect data on the age, gender, income, ethnicity and proximity between course completion of the students, which will be used as control variables in the analysis.

2. Format of experiential learning activities: this section will ask students to indicate whether the experiential learning activities that they participated in were real (i.e. involving actual clients, projects or cases) or hypothetical (i.e. simulated or fictional scenarios). This variable will be coded as a binary variable (1 = real, 0 = hypothetical) in the analysis.

3. Student motivation: This section will include items that measure the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of the students in the experiential learning activities, using established scales such as the Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (Ryan, 1982) or the Situational Motivation Scale (Guay et al., 2000). These scales have been widely used in educational research and have demonstrated positive psychometric properties.

4. Student satisfaction: This section will include items that measure the overall satisfaction of students with experiential learning activities as well as the specific aspects of satisfaction such as perceived learning, relevance to future career and enjoyment. These items can be adapted from established scales such as the Course Experience Questionnaire (Ramsden, 1991) or the National Survey of Student

Engagement (Kuh, 2001).

5. Expected learning outcomes: This section will include items that measure the extent to which students believe they have achieved the learning outcomes These items will be developed specifically for this study and will be pilot tested to ensure validity and reliability. Changes in the self-assessed increase in the domain knowledge and influence on their behaviour changes, including work and/or life aspects.of the students and in-depth understanding will also be examined in a separate session.

All survey items will be rated using a five-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*) to ensure consistency and ease in interpretation.

The survey will be designed to take approximately 15–20 min to complete to minimise respondent fatigue and improve response rates.

A sample of the survey is attached as Exhibit 3: Quantitative Survey (Sample) in the appendixes session.

(iii) Sampling and Data Collection

A self-administered questionnaire was employed to collect data using multi-stage cluster sampling methods under probability sampling. The questionnaire was disseminated through the Qualtrics platform of the CUHK with an anonymous link.

This report collected the data from two sources of random selections of clusters from the population of business disciplines, namely, WhatsApp and WeChat. Alternatively, the link was sent via email in various study groups in any business disciplines from the CUHK.

(iv) Questionnaire Adoption

Students' Motivation Questionnaire

The questionnaire was adopted from the "*Motivation, Achievement and Advanced Placement Intent of High School Students Learning Science"* (Bryan et al., 2011), which measures student motivation in various subjects. Within both studies, the factors intrinsic motivation (InMOT) and self-efficacy motivation (SEMOT) obtained the highest Cronbach's alpha values in the relevant studies on student motivation (Glynn et al., 2008; Chlumbley, 2015). Therefore, the two factors from the motivation part of the questionnaire were selected and adopted as follows.

Intrinsic Motivation*: InMOT_Composite (DV_{1a})[1]*

Q1 I liked the course that had challenged me with experiential learning activities.

Q2 Understanding the experiential learning content gave me a sense of accomplishment.

Q3 What I learned in the course was more important than the grade I received.

Self-efficacy Motivation*: SEMOT_Composite (DV_{1b})[2]*

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1 Intrinsic Motivation (InMOT):

Intrinsic motivation refers to the inherent interest, enjoyment and satisfaction of an individual in engaging in an activity for its own sake, instead of for external rewards or pressures (Ryan and Deci, 2000). In the context of experiential learning, intrinsic motivation represents the genuine enthusiasm and desire of students to participate in learning activities due to personal interest, curiosity and the perceived value of the experience (Kolb and Kolb, 2005).

2 Self-Efficacy Motivation (SEMOT):

Self-efficacy motivation refers to an individual's belief in its ability to successfully perform tasks, achieve goals and overcome challenges (Bandura, 1997). In the context of experiential learning, self-efficacy motivation represents the confidence of students in their capacity to effectively engage in

Q4 I had the belief that I could master the knowledge and skills in the course when I was studying the course.

Q5 I had the belief that I could earn a grade of 'A' in the course when I was studying the course.

Q6 I was confident I would do well on the assessment and exam when I was studying the course.

Q7 I expected to do as well as or better than other students in the course with the experiential learning activities when I was studying the course.

Q8 I was confident I would do well on the practicing the knowledge and projects with experiential learning activities when I was studying the course.

Overall Motivation

Q9 Overall, I was motivated to learn in this course. ***(DV_1)***

Q10 Overall, I was disappointed with this course.

Composite and each component scores will be analysed in the motivation part. Q10 is a question with the reverse-worded items of Q9 to decrease or prevent response bias.

Students' Satisfaction Questionnaire

Regarding student satisfaction, the questionnaire was adopted from *Factors Affecting Perceived Learning, Satisfaction and Quality in the Online MBA: A Structural Equation Modelling Approach*' (Sebastianell et al., 2015). Based on the

learning activities, master new knowledge and skills and apply them in real-world situations (Kolb, 1984).

results of Sebastianell et al. (2015), course content (CCSAT) refers to relevance to work and professor–student interactions (PSSAT), which are two factors that exert a statistically significant positive impact on student satisfaction. Therefore, items on Factor 1 (Course content; CCSAT) and Factor 4 (Professor–student interaction; PSSAT) were adopted with modifications as DV_3 and DV_4 with experiential learning concepts and examined as the control variables.

Course Content Satisfaction: *CCSAT_Composite (DV_{2a})*[3]

Q11: The experiential learning content in this course had added value to my learning experience.

Q12: The experiential learning content in this course was applicable and useful to my work in the workplace.

Q13: The experiential learning content was designed to stress important concepts.

Professor–Student Interaction Satisfaction: *PSSAT_Composite (DV_{2b})*[4]

Q14: The professor had actively facilitated discussions in class with reflective

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3 Course Content Satisfaction (CCSAT):

Course content satisfaction refers to the overall contentment and positive evaluation of the students of the subject matter, materials and learning experiences provided within an educational course (Marsh & Roche, 1997). In the context of experiential learning, course content satisfaction represents the perception of the students of the relevance, usefulness, coherence, and alignment of the course content with learning goals and expectations (Kolb and Kolb, 2009).

4 Professor–Student Interaction Satisfaction (PSSAT):

Professor–student interaction satisfaction refers to the positive assessment of the students of the quality, frequency and effectiveness of communication and engagement with course instructors (Moore, 1989). In the context of experiential learning, this term represents the contentment of students with the level of support, guidance, feedback, and rapport they experience in interactions with professors throughout the learning process (Kolb & Kolb, 2017).

observation sharing.

Q15: The professor had debriefed the experiential learning activity with abstract conceptualisation observation.

Q16: The professor was very responsive to student concerns.

Satisfaction Outcome:

Q17: I learned a lot in this course.

Q18: I was very satisfied with this course. (DV_2)

Q19: Overall, I was disappointed with this course.

The self-assessed behaviour changes and in-depth understanding of the students will also be examined in a separate session.

The reported data can be analysed as qualitative measures (increase, no change or decrease) if only a very few respondents select 2 or 4 on the scale (Weinberg, 2011).

Self-Assessed Behaviour Changes and In-Depth Understanding of Students on Domain Knowledge

Q20: The experiential learning course exerts a positive influence on my behaviour in work and/or life aspect(s). (DV_4)

Q21: I have acquired an in-depth understanding on the domain knowledge with the experiential learning course. (DV_3)

(v) Expected Sample Size

The expected number of completed responses to the questionnaire is 400 with a

one-month turnover time according to the rules of thumb of having a minimum of 20 samples for each independent variable, if the fundamental statistical analysis used is multiple regression (Hoskins & Marano, 2004; Chan, 2022).

(vi) Pilot Test

Prior to administering the survey to the full sample, a pilot test was conducted on a small group of students (n = 7) s. The pilot test also provided an opportunity to identify any technical issues with the online survey platform and to estimate the average time required to complete the survey.

The participants were requested to provide feedback on the survey items, including whether or not they are clear, relevant and easy to understand. They were also asked to provide suggestions for improving the survey design or administration. Based on the feedback from the pilot test, the survey items were revised and refined prior to administration to the full sample.

(vii) Data Analysis

In accordance with the objectives, data were analysed using IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 29.0 via a Window interface.

The first step was to clean and prepare the data for analysis, which involved screening the data for missing values, outliers and inconsistencies. Missing data were handled using appropriate techniques such as listwise deletion or multiple imputation according to the amount and pattern of missing data (Schafer & Graham, 2002). Outliers were identified using statistical methods, such as z-scores or the Mahalanobis distance and were omitted or adjusted according to their severity and impact on the analysis (Osborne & Overbay, 2004).

Descriptive statistics of the respondent profile, including frequency of distribution

and means, were used to investigate the links between various control groups. Several demographic variables were tested in terms of influence on student motivation and satisfaction, such as the age, gender, income, ethnicity (Brush et al., 1987) and proximity between course completion.

Sykes (1993) explained that regression analysis is a statistical tool used to investigate the relationship between variables and to ascertain the causal effect of one variable on another.

The current study conducted correlation analyses with regression modelling to examine the correlation between the expectation of the instructors and the final take-aways of the students on motivation and satisfaction and, thus, determine the relevance of various experiential learning activities. The results can serve as a compass in developing a framework for formulating various formats of experiential learning activities for business education.

Regression analysis was used to examine the relationships between the independent variables (i.e. format of experiential learning activities, nature of the subject and student demographics) and the dependent variables (i.e. student motivation and satisfaction) while controlling for any relevant covariates (e.g. programme of study and year in a programme).

Two separate regression models were estimated, one for each dependent variable (i.e. motivation and satisfaction). The independent variables were entered into the model in a hierarchical fashion beginning with the control variables followed by the main effects of format of experiential learning activities and nature of the subject.

A similar regression model was used for student satisfaction with satisfaction as the dependent variable.

The regression coefficients were interpreted in terms of magnitude, direction and statistical significance. A positive (negative) coefficient indicated a positive (negative) relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The magnitude of the coefficient represents the change in the dependent variable for a one-unit change in the independent variable given that all other variables are held constant. The statistical significance of the coefficients will be assessed using *t*-tests and *p*-values with a significance level set to .05.

(viii) Regression Model

Regression modelling was conducted to examine the correlation between the expectation of the instructors and the final take-aways of the students on motivation and satisfaction. In this manner, the study determines the relevance of various experiential learning activities, which serve as a compass in developing a framework of which format of experiential learning activities can be utilised for business education.

The study presents three independent variables:

IV_1: Experiential course learning format;

IV_2: Nature of the subject; and

IV_3: Student characteristics;

while there are four major dependent variables:

DV_1: Motivation (MOT), under DV_1:MOT,

DV_{1a}: Intrinsic Motivation (*InMOT_Composite*);

and DV_{1b}: Self-efficacy Motivation (SEMOT_Composite), which will be further examined and analysed;

DV_2: Satisfaction (SAT), under DV_2:SAT,

DV_{2a}: Course content satisfaction (CCSAT_*Composite*); and

DV_{2b}: Professor–student interaction satisfaction (PSSAT_Composite), which will be further examined and analysed;

DV_3: Incremental domain knowledge incremental (Domain Knowledge); and

DV_4: Positive influence on work and/or life aspects (PositiveInf).

To examine the impacts on student motivation, the following model was utilised, which model mirrors the structure of the satisfaction model. Similarly, it was applied to the subset questions of incremental domain knowledge and positive influence on work and/or life aspect models, which incorporated the same predictors and control variables. By examining the effects of these variables on student motivation (DV_1), the model aims to reveal the primary drivers of student engagement and enthusiasm in experiential learning environments.

$$MOT_{ij} = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 RealEL_j + \beta_2 Soft_j + \beta_3 X_i + \beta_4 X_j + \epsilon x,$$

where,

MOTij: student i's motivation to participate in experiential learning activity j;

RealELj: a binary variable that takes a value of 1 if the format is real-world experiential learning; otherwise, it is 0;

Soft: a binary variable that takes a value of 1 for soft skills; otherwise, it is 0;

Xi: other control variables related to student i's demographics, including age, gender and income, among others;

Xj: other control variables related to course or experiential learning activity j, including course relevance to work and student–teacher interaction.

DV_{1a}: Intrinsic Motivation (*InMOT_Composite)* and DV_{1b}: Self-Efficacy Motivation (*SEMOT_Composite*) will be further examined and analysed by replacing DV_1 and repeating the same regression model.

To examine the impacts on student satisfaction (DV_2), the following model will be considered:

$$SAT_{ij} = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 RealEL_j + \beta_2 Soft_j + \beta_3 X_i + \beta_4 X_j + \epsilon x,$$

where:

Sat_{ij}: student *i*'s satisfaction in participating in experiential learning activity *j*;

$RealEL_j$: a binary variable that takes a value of 1 if the format is real-world experiential learning; otherwise, it is 0;

Soft: a binary variable that takes a value of 1 for soft skills; otherwise, it is 0;

X_i: other control variables related to student *i*'s demographics, including age, gender and income.

X_j: other control variables related to course or experiential learning activity *j,* including course relevance to work and student–teacher interaction.

DV_{2a}: Course Content Satisfaction (CCSAT_*Composite*) and DV_{2b}: Professor–Student Interaction Satisfaction (PSSAT_Composite) will be further examined and analysed by replacing DV_2 and repeating the same regression model.

To examine the impacts on the incremental domain knowledge of students (DV_3), the following model will be considered:

$$DomainKnowledge_{ij} = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 RealEL_j + \beta_2 Soft_j + \beta_3 X_i + \beta_4 X_j + \epsilon x,$$

where:

$DomainKnowledge_{ij}$: student *i*'s satisfaction in participating in experiential learning activity *j*

$RealEL_j$: a binary variable that takes a value of 1 if the format used is real-world experiential learning; otherwise, it is 0;

Soft: a binary variable that takes a value of 1 for soft skills; otherwise, it is 0;

X_i: other control variables related to student *i*'s demographics, including age, gender and income;

X_j: other control variables related to course or experiential learning activity *j,* including course relevance to work and student–teacher interaction.

To examine the impacts on positive influence on work and life aspects (DV_4), the following model will be considered:

$$PositiveInf_{ij} = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 RealEL_j + \beta_2 Soft_j + \beta_3 X_i + \beta_4 X_j + \epsilon x,$$

where:

$PositiveInf_{ij}$: student *i*'s satisfaction in participating in experiential learning activity *j*

$RealEL_j$: a binary variable that takes a value of 1 if the format used is real-world experiential learning; otherwise, it is 0;

Soft: a binary variable that takes a value of 1 for soft skills; otherwise, it is 0;

X_i: other control variables related to student *i*'s demographics, including age, gender and income.

X_j: other control variables related to course or experiential learning activity *j,* including course relevance to work and student–teacher interaction.

The independent variables were meticulously selected to capture the essential aspects of experiential learning activities. The variable for the format of experiential learning (RealELj) distinguishes between real-world and hypothetical experiential learning, which acknowledges the potential differences in the perceptions and outcomes of students based on the authenticity of the learning experience. The variable for the nature of the subject ($Soft_j$) differentiates between soft (transferable) and hard (academic abilities and technical knowledge) skills.

By synthesising the insights gleaned from both regression models, the study aims to develop a comprehensive framework that guides the selection and design of experiential learning activities in business education. This framework considers the complex interplay among learning format, nature of the subject and student characteristics, to provide educators with evidence-based recommendations for the formulation of engaging and effective learning experiences. The findings hold the potential to significantly advance the current understanding of ELT and to inform the practice of business education, which ultimately leads to improved student outcomes and enhanced preparation for future careers.

3.2 Ethical Considerations

The study on the impact of experiential learning activities on student motivation and satisfaction in business education raises several important ethical considerations that must be addressed to ensure the integrity and trustworthiness of the research. As a researcher, my responsibility is to conduct the study in accordance with established ethical principles and guidelines, including the Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice of the university, the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act (2018). This section discusses the key ethical considerations related to the research design and methodology, selection and recruitment of participants, informed consent and confidentiality, expected risks and mitigation strategies, data protection and storage and ethical approval and monitoring.

Another ethical consideration related to the research design is the potential for researcher bias, particularly in the qualitative phase of the study. As the sole

interviewer and data analyst, I acknowledge that my experiences, values and assumptions may influence the manner in which I interpret and represent the perspectives of the instructors (Berger, 2015). To mitigate this risk, I engaged in reflexive practices, such as keeping a research journal and seeking feedback from peers and supervisors, to increase self-awareness and maintain a critical stance towards my subjectivity (Finlay, 2002).

3.2.1 Participant Selection and Recruitment

The target population for this study includes undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in business programmes at the CUHK who had participated in experiential learning activities as part of coursework. The sampling frame would be obtained from the student records of the university and a multi-stage cluster sampling method would be employed to ensure the representativeness and generalisability of the findings.

From an ethical standpoint, the selection and recruitment of participants must be conducted in a fair, transparent and non-coercive manner (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I ensured that the potential participants were fully informed of the nature and purpose of the study, as well as their rights and responsibilities as research subjects. I emphasised that participation would be entirely voluntary and that they were free to decline or withdraw from the study at any time without negative consequences.

To avoid any perception of undue influence or coercion, I did not directly recruit students who are currently enrolled in courses that I teach or supervise. Instead, I relied on personal networks and various communication channels (e.g. WhatsApp, WeChat and email) to deliver the anonymous survey link to potential participants. This approach helped in maintaining a clear separation between my roles as a

researcher and an instructor and minimised the risk of students feeling pressured or obligated to participate.

Another ethical consideration related to participant selection was the inclusion of vulnerable populations such as minors or individuals with diminished autonomy (Creswell & Poth, 2018). To address this issue, I ensured that all participants were aged more than 18 years and capable of providing legal valid informed consent. I also avoided targeting any specific groups or individuals who may be considered vulnerable or at risk of exploitation.

3.2.2 Informed Consent and Confidentiality

Obtaining informed consent from the participants is a fundamental ethical principle in research involving human subjects (Shahnazarian et al., 2013). I ensured that all participants were fully informed of the nature and purpose of the research as well as their rights and responsibilities as research subjects. This process was accomplished through the use of detailed informed consent forms that clearly outline the study objectives, procedures, risks and benefits, confidentiality measures and contact information of the researcher.

In the qualitative phase, course instructors received an interview invitation, a list of interview questions, objectives, venue, time, duration and format of the meeting (Zoom or face-to-face) in advance. Interviews were only conducted after obtaining written informed consent and the participants were informed that the interviews would be recorded by note-taking and audio recording with the option to opt in before the interview. The participants were also assured that they had the right to refuse to answer any questions or terminate the interview at any time without negative consequences.

In the quantitative phase, the self-administered questionnaire included a consent statement on the first page and the participants need to grant consent before to responding to the questionnaire. The consent statement clearly informed the participants of their right to skip any questions that they do not wish to answer and to withdraw from the study at any point without any penalties or repercussions.

Protecting the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants is another critical ethical consideration in this study. All data collected through interviews and questionnaires will be kept strictly confidential and would and will only be accessible to the researcher and authorised members of the research team. Any personally identifiable information will be omitted from the data files and reports and participants were assigned unique identification codes to protect their identity.

In the qualitative phase, the names of the interviewees were fictionalised or replaced by a random number to ensure anonymity. In the quantitative phase, all questionnaires were administered anonymously and no personally identifiable information was collected or reported. The participants were assured that their responses would be aggregated and presented in a manner that did not allow individual identification.

3.2.3 Anticipated Risks and Mitigation Strategies

Although the proposed study did not involve any physical risks or invasive procedures, several potential psychological and social risks were carefully considered and addressed. These included the risk of emotional distress or discomfort due to the discussion of sensitive topics related to personal experiences and opinions, the risk of breach of confidentiality or privacy and the risk of coercion

or undue influence in the recruitment and consent processes.

To mitigate the risk of emotional distress or discomfort, I ensured that the participants were fully informed of the nature and purpose of the study as well as their right to refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time without negative consequences. I remained attentive to any signs of distress or discomfort during the interviews and questionnaires.

To minimise the risk of breach of confidentiality or privacy, I implemented strict data protection and storage measures, as described in the next section.

3.2.4 Data Protection and Storage

Ensuring the security and confidentiality of participant data is a critical ethical responsibility. All data collected through the interviews and questionnaires were stored and processed in accordance with the GDPR and the Data Protection Act (2018).

To protect the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants, all files that contain personal or sensitive information were encrypted and stored on secure, password-protected cloud-based platforms, such as Microsoft OneDrive and Google Drive. Access to these files was restricted to the researcher and authorised members of the research team and all files will be regularly backed up to prevent data loss or corruption.

No personal or sensitive information would or will be stored on personal computers, USB devices or other portable storage media. All paper documents, such as signed consent forms or interview notes, will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in a secure location and will be destroyed after they are no longer needed for the purposes of

the study.

The participants would be fully informed of the data protection and storage measures in place, as well as their rights under the GDPR and Data Protection Act (2018). This includes the right to access, rectify or erase personal data as well as the right to object to the processing of data or to withdraw consent at any time.

3.2.5 Ethical Approval and Monitoring

Prior to data collection, this study underwent a rigorous ethical review process to ensure that it complied with the relevant ethical guidelines and regulations. This process involved submitting a detailed research proposal and ethical approval application to the Ethics Committee of the University of Wales Trinity Saint Davis.

The application for ethical approval included a comprehensive description of the research design and methodology, participant selection and recruitment procedures, informed consent and confidentiality measures, anticipated risks and mitigation strategies, data protection and storage protocols and other relevant ethical considerations.

Throughout the research process, I remained committed to upholding the highest ethical standards and to prioritising the welfare and interests of the participants. This aspect included being transparent and honest in communications with the participants, respecting their autonomy and right to make informed decisions, minimising any potential risks or harms and ensuring that the benefits of the research outweigh any costs or burdens to the participants.

In conclusion, this study raised several important ethical considerations related to research design and methodology, participant selection and recruitment, informed

consent and confidentiality, expected risks and mitigation strategies, data protection and storage and ethical approval and monitoring. As the researcher, I am committed to conducting the study in accordance with the established ethical principles and guidelines and to prioritising the welfare and interests of the participants throughout the research process.

Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

4.1 Phase 1: Qualitative Analysis and Results

This chapter presents the qualitative analysis and results of the semi-structured interviews conducted with the seven instructors from the Faculty of Business Administration at the CUHK. The objective of the qualitative phase was to gain insights into the design, implementation and assessment of experiential learning activities across subject areas and student populations. The findings were used to inform the development of the instrument for the quantitative survey and provide context for the interpretation of the quantitative results.

4.2 Frequency Analysis and Coding of Qualitative Data

The transcripts of the semi-structured interviews were analysed using thematic analysis techniques (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher engaged in a systematic and iterative process of coding and interpreting the data by using deductive and inductive strategies to identify the most salient and meaningful themes. The coding process involved the following steps.

(1) Familiarisation with the data: the researcher read and re-read the interview transcripts to immerse in the data and gain a holistic understanding of the perspectives and experiences of the instructors.

(2) Initial coding: the researcher assigned initial codes to capture key concepts, ideas and patterns that emerged from the interviews. These codes were a mix of descriptive, in vivo and process codes (Saldaña, 2021).

(3) Search for themes: the researcher examined the initial codes and grouped them into potential themes and sub-themes based on similarities, differences and relationships.

(4) Review of themes: the researcher refined and revised the themes and ensured that they were internally consistent, distinct from one another and accurately reflected the data.

(5) Definition and name of themes: the researcher provided clear definitions and names for each theme to capture the essence of each theme and its relationship to the research questions.

4.2.1 Data Analysis

To ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of the qualitative findings, the study employed several strategies, including member checking (i.e. sharing the findings with the participants for validation), peer debriefing (i.e. discussing the findings with colleagues to challenge assumptions and interpretations) and triangulation with other data sources (i.e. comparing the findings with the quantitative results and the literature review).

4.3 Results

4.3.1 Frequency Analysis and Coding

Based on the data collected from the seven semi-structured interviews, the study conducted frequency analysis to identify the most common types of experiential learning activities, focus on soft versus hard skills, perceived impact on student motivation and satisfaction and the challenges and support encountered by the instructors. Table 4.1 presents the results.

Table 4.1: Frequency Analysis of Qualitative Data

Code #	Code		Description	Frequency	Percentage
1	Format of experiential learning	(i)	Real experiential learning activities	12	85.7%
		(ii)	Hypothetical experiential learning activities	25	100%
2	Subject nature	(i)	Soft skills focus	18	72%
		(ii)	Hard skills focus	19	76%
3	Perception of course instructors	(i)	Perceived improvement in student motivation	6	85.7%
		(ii)	Perceived improvement in student satisfaction	7	100%
4	Challenges	(i)	Time and resource constraints	4	57.1%
		(ii)	Preparation time	3	42.9%
		(iii)	Finding suitable guest speakers	3	42.9%
		(iv)	Higher student expectations	2	28.6%
		(v)	Need for institutional support	2	28.6%
		(vi)	Large class size	1	14.3%
		(vii)	Limitations of online	1	14.3%

			learning		
		(viii)	Risk of poorly designed activities	1	14.3%
		(ix)	Aligning content of guest speakers with course objectives	1	14.3%
		(x)	Uncertainty of outcomes	1	14.3%
		(xi)	Finding appropriate topics and cases	1	14.3%
5	Support needed	(i)	Teaching grants and funding	3	42.9%
		(ii)	Personal networks	3	42.9%
		(iii)	Administrative support	2	28.6%
		(Iv)	Student helpers	1	14.3%

Frequency analysis reveals several key patterns in the qualitative data. First, hypothetical experiential learning activities (100%; e.g. case studies and simulations) were more frequently mentioned than real experiential learning activities (87.5%) (e.g. corporate projects and field trips). Second, a relatively equal emphasis was observed on the development of soft (72%) and hard (76%) skills through experiential learning activities. This distinction helps to elucidate the prevalence of the different types of experiential learning activities within the courses.

At the instructor level, the table reveals that a high percentage of instructors perceived improvement in student motivation (85.7%) and satisfaction (100%) as a result of incorporating experiential learning in their courses. This finding highlighted

the positive impact of experiential learning on student engagement and outcomes from the perspectives of the instructors. The revised table also presents the challenges faced by the instructors in implementing experiential learning activities in which time and resource constraints were the most frequently mentioned challenge (57.1% of instructors). Other notable challenges include finding suitable guest speakers (42.9%), preparation time (42.9%) and higher student expectations (28.6%). Regarding support needed, the table indicates that teaching grants and funding (42.9%) and personal networks (42.9%) were the most frequently cited forms of support followed by administrative support (28.6%) and student helpers (14.3%).

4.3.2 Thematic Analysis

4.3.2.1 Thematic Analysis (I)

The thematic analysis of the qualitative data yielded four main themes, namely, the diversity of experiential learning activities in business education, importance of balancing soft and hard skills development, perceived impact on student motivation and satisfaction and challenges and support in implementing experiential learning. Each theme is discussed in detail in the subsequent text with illustrative quotes from the interviews with the instructors.

Theme 1: Diversity of Experiential Learning Activities in Business Education

The interviews revealed a wide range of experiential learning activities that are being used in various business courses at the CUHK. These activities can be broadly categorised into two types, namely, real and hypothetical experiential learning activities.

Real experiential learning activities involve the participation of actual clients, projects or cases from the business world. Examples of such activities, as

mentioned by the instructors, include corporate group projects, field trips and guest speakers from the industry. For instance, Instructor A described the use of corporate group projects in his Business Practicum and Corporate Project courses:

> We've been conducting more and more collaborative projects in recent years. The idea is to incorporate outside corporate partners so that students can obtain real-world experience. Students can truly use what they've learned from textbooks when they work on joint projects, as you asked previously. They then tackle real-world issues and deliver them to corporate clients.

Similarly, Instructor F discussed the use of field trips and guest speakers in his courses:

> The Taiwan tour is unique in that students go to visit and learn about a variety of operations. It's not exactly what I teach in class; rather, it's about people learning on the trip and applying what they've learned, including knowledge from past MBA or EMBA courses.

> In Technology Commercialisation, students work on real-world projects outside of the classroom. It does not have a set time limit.

Alternatively, hypothetical experiential learning activities involve simulated or fictional scenarios, cases or projects. These activities provide students with opportunities to practice and apply knowledge and skills in a controlled and structured environment. Examples of hypothetical experiential learning activities, as

mentioned by the instructors, include case studies, simulation games, role plays and mock interviews. For instance, Instructor A described the use of simulation games in his Macroeconomics courses:

> The World Trade Organisation is a simulated activity for undergraduate Macroeconomics. This activity is for undergraduate students only.

Similarly, Instructor B discussed the use of case studies, role plays and mock interviews in his Organisational Behaviour and Human Capital Management courses:

> I presently rely heavily on case studies.

> In terms of soft skills, I may concentrate more on them in my future teaching.

The diversity of experiential learning activities used in business education reflects the efforts of the instructors to provide students with a range of learning experiences that bridge the gap between theory and practice. By incorporating real and hypothetical activities, instructors aim to develop the skills and competencies of students in various contexts and prepare them for the challenges of the real business world.

Theme 2: Importance of Balancing Soft and Hard Skill Development

Another key theme that emerged from the interviews was the importance of balancing between development of soft and hard skills through experiential learning activities. Soft skills refer to interpersonal, communication and social skills, while

hard skills denote technical knowledge and expertise. The instructors emphasised that both types of skills are essential for success in the business world and should be given equal attention in business education.

For instance, Instructor A discussed the development of soft and hard skills in his courses:

> Analytical skills are essential for economics and statistics, but for business students it's all about developing communication and project management skills, as well as citation skills. I'm hoping to train those skills through these activities.

Similarly, Instructor C highlighted the importance of both skills in his Strategic Management and Technology Innovation courses:

> I believe it might be both. So let me try to say that and the difficult skill is because my case is a strategic case study. As a result, students must identify what strategy is and how it might become a primary application of what they have studied, which is why it should be classified as a hard talent. However, I must point out that I have divided the entire class into distinct teams. Let's say they are divided into ten teams and then in each of these ten teams, they must find people, work together and discuss what strategy they want to implement, because every decision they make will affect their final outcome. So that is why having more compromise or maybe a debate and how they might list after a final decision is also equally vital and why it could also sharpen and their soft skill as well.

Instructor F also emphasised the equal importance of soft and hard skills in his entrepreneurship courses:

> When it comes to Applied Entrepreneurship, I believe it is not an issue of favouring soft or hard skills; both are necessary. Entrepreneurship entails a variety of characteristics, such as dealing with other entrepreneurs, which requires effective communication (soft skills). Students still need hard skills in order to analyse and build viable company models, design fundraising plans and communicate to investors. As a result, both soft and hard skills are essential. This is the nature of business; you need both.

The emphasis on balancing between soft and hard skills development reflects the recognition of the instructors of the complex and multifaceted nature of the business world. By providing students with opportunities to develop both types of skills through experiential learning activities, instructors aim to prepare them for the diverse challenges and responsibilities they will face in future careers.

Theme 3: Perceived Impact on Student Motivation and Satisfaction

The instructors consistently reported positive perceptions of the impact of experiential learning activities on student motivation and satisfaction. The majority observed improvement in student engagement, participation and overall learning experience as a result of the incorporation of experiential learning in courses.

For instance, Instructor A discussed the positive impact on student motivation and satisfaction in his courses:

> It’s achievable, actually. Some students may engage more, while others may

engage less. In the case of games or specific activities, engagement is higher, while in case studies it is lower.

Yes, we also do course reviews and some of the students have even said that they like this kind of work. They enjoyed these activities.

Similarly, Instructor C highlighted the positive impact on student participation and learning experience:

I believe that number one, after you have come out with this experiential learning, it is not easy at all because you actually need to have a very solid understanding of the specific case. You just think about it really thoroughly. It's simply not easy and you should make it more interactive. It's quite difficult. Another is that we really need to better understand what I described from the student's taste, which is why I believe that constant enhancement and then adjustment to attempt to modify the flavour for the student will be really significant.

Instructor G also emphasised the positive impact on student engagement and learning outcomes:

I believe I have a more effective situation. I haven't stated that I utilised this for three years of learning. I have been teaching for three years. So I don't have this experiential learning the first year and then I have to implement it the second year. So, we'll take the online approach because we had the COVID-

> 19, which is why we can't have physical contact. For the third time I teach, I also add our physical experiential learning. So that's why, after three years of quantitative and qualitative evaluation, we've observed that some of the difference will be this experiential learning, which will give me an improved understanding of the effectiveness of this new strategy.

The positive perceptions of the impact on student motivation and satisfaction imply that experiential learning activities are an effective means of engaging students and enhancing learning experiences. By providing students with opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills in real-world or simulated contexts, instructors can create a more meaningful and rewarding learning environment that fosters the intrinsic motivation and satisfaction of students.

Theme 4: Challenges and Support in Implementing Experiential Learning

The interviews also revealed several challenges faced by the instructors in implementing experiential learning activities in their courses. These challenges can be broadly categorised into three types, namely, time and resource constraints, finding suitable guest speakers and cases and the need for institutional support.

The instructors most frequently mentioned time and resource constraints as a challenges. Preparing and implementing experiential learning activities typically require significant time and effort from the instructors as well as financial resources for developing teaching materials or acquiring simulation platforms. For instance, Instructor A discussed the challenges of preparation time and student expectations:

> The first obstacle is preparation. Experience learning takes much more time to prepare than traditional teaching. Preparation includes design and

implementation, as well as material preparation.

The third challenge is the higher expectations of students. For example, if it is just a lecture, students can just sit there and not participate much. However, for these activities, students need to prepare in advance, then actively participate and then complete non-traditional assignments after the lecture. This puts higher demands on students.

Similarly, Instructor E highlighted time and resource constraints:

I believe that number one, after you have come out with this experiential learning, it is not easy at all because you actually need to have a very solid understanding of the specific case. You just think about it really thoroughly. It's simply not easy and you should make it more interactive. It's quite difficult. Another is that we really need to better understand what I described from the student's taste, which is why I believe that constant enhancement and then adjustment to attempt to modify the flavour for the student will be really significant.

Several instructors also mentioned that finding suitable guest speakers and cases that align with course objectives is another challenge. For instance, Instructor B discussed the difficulty of finding guest speakers who can present in English:

The second aspect, of course, is that if we want to introduce more real-world elements to students, what teachers can do is limited. Not every teacher is

> well-connected or has easy access to resources. It's not easy to find resources for some attractions, for example. However, if we have an office to help promote, connect or facilitate such matters ….

Similarly, Instructor C mentioned the challenge of aligning the material of guest speakers with course objectives:

> Mm, other challenges, like finding guest speakers, is one. On the one hand, the topic of what the speakers discuss should be as close to what is taught in class as possible. I have no control over what the speaker says; but, I can give them a topic, such as 'Can you talk about team formation in product development?' It is, for example, fairly broad. Or I might ask them directly to share their entrepreneurship experience in general. They may not have prepared slides expressly for my class, so they discuss that topic and then I consider how to tie it to the theoretical topics I teach. I don't have complete control over the details, but the general direction is correct.

A few instructors highlighted the need for institutional support as a challenge in implementing experiential learning activities. Support can take various forms, such as teaching grants and funding, student helpers, administrative support and programme or curriculum revamp. For instance, Instructor A mentioned the availability of teaching grants and student helpers as support for implementing experiential learning:

> The university also has teaching grants available, so if you have a new teaching

project, you can submit an application for a grant to help fund it.

Student helpers are responsible for gathering information for cases.

Similarly, Instructor E emphasised the importance of administrative support and funding:

(1) Admin support, (2) funding support, (3) motivation of other teachers to join, (4) social capital (network) and (5) programme or curriculum revamp.

The challenges and support in implementing experiential learning activities underscore the need for a collaborative and systematic approach for incorporating experiential learning in business education. By addressing time and resource constraints, finding suitable guest speakers and cases and providing institutional support, business schools can create a conducive environment for instructors in which to design and implement effective experiential learning activities that enhance student motivation and satisfaction.

4.3.2.2 Thematic Analysis (II)

The thematic analysis of the interview data also revealed several key themes and sub-themes related to the design, implementation and assessment of experiential learning activities in business education. These themes provided valuable insights into the perspectives and experiences of the course instructors and elucidated the factors that influence the effectiveness of experiential learning in enhancing student motivation, satisfaction and skill development.

The study also calculated the frequency of the identified themes and sub-themes

across the seven interviews to provide a sense of prevalence and importance. Table 4.2 presents the frequency analysis of the main themes and sub-themes.

Table 4.2 Frequency Analysis of Themes and Sub-themes

Theme #	Theme		Sub theme	Frequency	Percentage
1	Types of experiential learning activities	(i)	Case studies	7	100%
		(ii)	Simulations and games	5	71.4%
		(iii)	Real-world projects and collaborations	4	57.1%
		(iv)	Guest speakers and industry visits	3	42.9%
2	Reasons for using experiential learning	(i)	Enhancing student engagement and motivation	7	100%
		(ii)	Bridging theory and practice	6	85.7%
		(iii)	Developing soft skills	5	71.4%
		(iv)	Preparing students for future careers	4	57.1%
3	Challenges in implementing experiential learning	(i)	Time and resource constraints	5	71.4%
		(ii)	Ensuring alignment with learning objectives	4	57.1%
		(iii)	Assessing and evaluating student outcomes	3	42.9%
		(iv)	Adapting to online and hybrid formats	2	28.9%

4	Strategies for overcoming challenges	(i)	Leveraging institutional support and resources	4	57.1%
		(ii)	Collaborating with industry partners	3	42.9%
		(iii)	Providing clear guidelines and expectations	3	42.9%
		(iv)	Incorporating reflection and debriefing sessions	2	28.6%
5	Perceived impact on student outcomes	(i)	Enhanced understanding and application of concepts	6	85.7%
		(ii)	Improved soft skills and competencies	5	71.4%
		(iii)	Increased confidence and self-efficacy	4	57.1%
		(iv)	Positive influence on career readiness	3	42.9%

4.3.2.2.1 Types of Experiential Learning Activities

The course instructors described a wide range of experiential learning activities that they have incorporated into their business courses. The most frequently mentioned activities were case studies (100%), simulations and games (71.4%), real-world projects and collaborations (57.1%) and guest speakers and industry visits (42.9%). All instructors used case study (100%) a few of which used classic cases from sources such as Harvard Business School and others who are developing their cases based on real-world examples. The instructors emphasised the importance

of using cases to help students apply theoretical concepts to practical situations and develop analytical and problem-solving skills.

Simulations and games were also popular among the instructors in which five out of seven (71.4%) mentioned their use. These activities ranged from online role-playing games and virtual business simulations to in class games and competitions. The instructors reported that simulations and games provide a safe and engaging environment for students to experiment with different strategies and learn from mistakes.

Four instructors (57.1%) mentioned real-world projects and collaborations, who highlighted the value of providing students with authentic, hands-on experiences by working with actual clients or organisations. These activities included consulting projects, entrepreneurial ventures and corporate partnerships. The instructors underscored the importance of these experiences in helping students develop practical skills and gain exposure to real-world challenges.

Three instructors (42.9%) mentioned guest speakers and industry visits, who noted the benefits of bringing in external experts and exposing students to different perspectives and experiences. These activities included guest lectures, panel discussions and site visits to companies or organisations. The instructors emphasised the role of these experiences in helping students build professional networks and gain insights into different career paths.

4.3.2.2.2 Reasons for Using Experiential Learning

The course instructors identified several key reasons for incorporating experiential learning activities into business courses. The most frequently mentioned reasons were enhancing student engagement and motivation, bridging theory and practice, developing soft skills and preparing students for future careers.

The seven instructors (100%) pointed to the importance of experiential learning in enhancing student engagement and motivation. They noted that hands-on, interactive activities help students become increasingly actively involved in the learning process and develop an in-depth understanding of the subject matter. The instructors also highlighted the role of experiential learning in making course content more relevant and meaningful to students, which can increase their interest and enthusiasm for learning.

Six instructors (85.7%) mentioned the value of experiential learning in bridging the gap between theory and practice. They noted that experiential learning helps students develop a more nuanced and practical understanding of the subject matter by providing them with opportunities for applying theoretical concepts to real-world situations. The instructors emphasised the importance of this connection in preparing students for the challenges and complexities of the business world.

Five instructors (71.4%) identified the development of soft skills as a key reason for using experiential learning. They noted that activities, such as case studies, simulations and real-world projects, provide students with opportunities to practice and refine communication, teamwork, leadership and problem-solving skills. The instructors highlighted the importance of these skills in preparing students for success in future careers.

Four instructors (57.1%) mentioned the role of experiential learning in preparing students for future careers. They proposed that experiential learning helps students develop the skills, knowledge and competencies required for success in the workplace by providing them with authentic, real-world experiences and exposing them to different industries and professions. The instructors also cited the value of experiential learning in helping students build professional networks and gain

insights into different career paths.

4.3.2.2.3 Challenges in Implementing Experiential Learning

The course instructors identified several challenges in implementing experiential learning activities in business courses. They most frequently mentioned time and resource constraints (71.4%), ensuring alignment with learning objectives (57.1%), assessing and evaluating student outcomes (42.9%) and adapting to online and hybrid formats (28.6%).

Five instructors (71.4%) pointed to time and resource constraints as a significant challenge in implementing experiential learning. They discussed that designing and facilitating hands-on, interactive activities can be time-consuming and require significant preparation and coordination. The instructors also highlighted the need for adequate resources, such as technology, materials and support staff, to effectively implement experiential learning activities.

Four instructors (57.1%) identified alignment between experiential learning activities and course learning objectives as a challenge. They expressed that designing activities that effectively target specific learning outcomes while providing engaging and meaningful experiences for students can be difficult. They emphasised the importance of carefully planning and structuring experiential learning activities to ensure that they align with the overall goals and objectives of the course.

Three instructors (42.9%) mentioned the challenge of assessing and evaluating student outcomes in experiential learning activities. They cited that traditional assessment methods, such as exams and essays, may inadequately capture the skills and competencies developed through hands-on, interactive experiences. The instructors emphasised the need for authentic, performance-based assessments that align with the learning objectives and provide meaningful feedback to students.

Two instructors (28.6%) identified the challenge of adapting experiential learning activities to online and hybrid formats, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. They discussed that transitioning hands-on, interactive experiences to virtual environments can be difficult and may require significant modifications to the design and delivery of activities. The instructors also highlighted the need for creative solutions and flexibility in adapting experiential learning to different modes of instruction.

4.3.2.2.4 Strategies for Overcoming Challenges

The course instructors identified several strategies for overcoming the challenges associated with implementing experiential learning activities in business education. The most frequently mentioned strategies were leveraging institutional support and resources (57.1%), collaborating with industry partners (42.9%), providing clear guidelines and expectations (42.9%) and incorporating reflection and debriefing sessions (28.6%).

Four instructors (57.1%) stated the importance of leveraging institutional support and resources in implementing experiential learning activities. They declared that access to funding, technology and support staff can help mitigate a few of the time and resource constraints associated with designing and facilitating hands-on, interactive experiences. The instructors also stressed the value of institutional recognition and incentives for innovative teaching practices in encouraging the adoption of experiential learning.

Three instructors (42.9%) identified collaboration with industry partners as a key strategy for overcoming challenges in experiential learning. They mentioned that partnering with companies, organisations and alumni can provide access to real-world projects, mentors and resources, which can enhance the authenticity and

relevance of experiential learning activities. They also emphasised the importance of establishing clear expectations and guidelines for industry partnerships to ensure that they are mutually beneficial and aligned with the goals of the course.

Three instructors (42.9%) cited the importance of providing clear guidelines and expectations for students in experiential learning activities. By communicating the learning objectives, assessment criteria and roles and responsibilities upfront, instructors can help students navigate the challenges and uncertainties associated with hands-on, interactive experiences. The instructors stressed the value of providing ongoing feedback and support to students throughout the experiential learning process.

Two instructors (28.6%) identified the incorporation of reflection and debriefing sessions as a key strategy for enhancing the effectiveness of experiential learning activities. By providing structured opportunities for students to reflect on their experiences, share insights and discuss lessons learned, instructors can help students develop an in-depth understanding of the subject matter and transfer their learning to new situations. The instructors also mentioned the importance of using reflection and debriefing sessions in providing feedback and support to students and identifying areas for improvement in the design and delivery of experiential learning activities.

4.3.2.2.5 Perceived Impact on Student Outcomes

The course instructors identified several perceived impacts of experiential learning activities on student outcomes in business education. The most frequently mentioned ones were enhanced understanding and application of concepts (85.7%), improved soft skills and competencies (71.4%), increased confidence and self-efficacy (57.1%) and positive influence on career readiness (42.9%).

Six (85.7%) pointed to the impact of experiential learning on enhancing the understanding and application of students of course concepts. They noted that by providing opportunities for students to engage with the subject matter in a hands-on, interactive manner, experiential learning can help students develop an in-depth deeper and nuanced understanding of key theories, frameworks and principles. The instructors also underscored the value of experiential learning in helping students apply knowledge to real-world situations and develop practical skills and competencies.

Five instructors (71.4%) identified the impact of experiential learning on improving the soft skills and competencies of students. They cited that activities, such as case studies, simulations and real-world projects, provide students with opportunities to practice and refine communication, teamwork, leadership and problem-solving skills. They also emphasised the importance of these skills in preparing students for success in future careers and in navigating the complexity of the business world.

Four instructors (57.1%) mentioned the impact of experiential learning on increasing the confidence and self-efficacy of students. They noted that experiential learning helps students develop a greater sense of self-assurance and belief in their abilities through opportunities to take ownership of learning, experiment with different strategies and learn from mistakes. The instructors also highlighted the value of experiential learning in helping students develop resilience and adaptability in the face of challenges and uncertainties.

Three instructors (42.9%) recognised the positive influence of experiential learning on the career readiness of students. They disclosed experiential learning helps students develop the skills, knowledge and competencies required for success in the workplace. Towards this end, students should be provided with authentic, real-

world experiences and be exposed them to different industries and professions. The instructors also highlighted the value of experiential learning in helping students build professional networks, gain insights into different career paths and make informed decisions about future goals and aspirations.

4.3.2.2.6 Results of the Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative analysis of the semi-structured interviews with the course instructors revealed several key findings related to the design, implementation and assessment of experiential learning activities in business education. These findings present valuable insights into the perspectives and experiences of the instructors and elucidate the factors that influence the effectiveness of experiential learning in enhancing student motivation, satisfaction and skill development.

First, analysis revealed a wide range of experiential learning activities that are used in business courses, including case studies; simulations and games; real-world projects and collaborations; and guest speaker and industry visits. The instructors selected these activities due to their ability to engage students, bridge theory and practice, develop soft skills and prepare students for future careers. The diversity of activities reflects the flexibility and adaptability of experiential learning approaches in meeting the needs and goals of different courses and diverse student populations.

Second, analysis identified several key challenges associated with the implementation of experiential learning activities, including time and resource constraints, alignment with learning objectives, assessment and evaluation of student outcomes and adaption to online and hybrid formats. These challenges point to the need for careful planning, coordination and support in designing and facilitating effective experiential learning experiences. Particularly, the instructors emphasised the importance of leveraging institutional resources, collaborating with

industry partners, providing clear guidelines and expectations and incorporating reflection and debriefing sessions in overcoming these challenges.

Third, analysis revealed several perceived impacts of experiential learning activities on student outcomes, including enhanced understanding and application of concepts, improved soft skills and competencies, increased confidence and self-efficacy and positive influence on career readiness. These findings implied that experiential learning can exert a significant and multifaceted impact on the academic, personal and professional development of students. The instructors underscored the value of experiential learning in providing students with authentic, meaningful and transferable learning experiences, which prepare them for success in future careers and in navigating the complexity of the business world.

Finally, analysis highlighted the importance of two additional measures of student outcomes that emerged from the qualitative data, namely, incremental domain knowledge and positive influence on work and life aspects. Several instructors cited that experiential learning activities can help students develop an in-depth and nuanced understanding of the subject matter, which can lead to incremental gains in domain-specific knowledge and expertise. Additionally, a number of instructors described the potential of experiential learning to exert a positive impact on the personal and professional lives of students beyond the classroom by enabling them to develop transferable skills, build networks and gain insights into various career paths and opportunities.

4.3.2.2.7 Implications for the Quantitative Phase

The qualitative findings pose several important implications for the design and implementation of the quantitative phase.

(i) The identified themes and sub-themes related to the types of experiential

learning activities, reasons underlying the use of experiential learning and challenges, strategies and perceived impacts on student outcomes can inform the development of specific survey items and scales. By incorporating these themes into the instrument, the researcher can ensure that the quantitative measures are grounded in the real-world experiences and perspectives of the course instructors.

(ii) The qualitative findings related to incremental domain knowledge and positive impact on work and life aspects suggest the need to include these constructs in the quantitative survey. By assessing the self-reported gains of students in domain-specific knowledge and the perceived impact of experiential learning on their personal and professional growth, the researcher can provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the effectiveness of experiential learning in business education.

(iii) The qualitative findings related to the challenges and strategies associated with the implementation of experiential learning activities can inform the development of specific hypotheses and research questions for the quantitative phase. For example, the researcher may hypothesise that students who participate in experiential learning activities that are well-aligned with the learning objectives of the course and incorporate reflection and debriefing sessions will report higher levels of motivation, satisfaction and skill development compared to those who do not participate.

(iv) The qualitative findings related to the perceived impacts of experiential learning on student outcomes can serve as reference for the selection of specific dependent variables and measures for quantitative analysis. By focusing on constructs, such as understanding and application of concepts,

soft skills and competencies, confidence and self-efficacy and career readiness, the researcher can provide a targeted and meaningful assessment of the effectiveness of experiential learning in achieving the desired student outcomes.

The qualitative analysis of the semi-structured interviews with the course instructors provided a rich and nuanced understanding of the design, implementation and assessment of experiential learning activities in business education. The themes, challenges, strategies and perceived impacts that were identified can inform the development of the instrument for the quantitative survey and guide the analysis and interpretation of the results. By integrating the qualitative and quantitative findings, this study aims to provide a comprehensive and evidence-based understanding of the factors that influence the effectiveness of experiential learning in enhancing student motivation and satisfaction.

In summary, the qualitative analysis laid a strong foundation for the quantitative phase, which intends to provide valuable context and guidance for investigating the complex and multifaceted nature of experiential learning in business education. The findings from this analysis can further inform the development of evidence-based strategies for the design and implementation of effective experiential learning activities that enhance the academic and professional development of students and prepare them for success in the dynamic and challenging business world.

4.5 Phase 2: Quantitative Data Analysis

In this phase, the study examined the relationships between the independent and dependent variables of student motivation and satisfaction in experiential learning activities.

4.5.1 Descriptive Statistics

4.5.1.1 Survey Responses

A total of 426 responses were received from the target population of undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in business programmes at the CUHK. The survey was administered using a self-administered questionnaire, which was distributed through various channels, including WhatsApp, WeChat and email, to ensure a diverse and representative sample size.

The instrument was designed to capture data on the independent variables, including the format of experiential learning (real versus hypothetical), the nature of skills developed (soft versus hard skills), educational programmes (i.e. BBA, MiM, MBA and EMBA), level of education (undergraduate versus postgraduate), gender, years of working experience and year/expected year of graduation. The dependent variables were measured using composite scores for motivation (MOT), which included self-efficacy motivation (self-efficacy motivation (SEMOT)_Composite), intrinsic motivation (InMOT_Composite) and satisfaction (SAT), which included course content satisfaction (course content satisfaction (CCSAT)_Composite) and professor–student interaction satisfaction (PSSAT_Composite). Additionally, based on the qualitative findings, the study added three dependent variables to the survey, namely, overall satisfaction with experiential learning (SAT), motivation in experiential learning (MOT), incremental domain knowledge (DomainKnowledge) and positive influence on work and life aspects (PositiveInf). These additional variables were measured using single-item self-reported scores to capture the perceptions of the students of the broad impact and outcomes of experiential learning activities.

The survey responses were carefully screened for missing values, outliers and

inconsistencies. The study found no missing values for the variables for analysis, which ensured a complete dataset for the quantitative analysis. Data were then coded and prepared for analysis using SPSS.

Descriptive statistics were generated to provide an overview of the sample characteristics and the distribution of responses across the independent and dependent variables. The sample included students from various business programmes, including BBA, MiM, MBA and EMBA, which represents undergraduate and postgraduate levels of education. The study also examined the gender distribution of the respondents along with years of working experience and year/expected year of graduation.

The composite scores for the dependent variables (MOT, SEMOT_Composite, InMOT_Composite, SAT, CCSAT_Composite, PSSAT_Composite, DomainKnowledge and PositiveInf) were calculated based on the responses to corresponding survey items. These composite scores were used in the subsequent regression analyses to examine the relationships between the independent and dependent variables.

In summary, the responses provided a rich dataset for the quantitative analysis, which enabled the examination of the factors that influence student motivation and satisfaction in experiential learning activities. The diverse sample of business students across various programmes and levels of education strengthened the generalisability of the findings to the target population.

4.5.1.2 Demographic Characteristics

Table 4.3: SPSS Results of Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
How old are you? – Please slide to indicate the answer	396	18	62	31.06	9.956
Your estimated annual income (in HKD $ '000) – Please select 5000 (i.e. 5 Million) if your salary exceed the range, thanks!	396	0	5000	971.91	1012.269
Your years of working experience	426	.0	20.0	8.877	7.2766
Year of Graduation or Expected Year of Graduation – Selected Choice	403	-1	2023	30.93	245.213
Valid N (listwise)	371				

The respondents represented a diverse sample of undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in various business programmes at the CUHK. The demographic information collected included years of working experience and year/expected year of graduation.

The age of the respondents ranged from 18 to 62 years with a mean age of 31.06 years (SD = 9.956). This wide age range suggests that the sample included traditional students who entered the programme immediately after completing undergraduate studies and mature students with prior work experience.

For years of working experience, the survey captured information on years of working experience, which ranged from 0 to more than 20 years. The mean of working experience was 8.877 years (SD = 7.2766), which indicated that the sample included students with limited work experience and those with substantial professional experience. This diversity in work experience enabled the exploration of its potential influence on student motivation and satisfaction in experiential

learning activities.

For year/expected year of graduation, the survey collected data on year/expected year of graduation, which ranged from 2020 to 2025 with a median year of 2023. This information is valuable for understanding the temporal context of the responses and for examining any potential trends or changes in student perceptions over time. The estimated annual income of the respondents ranged from HKD $0 to HKD $5,000,000 with a mean of HKD $971,910 (SD = HKD $1,012,269). This wide range of income levels reflects diverse financial backgrounds.

The diverse demographic composition of the sample strengthens the external validity and generalisability of the findings to the broader population of business students at the CUHK. The inclusion of students with different levels of work experience enabled a comprehensive examination of the factors that influence student motivation and satisfaction in experiential learning activities.

4.5.2 Advanced Quantitative Analysis Techniques

To thoroughly examine the relationships between the independent variables and each dependent variable, the study conducted a series of multiple linear regression analyses using SPSS. The enter method was employed, which simultaneously introduced all independent variables into the regression model and enabled the assessment of unique contribution of each variable to the dependent variable while controlling for the effects of the other variables in the model (Field, 2013).

Prior to the regression analyses, data were carefully screened and prepared. The study assessed the assumptions of multiple linear regression, including linearity, normality, homoscedasticity and the absence of multicollinearity, to ensure the validity and reliability of the results. Linearity was evaluated by examining the scatter plots between each independent variable and the dependent variable, to ensure a

linear relationship. Normality was assessed by inspecting the histogram and normal probability plot of the residuals, which confirmed that the residuals were approximately normally distributed. Homoscedasticity was verified by examining the scatter plot of standardised residuals against standardised predicted values, which affirmed that the residuals were evenly distributed across the range of predicted values. Lastly, the study assessed multicollinearity by examining the correlation matrix of the independent variables and by calculating the variance inflation factors (VIF). In this manner, the study ensured that no high correlations existed among the predictors and that the VIF values were within acceptable limits (Hair et al., 2014).

After satisfying the assumptions, separate multiple linear regression models were constructed for each dependent variable as follows: motivation in experiential learning (MOT), self-efficacy motivation (SEMOT_Composite), intrinsic motivation (InMOT_Composite), overall satisfaction with experiential learning (SAT), course content satisfaction (CCSAT_Composite), professor–student interaction satisfaction (PSSAT_Composite) and incremental domain knowledge (DomainKnowledge) and positive impact on work/life aspects (PositiveInf). The independent variables included in each model were the format of experiential learning (real = 1; hypothetical = 0), nature of skills (soft skills = 1; hard skills = 0), gender (male = 1; female = 0, other = false), years of working experience and year/expected year of graduation.

Unstandardised (B) and standardised (β) regression coefficients were examined to determine the direction and magnitude of the relationship between each independent variable and the dependent variable. The unstandardised coefficients represent a change in the dependent variable for a one-unit change in the independent variable while holding other variables constant. The standardised

coefficients enable the comparison of the relative importance of each independent variable in predicting the dependent variable, because they are measured using a common scale (Field, 2013).

The statistical significance of the contribution of each independent variable to the dependent variable was assessed using t-tests and associated p-values. A significance level of 0.05 was set for all analyses, which indicates that a p-value less than 0.05 indicated a statistically significant relationship between the independent and dependent variables after controlling for the effects of other variables in the model.

The study evaluated the overall fit of each regression model using the F-test and its associated p-value, which assessed whether or not the independent variables collectively explained a significant proportion of the variance in the dependent variable. The adjusted R-squared value was also reported, which provides an estimate of the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that was accounted for by the independent variables. It is adjusted for the number of predictors in the model.

Furthermore, the study conducted additional analyses to gain an in-depth understanding of the relationships between the independent and dependent variables. It explored the interaction effects between the selected independent variables to investigate potential moderating relationships. For example, it examined the interaction between the format of experiential learning and the nature of skills to determine if the effect of the format of experiential learning on student outcomes differed according to whether the focus was on soft or hard skills.

Moreover, hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted to determine the incremental predictive value of specific independent variables over and above

other variables. For instance, years of working experience was entered into the regression model in a separate block after controlling for the effects of other demographic variables, which enabled the assessment of its unique contribution to the dependent variable.

Sub-group analyses were also performed to investigate potential differences in the relationships between the independent and dependent variables based on demographic characteristics such as gender, level of education and educational programme. This process facilitated the identification of any unique patterns or trends within specific sub-groups of the sample.

The results of these advanced techniques for quantitative analysis were thoroughly examined and interpreted in light of the research questions and hypotheses. The findings were compared and contrasted with the existing literature on experiential learning in business education. Lastly, the study discussed their implications for theory and practice.

In summary, the advanced techniques for quantitative analysis employed in this study, including multiple linear regression, interaction effects, sub-group analyses and hierarchical regression, provided a comprehensive and rigorous examination of the relationships between the independent and dependent variables. These techniques enabled the identification of the significant predictors of student motivation and satisfaction in experiential learning activities while controlling for the effects of other relevant variables. The results contribute to an in-depth understanding of the factors that influence the effectiveness of experiential learning in business education and inform the design and implementation of experiential learning activities to optimise student outcomes.

4.5.3 Results of Quantitative Data Analyses

4.5.3.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Zero-Order Correlations

Table 4.4 Confirmatory Factor Analysis by Jamovi:

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Factor Loadings

Factor	Indicator	Estimate	SE	Z	p
Satisfaction	SAT_Q8	0.892	0.0306	29.2	<.001
Motivation	MOT_Q19	0.880	0.0301	29.2	<.001
Positive Influence	PositiveInf_Q20	0.859	0.0294	29.2	<.001
Domain Knowledge	DomainKnowledge_Q21	0.813	0.0279	29.2	<.001

Table 4.4 shows the results of a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) for a scale measuring four factors: Satisfaction, Motivation, Positive Influence, and Domain Knowledge.

The p-values for all factor loadings are <.001, indicating that the relationships between the indicators and their corresponding factors are statistically significant at the 0.1% level.

The low p-values provide strong evidence against the null hypothesis that the factor loadings are equal to zero.

The Confirmatory Factor Analysis results support the validity of the four-factor structure of the scale. The high factor loadings, low standard errors, high Z-values, and low p-values indicate that the indicators are strongly related to their respective factors and that the relationships are statistically significant. This suggests that the scale is measuring the intended constructs of Satisfaction, Motivation, Positive Influence, and Domain Knowledge.

Table 4.5 Reliability Statistics

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.916	.917	4

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
SAT_Q8	12.87	5.435	.788	.623	.899
MOT_Q19	12.91	5.487	.788	.624	.898
PositiveInf_Q20	13.00	5.435	.832	.722	.883
DomainKnowledge_Q21	12.94	5.648	.828	.715	.885

The Table 4.5 contains reliability statistics for a scale measuring various constructs. The analysis of the statistics is as follows:

Cronbach's Alpha: The scale has a high reliability with a Cronbach's Alpha value of .916 based on standardized items.

Cronbach's Alpha if Item d: This column shows the Cronbach's Alpha reliability if each item were d. The values range from .883 to .899, indicating that deleting any item would slightly decrease the scale's reliability.

Overall, the scale demonstrates high reliability with a Cronbach's Alpha of .916. The items have strong positive correlations with each other and with the total score, suggesting that they measure related constructs. Deleting any item would slightly decrease the scale's variance, and reliability, indicating that all items contribute positively to the scale's psychometric properties.

Table 4.6 on zero-order correlation provides insights into the relationships between the variables related to experiential learning activities and student outcomes. The study noted several notable correlations that emerged from the data. The subsequent sections will discuss the details of the findings.

Table 4.6: Zero-order correlation between the variables related to experiential learning activities and student outcomes

Correlations

	Real (1) / Hypothetical (0)	Soft Skills (1) / Hard Skills (0)	CCSAT_Composite	PSSAT_Composite	InMOT_Composite	SEMOT_Composite	PositiveInf_Q20	DomainKnowledge_Q21	Male(1)/Female(0)/Other(False)	Your years of working experience	Year of Graduation or Expected Year of Graduation – Selected Choice
Real (1) / Hypothetical (0)	1.000	.487**	.215**	.201**	.241**	.155**	.218**	.256**	.077	.222**	-.068
Soft Skills (1) / Hard Skills (0)	.487**	1.000	.083*	.044	.150**	.113*	.090*	.102*	.048	.037	.095*
CCSAT_Composite	.215**	.083*	1.000	.818**	.867**	.621**	.748**	.759**	.045	.094*	-.002
PSSAT_Composite	.201**	.044	.818**	1.000	.781**	.546**	.695**	.699**	.052	.104*	.002
InMOT_Composite	.241**	.150**	.867**	.781**	1.000	.652**	.784**	.798**	.048	.141**	.033
SEMOT_Composite	.155**	.113*	.621**	.546**	.652**	1.000	.564**	.602**	.118**	-.067	.078
PositiveInf_Q20	.218**	.090*	.748**	.695**	.784**	.564**	1.000	.813**	-.012	.090*	.013
DomainKnowledge_Q21	.256**	.102*	.759**	.699**	.798**	.602**	.813**	1.000	.000	.007	.031
Male(1)/Female(0)/Other(False)	.077	.048	.045	.052	.048	.118**	-.012	.000	1.000	.071	-.121**
Your years of working experience	.222**	.037	.094*	.104*	.141**	-.067	.090*	.007	.071	1.000	-.147**
Year of Graduation or Expected Year of Graduation – Selected Choice	-.068	.095*	-.002	.002	.033	.078	.013	.031	-.121**	-.147**	1.000

**. Correlation is significant at 0.01 level

*. Correlation is significant at 0.05 level

First, the study found a strong positive correlation between real (1)/hypothetical (0) and soft (1)/hard skills (0) ($r = .487$, $p < .01$), which suggests that real-world experiential learning activities, compared with hypothetical activities, are more closely associated with the development of soft skills (Burch et al., 2019; Gitting et al., 2020).

Second, the composite scores for CCSAT, PSSAT, InMOT and SEMOT demonstrated significant positive correlations with one another (r ranging from .546 to .867, $p < .01$). This result indicates that these constructs, which likely represent different aspects of student satisfaction and motivation, are closely related and may influence one another (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; McCarthy, 2016).

Third, PositiveInf, which represents the positive influence of experiential learning activities on student behaviour, exhibits significant positive correlations with the composite scores (r ranging from .564 to .784, $p < .01$). This finding suggests that experiential learning activities that positively influence student behaviour are associated with high levels of satisfaction and motivation (Kirkpatrick, 1996; Noe, 1986).

Lastly, year/expected year of graduation (selected variable) displays a significant negative correlation with male(1)/female(0) ($r = -.121$, $p < .01$), which indicates that a shift may have occurred in gender composition over time, that is, the number of women have increased in recent or upcoming graduation years (Perna, 2011; Winkler, 2009).

These findings provided valuable insights into the complex relationships among experiential learning activities, student characteristics and learning outcomes, which highlights the importance of considering multiple factors in the design and implementation of experiential learning initiatives in business education (Kolb & Kolb,

2017; Morris, 2020), which will be discussed in subsequent sections.

4.5.3.2 Motivation in Experiential Learning (MOT)

Table 4.7: SPSS Result of Motivation in Experiential Learning (MOT)

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.262[a]	.068	.057	.857

a. Predictors: (Constant), Year of Graduation or Expected Year of Graduation – Selected Choice, Real (1) / Hypothetical (0), Male(1)/Female(0)/Other(False), Your years of working experience, Soft Skills (1) / Hard Skills (0)

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	21.398	5	4.280	5.831	<.001[b]
	Residual	291.366	397	.734		
	Total	312.764	402			

a. Dependent Variable: MOT_Q19

b. Predictors: (Constant), Year of Graduation or Expected Year of Graduation – Selected Choice, Real (1) / Hypothetical (0), Male(1)/Female(0)/Other(False), Your years of working experience, Soft Skills (1) / Hard Skills (0)

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	4.009	.085		47.188	<.001
	Real (1) / Hypothetical (0)	.381	.102	.216	3.757 ***	<.001
	Soft Skills (1) / Hard Skills (0)	-.008	.106	-.004	-.074	.941
	Male(1)/Female(0)/Other (False)	.198	.086	.112	2.289 **	.023
	Your years of working experience	.004	.006	.036	.722	.470
	Year of Graduation or Expected Year of Graduation - Selected Choice	.000	.000	.082	1.651	.100

a. Dependent Variable: MOT

*Note: * 10% Significance,*

*** 5% significance,*

**** 1% significance*

The multiple linear regression analysis for motivation in experiential learning (MOT) yielded a statistically significant model ($F(5, 297) = 5.831$, $p < .001$), which indicates that the independent variables collectively explained a significant proportion of the variance in student motivation in experiential learning. The model accounted for 6.8% of variance in MOT, as indicated by the adjusted R-squared value ($R^2 = .068$). Among the independent variables, the te of experiential learning (real (1)/hypothetical (0)) emerged as a significant predictor of motivation in experiential learning ($\beta = .216$, $p = <.001$). This finding implied that students who participated in real-world experiential learning activities reported higher levels of motivation compared with those who participated in hypothetical activities. The positive coefficient indicates that real-world experiential learning activities tend to enhance student motivation in learning experience.

Gender (male(1)/female(0)/other(False)) also emerged as a significant predictor of motivation in experiential learning ($\beta = .112$, $p = .024$). This finding implied that male students tend to report higher levels of motivation in experiential learning activities

than did female students. The result will be discussed in Section 4.5.4.2.

The nature of skills (soft skills (1)/hard skills (0)), gender, years of working experience and year/expected year of graduation did not emerge as significant predictors of motivation in experiential learning.

4.5.3.3 Intrinsic Motivation (InMOT_Composite)

Table 4.8: SPSS Result of Intrinsic Motivation (InMOT_Composite)

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.269[a]	.072	.061	.78446

a. Predictors: (Constant), Year of Graduation or Expected Year of Graduation – Selected Choice, Real (1) / Hypothetical (0), Male(1)/Female(0)/Other(False), Your years of working experience, Soft Skills (1) / Hard Skills (0)

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	19.045	5	3.809	6.190	<.001[b]
	Residual	244.308	397	.615		
	Total	263.353	402			

a. Dependent Variable: InMOT_Composite

b. Predictors: (Constant), Year of Graduation or Expected Year of Graduation – Selected Choice, Real (1) / Hypothetical (0), Male(1)/Female(0)/Other(False), Your years of working experience, Soft Skills (1) / Hard Skills (0)

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	3.940	.078		50.636	<.001
	Real (1) / Hypothetical (0)	.325	.093	.200	3.497 ***	<.001
	Soft Skills (1) / Hard Skills (0)	.071	.097	.041	.731	.465
	Male(1)/Female(0)/Other (False)	.049	.079	.030	.623	.534
	Your years of working experience	.011	.006	.102	2.030 **	.043
	Year of Graduation or Expected Year of Graduation - Selected Choice	.000	.000	.062	1.246	.213

a. Dependent Variable: lnMOT_Composite

*Note: * 10% Significance,*

*** 5% significance,*

**** 1% significance*

The multiple linear regression analysis for intrinsic motivation (lnMOT_Composite) yielded a number of notable results. The overall regression model was statistically significant ($F(5, 397) = 6.190$, $p < .001$). In other words, the independent variables included in the model collectively explained a significant proportion of variance in intrinsic motivation. The model accounted for 7.2% of variance in lnMOT_Composite, as indicated by the adjusted R-squared value ($R^2 = .072$).

Examining the individual predictors illustrated that the format of condition (real versus hypothetical) was a significant predictor ($B = .325$, $p < .001$). The participants under the real-world condition scored higher on the lnMOT_Composite compared with those under the hypothetical condition. Years of working experience also emerged as a significant predictor ($B = .011$, $p = .043$) with each additional year of experience associated with a small increase in lnMOT_Composite scores.

Contrary to expectations, the finding suggested that the factors included in the model, such as the distinction between soft and hard skills, gender and year of graduation did not exert a statistically significant impact on the intrinsic motivation

of students in experiential learning activities.

4.5.3.4 Self-Efficacy Motivation (SEMOT_Composite)

Table 4.9: SPSS Result of Self-Efficacy Motivation (SEMOT_Composite)

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.237[a]	.056	.044	.8582

a. Predictors: (Constant), Year of Graduation or Expected Year of Graduation – Selected Choice, Real (1) / Hypothetical (0), Male(1)/Female(0)/Other(False), Your years of working experience, Soft Skills (1) / Hard Skills (0)

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	17.344	5	3.469	4.710	<.001[b]
	Residual	292.382	397	.736		
	Total	309.726	402			

a. Dependent Variable: SEMOT_Composite

b. Predictors: (Constant), Year of Graduation or Expected Year of Graduation – Selected Choice, Real (1) / Hypothetical (0), Male(1)/Female(0)/Other(False), Your years of working experience, Soft Skills (1) / Hard Skills (0)

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	3.723	.085		43.744	<.001
	Real (1) / Hypothetical (0)	.287	.102	.163	2.818 ***	.005
	Soft Skills (1) / Hard Skills (0)	.044	.107	.023	.414	.679
	Male(1)/Female(0)/Other (False)	.215	.086	.123	2.485 **	.013
	Your years of working experience	-.012	.006	-.100	-1.982 **	.048
	Year of Graduation or Expected Year of Graduation - Selected Choice	.000	.000	.087	1.737 *	.083

a. Dependent Variable: SEMOT_Composite

*Note: * 10% Significance,*

*** 5% significance,*

**** 1% significance*

The multiple linear regression analysis for self-efficacy motivation (SEMOT_Composite) revealed several interesting findings. The overall regression model was statistically significant ($F(5, 397) = 4.710$, $p < .001$), which implied that the independent variables included in the model collectively explained a significant proportion of variance in self-efficacy motivation. The model accounted for 5.6% of the variance in SEMOT_Composite, as indicated by the adjusted R-squared value ($R^2 = .056$).

Among the independent variables, gender (male(1)/female(0)/other(false)) emerged as a significant predictor of SEMOT ($\beta = .215$, $p = .013$). This finding pointed out that gender plays a role in shaping the beliefs of students about their ability to succeed and master the knowledge and skills taught in experiential learning activities. The positive coefficient indicates that male students tend to exhibit higher levels of SEMOT compared with female students after controlling for the effects of the other variables in the model. The result will be discussed in Section 4.5.4.2.

Years of working experience also emerged as a significant predictor of SEMOT (β = −.012, p = .048). The negative coefficient indicated that the SEMOT of students tends to decrease with the increase in years of working experience. This finding highlighted important questions about the potential impact of prior work experience on the confidence and self-belief of students in the context of experiential learning activities.

4.5.3.5 Satisfaction With Experiential Learning (SAT)

Table 4.10: SPSS result of Satisfaction with Experiential Learning (SAT)

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.171[a]	.029	.017	.859

a. Predictors: (Constant), Year of Graduation or Expected Year of Graduation – Selected Choice, Real (1) / Hypothetical (0), Male(1)/Female(0)/Other(False), Your years of working experience, Soft Skills (1) / Hard Skills (0)

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8.779	5	1.756	2.382	.038[b]
	Residual	292.606	397	.737		
	Total	301.385	402			

a. Dependent Variable: SAT_Q8

b. Predictors: (Constant), Year of Graduation or Expected Year of Graduation – Selected Choice, Real (1) / Hypothetical (0), Male(1)/Female(0)/Other(False), Your years of working experience, Soft Skills (1) / Hard Skills (0)

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	4.207	.085		49.402	<.001
	Real (1) / Hypothetical (0)	.272	.102	.157	2.678 ***	.008
	Soft Skills (1) / Hard Skills (0)	-.011	.107	-.006	-.099	.921
	Male(1)/Female(0)/Other (False)	.075	.086	.043	.866	.387
	Your years of working experience	.002	.006	.020	.387	.699
	Year of Graduation or Expected Year of Graduation - Selected Choice	.000	.000	-.011	-.220	.826

a. Dependent Variable: SAT

*Note: * 10% Significance,*

*** 5% significance,*

**** 1% significance*

The multiple linear regression analysis for satisfaction with experiential learning (SAT) yielded a statistically significant model ($F(5, 397) = 2.382$, $p = .038$). Simply put, the independent variables collectively explained a significant proportion of variance in student satisfaction with experiential learning. The model accounted for 2.9% of variance in SAT, as indicated by the adjusted R-squared value ($R^2 = .029$). Among the independent variables, the format of experiential learning (real(1)/hypothetical (0)) emerged as a significant predictor of satisfaction with experiential learning ($\beta = .157$, $p = .008$). This finding suggested that students who participated in real-world experiential learning activities reported higher levels of satisfaction compared with those who participated in hypothetical activities. The positive coefficient indicates that real experiential learning activities tend to enhance the overall satisfaction of students with learning experiences.

The nature of skills (soft skills(1)/hard skills (0)), gender, years of working experience and year/expected year of graduation did not emerge as significant predictors of satisfaction with experiential learning.

4.5.3.6 Course Content Satisfaction (CCSAT_Composite)

Table 4.11: SPSS Result of Course Content Satisfaction (CCSAT_Composite)

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.224[a]	.050	.038	.759001693

a. Predictors: (Constant), Year of Graduation or Expected Year of Graduation – Selected Choice, Real (1) / Hypothetical (0), Male(1)/Female(0)/Other(False), Your years of working experience, Soft Skills (1) / Hard Skills (0)

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	12.094	5	2.419	4.199	<.001[b]
	Residual	228.705	397	.576		
	Total	240.800	402			

a. Dependent Variable: CCSAT_Composite

b. Predictors: (Constant), Year of Graduation or Expected Year of Graduation – Selected Choice, Real (1) / Hypothetical (0), Male(1)/Female(0)/Other(False), Your years of working experience, Soft Skills (1) / Hard Skills (0)

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	4.087	.075		54.296	<.001
	Real (1) / Hypothetical (0)	.338	.090	.218	3.763 ***	<.001 **
	Soft Skills (1) / Hard Skills (0)	-.048	.094	-.029	-.514	.607
	Male(1)/Female(0)/Other (False)	.045	.076	.029	.586	.559
	Your years of working experience	.005	.005	.048	.949	.343
	Year of Graduation or Expected Year of Graduation - Selected Choice	8.121E-5	.000	.026	.512	.609

a. Dependent Variable: CCSAT_Composite

*Note: * 10% Significance,*

*** 5% significance,*

**** 1% significance*

The multiple linear regression analysis for course content satisfaction (CCSAT_Composite) yielded a statistically significant model (F(5, 397) = 3.171, p = <.001). This result indicated that the independent variables collectively explained a significant proportion of variance in student satisfaction with the content of experiential learning courses. The model accounted for 5.0% of variance in CCSAT_Composite, as indicated by the adjusted R-squared value (R^2 = .050).

Among the independent variables, the format of experiential learning (real(1)/hypothetical (0)) emerged as a significant predictor of course content satisfaction (β = .218, p = <.001). This finding suggested that students who participated in real-world experiential learning activities reported higher levels of satisfaction with course content compared with those who participated in hypothetical activities. The positive coefficient indicates that real-world experiential learning activities tend to enhance the perceptions of students of the relevance, usefulness and quality of course content.

The nature of skills (soft skills(1)/hard skills (0)), level of education (UG(0)/PG (1)), gender, years of working experience and year/expected year of graduation did not emerge as significant predictors of satisfaction with course content.

4.5.3.7 Professor–Student Interaction Satisfaction (PSSAT_Composite)

Table 4.12: SPSS Result of Professor–Student Interaction Satisfaction (PSSAT_Composite)

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.223[a]	.050	.038	.750680724

a. Predictors: (Constant), Year of Graduation or Expected Year of Graduation – Selected Choice, Real (1) / Hypothetical (0), Male(1)/Female(0)/Other(False), Your years of working experience, Soft Skills (1) / Hard Skills (0)

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	11.700	5	2.340	4.153	.001[b]
	Residual	223.718	397	.564		
	Total	235.418	402			

a. Dependent Variable: PSSAT_Composite

b. Predictors: (Constant), Year of Graduation or Expected Year of Graduation – Selected Choice, Real (1) / Hypothetical (0), Male(1)/Female(0)/Other(False), Your years of working experience, Soft Skills (1) / Hard Skills (0)

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	4.171	.074		56.019	<.001
	Real (1) / Hypothetical (0)	.341	.089	.222	3.831**	<.001**
	Soft Skills (1) / Hard Skills (0)	-.118	.093	-.072	-1.268	.205
	Male(1)/Female(0)/Other (False)	.060	.076	.039	.791	.430
	Your years of working experience	.006	.005	.060	1.173	.242
	Year of Graduation or Expected Year of Graduation - Selected Choice	.000	.000	.038	.748	.455

a. Dependent Variable: PSSAT_Composite

*Note: * 10% Significance,*

*** 5% significance,*

**** 1% significance*

The multiple linear regression analysis for professor–student interaction satisfaction (PSSAT_Composite) yielded a statistically significant model ($F(5, 397) = 4.153$, $p = .001$). This result implied that the independent variables collectively explained a significant proportion of variance in student satisfaction with interactions with professors in experiential learning courses. The model accounted for 5.0% of variance in PSSAT_Composite, as indicated by the adjusted R-squared value ($R^2 = .055$).

Among the independent variables, the format of experiential learning (real(1)/hypothetical (0)) emerged as a significant predictor of professor–student interaction satisfaction ($\beta = .222$, $p = <0.001$). This finding indicated that students who participated in real-world experiential learning activities reported higher levels of satisfaction with their interactions with professors compared with those who participated in hypothetical activities. The positive coefficient indicates that real-

world experiential learning activities tend to foster more positive and satisfying interactions between students and professors.

4.5.3.8 Domain Knowledge Improvement (DomainKnowledge)

Table 4.13: SPSS Result of Domain Knowledge Improvement (DomainKnowledge)

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.267[a]	.071	.060	.790

a. Predictors: (Constant), Year of Graduation or Expected Year of Graduation – Selected Choice, Real (1) / Hypothetical (0), Male(1)/Female(0)/Other(False), Your years of working experience, Soft Skills (1) / Hard Skills (0)

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	18.987	5	3.797	6.087	<.001[b]
	Residual	247.683	397	.624		
	Total	266.670	402			

a. Dependent Variable: DomainKnowledge_Q21

b. Predictors: (Constant), Year of Graduation or Expected Year of Graduation – Selected Choice, Real (1) / Hypothetical (0), Male(1)/Female(0)/Other(False), Your years of working experience, Soft Skills (1) / Hard Skills (0)

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	4.160	.078		53.099	<.001
	Real (1) / Hypothetical (0)	.475	.094	.291	5.077 ***	<.001
	Soft Skills (1) / Hard Skills (0)	-.073	.098	-.042	-.745	.457
	Male(1)/Female(0)/Other (False)	-.019	.080	-.012	-.236	.813
	Your years of working experience	-.005	.006	-.049	-.970	.332
	Year of Graduation or Expected Year of Graduation - Selected Choice	.000	.000	.046	.922	.357

a. Dependent Variable: DomainKnowledge_Q21

*Note: * 10% Significance,*

*** 5% significance,*

**** 1% significance*

The multiple linear regression analysis for domain knowledge improvement (DomainKnowledge) yielded a statistically significant model ($F(5,397) = 6.087$, $p < .001$), which indicates that the independent variables collectively explained a significant proportion of variance in the perceived improvement of students in domain knowledge through experiential learning. The model accounted for 7.1% of variance in DomainKnowledge, as indicated by the adjusted R-squared value ($R^2 = .071$).

Among the independent variables, the format of experiential learning (real(1)/hypothetical (0)) emerged as a significant predictor of domain knowledge improvement ($\beta = .291$, $p < .001$). This finding suggested that students who participated in real experiential learning activities reported higher levels of perceived improvement in domain knowledge compared with those who participated in hypothetical activities. The positive coefficient indicates that real-world experiential learning activities tend to enhance the perceptions of students about the

effectiveness of experiential learning in improving domain-specific knowledge and expertise.

The nature of skills (soft skills(1)/hard skills(0)), gender, years of working experience and year/expected year of graduation did not emerge as significant predictors of domain knowledge improvement.

4.5.3.9 Positive Impact on Work and Life (PositiveInf)

Table 4.14: SPSS Result of Positive Impact on Work and Life (PositiveInf)

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.227[a]	.052	.040	.847

a. Predictors: (Constant), Year of Graduation or Expected Year of Graduation – Selected Choice, Real (1) / Hypothetical (0), Male(1)/Female(0)/Other(False), Your years of working experience, Soft Skills (1) / Hard Skills (0)

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	15.536	5	3.107	4.326	<.001[b]
	Residual	285.144	397	.718		
	Total	300.680	402			

a. Dependent Variable: PositiveInf_Q20

b. Predictors: (Constant), Year of Graduation or Expected Year of Graduation – Selected Choice, Real (1) / Hypothetical (0), Male(1)/Female(0)/Other(False), Your years of working experience, Soft Skills (1) / Hard Skills (0)

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	4.051	.084		48.195	<.001
	Real (1) / Hypothetical (0)	.386	.100	.223	3.843***	<.001
	Soft Skills (1) / Hard Skills (0)	-.042	.105	-.022	-.394	.694
	Male(1)/Female(0)/Other (False)	-.048	.085	-.028	-.557	.578
	Your years of working experience	.006	.006	.049	.956	.340
	Year of Graduation or Expected Year of Graduation - Selected Choice	.000	.000	.034	.682	.496

a. Dependent Variable: PositiveInf_Q20

*Note: * 10% Significance,*

*** 5% significance,*

**** 1% significance*

The multiple linear regression analysis for positive impact on work and life (PositiveInf) yielded a statistically significant model (F(5,397) = 4.326, p = <0.001), which indicated that the independent variables collectively explained a significant proportion of variance in the perceived positive impact of experiential learning on the work and life aspects of the students. The model accounted for 5.2% of variance in PositiveInf, as indicated by the adjusted R-squared value (R^2 = .052).

Among the independent variables, the format of experiential learning (real(1)/hypothetical (0)) emerged as a significant predictor of positive impact on work and life aspects (β = .223, p < .001). This finding suggested that students who participated in real-world experiential learning activities reported higher levels of perceived positive impact on work and life aspects compared with those who participated in hypothetical activities. The positive coefficient indicates that real-world experiential learning activities tend to enhance the perceptions of students about the positive impact of experiential learning on personal and professional

growth.

The nature of skills developed (soft skills(1)/hard skills(0)), gender, years of working experience and year/expected year of graduation did not emerge as significant predictors of positive impact on the work and life aspects.

4.5.4 Implications and Discussions of the Findings

The quantitative data analysis yielded several significant findings that elucidate the factors that influence student motivation and satisfaction in experiential learning activities within the context of business education as well as incremental domain knowledge and positive influence on work and/or life aspects to business students The results of multiple linear regression analyses for each dependent variable provided insights into the predictive power of various independent variables and their relationships with the outcomes of interest. Summary of the hypothesis testing result is as below:

Table 4.15 Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Result
1. Students are more motivated and satisfied in real-world experiential learning formats compared to hypothetical formats	Supported
2. The impact of student motivation and satisfaction in the acquisition of soft skills is stronger than that on hard skills via experiential learning	Not Supported The nature of skills (soft skills (1)/hard skills (0)) did not emerge as significant predictors of motivation and motivation in experiential learning.
3. Student characteristics (e.g. gender, year of working experience, and proximity between the graduation year)	Partially Supported (Gender emerged as a significant predictor of motivation and self-efficacy motivation in experiential

exert an impact on student motivation and satisfaction	learning, but not satisfaction) (There is significant positive relationship between years of working experience and intrinsic motivation)
4. Students exhibit incremental growth in domain knowledge and positive influence in work/life aspects through real-world experiential learning formats comparing with hypothetical formats.	Supported
5. Students exhibit high levels of enhancement in domain knowledge and positive influence in work/ life aspects when acquiring soft skills compared to hard skills through experiential learning	Not Supported

4.5.4.1 Role of Experiential Learning Format

One of the most consistent and significant findings across regression analyses was the impact of the format of experiential learning (real versus hypothetical) on various aspects of student motivation and satisfaction. The results demonstrated that students who participated in real-world experiential learning activities reported higher levels of motivation (MOT), intrinsic motivation (InMOT_Composite), self-efficacy motivation (SEMOT_Composite), satisfaction with experiential learning (SAT), course content satisfaction (CCSAT), professor–student interaction satisfaction (PSSAT), domain knowledge improvement (DomainKnowledge) and positive influence on work and life (PositiveInf), compared with those who participated in hypothetical activities.

These findings align with ELT, which emphasises the importance of concrete experiences and active experimentation in the learning process. Real-world experiential learning activities provide students with authentic, hands-on experiences that enable them to apply knowledge and skills to real-world situations, which fosters deeper engagement, understanding and transfer of learning (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). The results also support the notion that real-world relevance and authenticity are key factors that promote student motivation and satisfaction in experiential learning (Beard, 2010; Carver, 1996).

The significance of real-world experiential learning activities in enhancing various aspects of student motivation and satisfaction poses important implications for the design and implementation of experiential learning in business education. Educators should strive to incorporate further real-world, authentic learning experiences into courses such as corporate projects, field trips and collaborations with industry partners. By providing students with opportunities to engage with real clients, cases and challenges, educators can create meaningful and impactful learning experiences that foster student motivation, satisfaction, domain knowledge acquisition and transferable skills for work and life.

4.5.4.2 Role of Gender in SEMOT

Another notable finding from the quantitative analysis was the significant role of gender in shaping the self-efficacy motivation of students (SEMOT). The results depicted that male students tended to report higher levels of SEMOT compared with female students after controlling for the effects of other variables in the model.

This finding is consistent with those of previous research that identified gender differences in self-efficacy beliefs. For example, Fallan and Opstad (2016) found

that male students in a business school context exhibited higher levels of self-efficacy than did their female counterparts. The authors suggested that these differences could be attributed to socialisation processes and gender stereotypes that shape the beliefs of individuals about their abilities. Huang (2013) conducted a meta-analysis and revealed that men generally report higher levels of self-efficacy compared with women, particularly in stereotypically masculine domains such as mathematics and science. The current study extends this finding to the context of experiential learning in business education and proposes that gender disparity in self-efficacy beliefs may persist even in applied and interactive learning environments.

The role of gender in SEMOT poses important implications for educators and administrators in business education. Efforts should be made to address gender disparity in self-efficacy beliefs and to create more inclusive and equitable learning environments that support the confidence and motivation of all students regardless of gender. This initiative may involve implementing targeted interventions and support systems for female students such as mentoring programmes, leadership development opportunities and workshops on building self-efficacy and resilience.

Moreover, educators should be mindful of potential gender bias in teaching practices and strive to create a classroom culture that values diversity, promotes equal participation and challenges stereotypes and assumptions. By fostering a supportive and inclusive learning environment, educators can help students develop a strong sense of self-efficacy and motivation in experiential learning activities.

4.5.4.3 Role of Working Experience in Intrinsic Motivation and SEMOT

Quantitative analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between years of working experience and intrinsic motivation (InMOT_Composite). The results

demonstrated that intrinsic motivation tended to increase with the increase in years of working experience.

This finding suggested that students with extensive work experience may bring exhibit heightened sense of intrinsic motivation in experiential learning activities. A possible explanation is that these students possess a clearer understanding of their professional goals and the relevance of learning experiences to their work and life aspirations. As such, they may be more intrinsically driven to engage in experiential learning activities that align with their interests and career objectives, which leads to a greater sense of personal fulfilment and enjoyment in the learning process (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

However, the quantitative analysis revealed a significant negative relationship between years of working experience and self-efficacy motivation (SEMOT). The results demonstrated that SEMOT tended to decrease with the increase in years of working experience.

This finding leads to important questions about the potential impact of prior work experience on the confidence and self-beliefs of students in the context of experiential learning activities. It suggests that students with extensive work experience may face unique challenges and barriers to developing and maintaining self-efficacy in academic settings, particularly when engaging in hands-on, interactive learning experiences, which may diverge from established professional expertise and routine.

A possible explanation for this finding is that students with substantial work experience may have developed a strong sense of professional identity and expertise. As such, they may feel challenged or disrupted when engaging in experiential learning activities that require them to take on new roles, skills or

perspectives. The process of unlearning and relearning can be psychologically and emotionally demanding, which potentially leads to feelings of uncertainty, self-doubt and decreased self-efficacy (Matsuo, 2015).

Another potential explanation is that students with extensive work experience may hold higher expectations and standards of their performance and learning outcomes. This scenario could lead to high levels of self-criticism and low levels of self-efficacy when faced with new challenges or setbacks in experiential learning activities. The pressure to excel and demonstrate mastery may be heightened for experienced professionals, who may feel a greater sense of responsibility and accountability for their learning and performance (Knowles et al., 2012).

The negative relationship between working experience and SEMOT presents important implications for educators and administrators in business education. Efforts should be made to recognise and address the unique needs and challenges faced by students with extensive work experience. Moreover, they should be provided with targeted support and resources to help them build and maintain self-efficacy in experiential learning activities.

This aspect may involve providing opportunities for reflection, feedback and peer support, as well as creating a safe and supportive learning environment that values the diverse experiences and perspectives of all students. Educators may also need to adapt teaching strategies and assessment practices to accommodate the learning preferences and goals of experienced professionals and to provide additionally flexible and personalised learning pathways that promote self-directed learning and continuous improvement (Knowles et al., 2012).

The contrasting relationships between working experience and intrinsic versus SEMOT highlight the complex interplay of factors that form student outcomes in

experiential learning. Educators should be attuned to the diverse needs and challenges faced by students with varying levels of work experience and provide targeted support and resources to help students maximise intrinsic motivation while building and maintaining self-efficacy in experiential learning activities. By leveraging the strengths and expertise of experienced professionals, educators can create a dynamic and enriching learning environment that benefits all students (Reynolds, 2007).

4.5.4.4 Impact of Experiential Learning on Domain Knowledge Improvement and Positive Influence on Work/Life Aspects

The quantitative analysis revealed that the format of experiential learning (real versus hypothetical) emerged as a significant predictor of domain knowledge improvement (DomainKnowledge) and positive influence on work/life aspects (PositiveInf). Students who participated in real-world experiential learning activities reported higher levels of perceived improvement in domain knowledge and increased positive impact on work and life compared with those who participated in hypothetical activities. These findings suggested that real experiential learning activities not only enhance student motivation and satisfaction but also contribute to the acquisition of domain-specific knowledge and the development of transferable skills and competencies that positively influence work and life outcomes. By engaging in authentic, real-world learning experiences, students gain the opportunity to apply theoretical concepts to practical situations, which enhances their understanding of the subject matter and develop a nuanced and contextual comprehension of domain knowledge (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Matsuo, 2015).

Moreover, real-world experiential learning activities expose students to the challenges, complexities and opportunities of the business world, which enables

them to develop valuable skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, communication and teamwork. Employers highly seek these skills, which are essential for success in various professional and personal contexts (Beard & Wilson, 2013; Smith & Worsfold, 2015). By fostering the development of these transferable competencies, real experiential learning activities can exert long-term positive impacts on the work and life outcomes of students, enhancing employability, career advancement and overall well-being (Jackson, 2015; Kuh, 2008).

The significance of real experiential learning in promoting domain knowledge acquisition and positive work/life outcomes present important implications for business education. Educators should prioritise the integration of real-world, authentic learning experiences into their curricula by collaborating with industry partners and designing activities that closely mirror the challenges and opportunities that occur in the business world. By providing students with meaningful opportunities to apply knowledge and skills in real-world contexts, educators can facilitate an in-depth understanding of the subject matter and prepare students for success in their future careers and personal lives. Furthermore, educators should explicitly emphasise the transferability of skills and competencies developed through experiential learning activities. Towards this end, they can help students recognise the relevance and applicability of learnings to various work and life scenarios. This aspect may involve the incorporation of reflective exercises, tools for self-assessment and resources for career development that encourage students to articulate and leverage experiential learning outcomes in professional and personal pursuits (Smith & Worsfold, 2015; Beard & Wilson, 2013).

4.5.4.5 Implications for Instructional Design in Experiential Learning

The quantitative findings pose important implications for instructional design in

experiential learning in the context of business education. The results highlight the need for educators to carefully consider the format of experiential learning activities that they incorporate into their courses with a particular emphasis on real-world, authentic experiences that closely mirror the challenges and opportunities of the business world. When designing activities for experiential learning, educators should endeavour to create opportunities in which students can engage with real clients, cases and projects. Towards this end, they may collaborate with industry partners and leverage their expertise and resources. This initiative may involve the development of long-term partnerships with companies, organisations and alumni networks and co-creating learning experiences that align with the needs and goals of students and external stakeholders (Hodge et al., 2014; Jackson, 2015).

Moreover, educators should pay close attention to the alignment among learning objectives, instructional strategies and assessment methods in experiential learning activities. The quantitative results suggest that the motivation, satisfaction, domain knowledge acquisition and positive work/life outcomes of students are enhanced when they participate in real-world experiential learning activities that are well-designed, properly facilitated and effectively assessed (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Smith & Worsfold, 2015). To ensure the effectiveness of these activities, educators should adopt a learner-centred approach to instructional design and consider the diverse needs, preferences and experiences of students. Doing so may involve the incorporation of various instructional strategies, such as problem-based learning, case studies, simulations and reflective exercises, which cater to different learning styles and promote active engagement, critical thinking and self-directed learning (Matsuo, 2015; Beard & Wilson, 2013). Moreover, educators should incorporate reflective components into assessment practices, which encourages students to

critically examine experiential learning experiences, articulate key take-aways and consider the implications of their future work and life. By fostering a culture of reflection and continuous improvement, educators can help students to develop a holistic and integrated understanding of learning and its relevance to personal and professional growth (Beard & Wilson, 2013; Matsuo, 2015).

4.5.4.5 Conclusion of Phase 2: Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative analysis on student motivation, satisfaction, incremental domain knowledge and positive influence on work/life aspects within the context of business education and in terms of experiential learning activities provides valuable insights into the factors that influence student engagement, learning and development. The results highlight the significant impact of real-world experiential learning activities on various aspects of student motivation and satisfaction, including the role of gender and working experience in shaping the SEMOT of students (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Fallan & Opstad, 2016; Huang, 2013).

The findings pose important implications for theory and practice in the fields of experiential learning and business education. From the theoretical perspective, the results provide empirical support for the key principles and frameworks of experiential learning, such as ELT by Kolb (1984) and the theory of experience and education by Dewey (1938). The findings also contribute to the growing body of literature on the effectiveness of experiential learning in promoting engagement, skill development, domain knowledge acquisition and positive influence of work/life aspects among students.

From the practical perspective, the findings offer valuable insights and recommendations for various stakeholders, such as educators, administrators and policy makers, in the design and implementation of experiential learning

programmes in business education. The results underscore the importance of the integration of real-world, authentic learning experiences into business curricula and guidance on the optimisation of student motivation, satisfaction, incremental domain knowledge and positive influence on work and/life aspects in experiential learning activities (Hodge et al., 2014; Jackson, 2015; Smith & Worsfold, 2015).

However, the study has its limitations, which should be addressed in future research such as reliance on self-reported measures, cross-sectional design and focus on a specific population of business students. Thus, future research could incorporate other objective measures of student outcomes, use longitudinal or experimental designs and replicate the study across cultural and institutional settings (Astin, 1993; Kuh, 2009; Shadish et al., 2002).

In addition, future research could incorporate qualitative methods to gain an in-depth understanding of the subjective experiences and perceptions of students regarding experiential learning activities. It may also investigate the specific strategies and practices that are most effective in promoting student engagement, skill development and learning outcomes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Patton, 2015; Ambrose et al., 2010).

In conclusion, the quantitative analysis provided a valuable contribution to the field of experiential learning and business education and offered empirical evidence and practical insights that can be used to enhance student motivation and satisfaction in experiential learning activities. By building on these findings and addressing the limitations and future research directions, researchers and practitioners can continue to advance the understanding and effectiveness of experiential learning in preparing students for success in personal and professional development (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Kuh, 2008; Datar et al., 2010).

4.6 Summary of Key Findings of the Mixed-Method Approach

The mixed-method approach enabled a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the factors that influence student motivation and satisfaction in experiential learning activities within the context of business education. By integrating qualitative data (insights from the interviews with the instructors) with quantitative data (survey data from the students), the study provided a holistic perspective on the complex dynamics of experiential learning (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Johnson et al., 2007).

The qualitative phase revealed four major themes, namely, diversity of experiential learning activities, importance of balancing between soft and hard skill development, perceived impact on student motivation and satisfaction and challenges and support in implementing experiential learning. These themes provided valuable contexts and insights into the factors that influence the effectiveness of experiential learning from the perspectives of course instructors (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; McCarthy, 2016).

The quantitative phase complemented and extended the qualitative findings by examining the relationships between specific independent variables (e.g. format of experiential learning, nature of skills and student demographics) and dependent variables related to student motivation, satisfaction, incremental domain knowledge and positive influence on work/life aspects. The regression analyses identified the significant predictors of student outcomes, such as the format of experiential learning (real versus hypothetical), gender and years of working experience, which highlighted the importance of real-world, authentic learning experiences and the role of individual differences in the formation of student motivation and satisfaction (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Fallan & Opstad, 2016; Huang, 2013).

One of the most significant findings from both phases was the positive impact of

real-world experiential learning activities on various aspects of student motivation and satisfaction. This finding aligns with ELT and supports the notion that real-world relevance and authenticity are key factors that promote student engagement and learning (Beard, 2010; Carver, 1996).

Another notable finding was the significant role of gender and years of working experience in shaping the self-efficacy motivation of students. This finding is consistent with those of previous research on gender differences in self-efficacy beliefs (Fallan & Opstad, 2016; Huang, 2013). Furthermore, it raises important questions on the potential impact of prior work experience on the confidence and self-beliefs of students in experiential learning settings (Kasworm, 2008; Knowles et al., 2012).

The study also highlighted the importance of reflection and debriefing sessions as key strategies for enhancing the effectiveness of experiential learning activities. This finding aligns with ELT and underscores the crucial role of reflection in transforming experience into knowledge (Kolb, 1984; Boud et al., 1985).

Furthermore, the results of the mixed-method design revealed the importance of the alignment between the expectations of instructors and the outcomes of students in experiential learning activities. Although the quantitative analysis provided a degree of evidence of alignment, particularly in the context of domain knowledge improvement, it also identified potential gaps and discrepancies, especially in the context of intrinsic motivation. This finding highlighted the need for further research on the alignment between instructor expectations and student outcomes and for strategies for enhancing communication, collaboration and feedback between instructors and students (Bransford et al., 2000; Chickering & Gamson, 1987).

In summary, the mixed-method findings presented a rich and nuanced

understanding of the factors that influence student motivation and satisfaction in experiential learning activities within the context of business education. By integrating both insights, the study offers valuable implications for theory and practice and highlights the need for additional research that explores the complex interplay of factors that form the effectiveness of experiential learning in the promotion of student engagement, skill development and career readiness (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Kuh, 2008; Datar et al., 2010).

4.7 Discussion of Findings with Research Objectives and Hypotheses

The findings of this mixed-method study provided valuable insights into the research objectives and hypotheses, which were outlined in previous chapters. The study aimed to investigate the relationship between various formats of experiential learning activities and student satisfaction and motivation in business education. It specifically focused on the differences between real-world and hypothetical learning experiences and the impact on the development of hard and soft skills (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Gittings et al., 2020).

The first research objective is to examine the difference in the effects of the actual and hypothetical formats of experiential learning on student satisfaction and motivation. The quantitative findings provided strong support for H2, which stated that students are more motivated and satisfied with real-world experiential learning formats compared with their hypothetical counterparts. Regression analyses consistently demonstrated that the format of experiential learning (real versus hypothetical) was a significant predictor of various aspects of student motivation and satisfaction. Specifically, students who participated in real-world experiential learning activities reported higher levels of motivation, satisfaction, domain

knowledge improvement, positive influence on work and life aspects, CCSAT and professor–student interaction satisfaction (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Beard, 2010; Carver, 1996).

The second research objective is to examine whether experiential learning will more strongly impact the nature of the subject (i.e. hard and soft skill development) in terms of student satisfaction and motivation. Although the quantitative analysis did not reveal significant differences in the impact of experiential learning on hard versus soft skill development, the qualitative findings highlighted the importance of striking a balance between both types of skills in experiential learning activities. The instructors emphasised that both skills are essential for success in the business world and should be given equal attention in business education (Wats & Wats, 2022; Robles, 2012). This finding partially supports H3, which states that the impact on student motivation and satisfaction in acquiring soft skills is stronger than hard skills when using experiential learning.

The third research objective is to investigate differences in the changes in satisfaction and motivation according to the characteristics of the students. The quantitative analysis revealed the significant effects of gender and years of working experience on SEMOT in which male students and those with less years of working experience reported higher levels of SEMOT (Fallan & Opstad, 2016; Huang, 2013; Kasworm, 2008; Knowles et al., 2012). However, the qualitative findings did not provide specific insights into the role of student characteristics in the formation of motivation and satisfaction in experiential learning activities.

The fourth research objective is to contrast and investigate the difference between the set teaching objectives and expected learning outcomes of the course instructors in various formats of experiential learning activities with the self-

assessed changes in behaviour and in-depth understanding of domain knowledge of the students. The qualitative findings revealed the importance of the alignment between instructor expectations and student outcomes in experiential learning activities. The instructors emphasised the need to carefully design activities that target specific learning objectives and to provide ongoing feedback and support to ensure student progress (Bransford et al., 2000; Chickering & Gamson, 1987). Meanwhile, the quantitative analysis provided a certain degree of evidence of the alignment between instructor expectations and student outcomes, particularly in the context of domain knowledge improvement.

In summary, the findings provide partial support for the hypotheses and offer valuable insights into the research objectives. The mixed-method approach enabled a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the factors that influence student motivation and satisfaction in experiential learning activities. Moreover, the results highlighted the importance of real-world, authentic learning experiences, balance between hard and soft skill development, role of individual differences and alignment between instructor expectations and student outcomes (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Gittings et al., 2020; Wats & Wats, 2022; Bransford et al., 2000).

Nevertheless, the study has limitations that should be addressed in future research, such as the reliance on self-reported measures, cross-sectional design and focus on a specific population of business students (Astin, 1993; Kuh, 2009; Shadish et al., 2002). To address these concerns, future research could incorporate other objective measures of student outcomes, employ longitudinal or experimental study designs and replicate the study across cultural and institutional settings to enhance the generalisability and robustness of the findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Patton, 2015; Ambrose et al., 2010). The next chapter will further discuss these limitations.

4.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the qualitative and quantitative analyses and results of the mixed-method study, which aimed to investigate the factors that influence student motivation and satisfaction in experiential learning activities within the context of business education at the CUHK. The qualitative phase, which involved semi-structured interviews with seven course instructors, revealed four major themes, namely, diversity of experiential learning activities, importance of balancing between soft and hard skill development, perceived impact on student motivation and satisfaction and challenges and support in implementing experiential learning (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; McCarthy, 2016).

The quantitative phase, in which a survey on 426 undergraduate and graduate students was conducted, complemented and extended the qualitative findings by examining the relationships between specific independent variables (e.g. format of experiential learning, nature of skills and student demographics) and dependent variables related to student motivation and satisfaction. Regression analyses identified significant predictors of student outcomes, such as the format of experiential learning (real versus hypothetical), gender and years of working experience. The results highlighted the importance of real-world, authentic learning experiences and the role of individual differences in the formation of student motivation and satisfaction (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Fallan & Opstad, 2016; Huang, 2013).

The interaction effects were examined to investigate potential moderating relationships between the independent variables in predicting student outcomes. The interaction between the format of experiential learning and the nature of skills was tested to determine if the effect of real-world vs. hypothetical learning

experiences on student motivation and satisfaction differed depending on whether the focus was on soft or hard skill development. However, the regression analyses revealed that none of these interaction effects reached statistical significance at the 0.05 level and thus no significant result.

The integration of the qualitative and quantitative findings provided a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the factors that influence student motivation and satisfaction in experiential learning activities. Moreover, the study contributed to the growing body of literature on the effectiveness of experiential learning in business education and extended previous research by examining the role of specific factors and individual differences in the formation of student outcomes (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Gittings et al., 2020; Wats & Wats, 2022).

The findings pose important implications for theory and practice in the fields of experiential learning and business education. From the theoretical perspective, the study provides empirical support for key theoretical frameworks and models such as ELT (Kolb, 1984) and the theory of experience and education (Dewey, 1938). The study also contributes to the literature on the roles of self-efficacy and gender differences in experiential learning, as well as the importance of authentic and real-world learning experiences in the promotion of student engagement and satisfaction (Beard, 2010; Fallan & Opstad, 2016; Huang, 2013).

From the practical perspective, the study offers evidence-based recommendations for educators, administrators and policy makers involved in the design and implementation of experiential learning programmes in business education. The findings highlight the importance of integrating of real-world learning experiences; developing relevant skills; considering individual differences; fostering positive interactions and relationships; addressing challenges and barriers; and using

evidence-based strategies and assessment practices to optimise student outcomes in experiential learning activities (Hodge et al., 2014; Jackson, 2015; Smith & Worsfold, 2015; Bransford et al., 2000; Chickering & Gamson, 1987).

Although the study provided valuable contributions to the field of experiential learning in business education, acknowledging its limitations and identifying directions for future research are important. The study was conducted within a single institution and relied on self-reported data, which may limit the generalisability of the findings and introduce potential biases (Astin, 1993; Kuh, 2009). Future research could address these limitations by replicating the study across educational settings, incorporating other objective measures of student outcomes, using longitudinal or experimental study designs, exploring additional variables and factors, examining a broad range of student outcomes and conducting comparative studies with other pedagogical approaches (Shadish et al., 2002; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Patton, 2015; Ambrose et al., 2010).

Despite these limitations, the study provided a robust and comprehensive examination of the factors that influence student motivation and satisfaction in experiential learning activities within the context of business education. The findings contributed to the growing body of evidence on the effectiveness of experiential learning in promoting student engagement, skill development and overall success. Furthermore, it offered valuable insights and recommendations for the optimisation of experiential learning practices in business education and beyond (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Kuh, 2008; Datar et al., 2010).

Chapter Five: Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This mixed-method study aimed to investigate the factors that influence student motivation and satisfaction in experiential learning activities within the context of business education at the CUHK. By employing a sequential explanatory design, the study integrated qualitative data (derived from the interviews with the instructors) into quantitative data (derived student surveys) to provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the complex dynamics at play in experiential learning.

The qualitative phase revealed four major themes in experiential learning, namely, diversity in experiential learning activities, roles of experiential learning in the development of soft and hard skills, perceived impact on student motivation and satisfaction and challenges and support in implementing experiential learning. These themes provided valuable context and insights into the factors that influence the effectiveness of experiential learning from the perspective of course instructors.

The quantitative phase complemented and extended the qualitative findings by examining the relationships between specific independent variables (e.g. format of experiential learning, nature of skills and student demographics) and dependent variables related to student motivation and satisfaction. The regression analyses identified the predictors of student outcomes, such as the format of experiential learning (real versus hypothetical), gender and years of working experience, which highlighted the importance of real-world, authentic learning experiences and the role of individual differences in the formation of student motivation and satisfaction.

This concluding chapter presents a summary of the key findings, discusses their implications for theory and practice, addresses the limitations of the study and poses recommendations for future research and practice in the field of experiential learning

in business education.

5.2 Summary of Key Findings

5.2.1 Impact of Real-World Experiential Learning Activities

One of the findings across the qualitative and quantitative analyses was that real-world experiential learning activities, relative to hypothetical ones, exert a stronger impact on student motivation and satisfaction. Qualitative analysis revealed that instructors perceived real-world experiential learning activities, such as corporate projects, field trips and collaborations with industry partners, as more effective in engaging students and enhancing learning experiences compared with hypothetical activities. The quantitative analysis provided empirical support for this finding, which implied that students who participated in real-world experiential learning activities reported higher levels of motivation, satisfaction, positive impact on work and life, domain knowledge improvement, course content satisfaction and professor–student interaction satisfaction compared with those who participated in hypothetical activities.

These findings align with ELT, which emphasises the importance of concrete experiences and active experimentation in the learning process. Real-world experiential learning activities provide students with authentic, hands-on experiences that enable them to apply their knowledge and skills to real-world scenarios, which fosters in-depth engagement, understanding and transfer of learning (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). The results also support the notion that real-world relevance and authenticity are key factors in promoting student motivation and satisfaction in experiential learning (Beard, 2010; Carver, 1996).

The enhancement of various aspects of student motivation and satisfaction through

real-world experiential learning activities poses important implications for the design and implementation of experiential learning activities in business education. Educators should strive to incorporate additional real-world, authentic learning experiences, such as corporate projects, field trips and collaborations with industry partners, into courses. By providing students with opportunities to engage in real clients, cases and challenges, educators can create further meaningful and impactful learning experiences that foster student motivation, satisfaction and skill development (Hodge et al., 2014; Jackson, 2015; Smith & Worsfold, 2015).

5.2.2 Role of Gender and Working Experience in Self-Efficacy Motivation

Another notable finding from the quantitative analysis was the roles of gender and years of working experience in the formation of the self-efficacy motivation of students. The results illustrated that male students tended to report higher levels of self-efficacy motivation compared with female students after controlling for the effects of the other variables in the model. This finding is consistent with those of previous research that identified gender differences in self-efficacy beliefs (Fallan & Opstad, 2016; Huang, 2013).

The role of gender in self-efficacy motivation denotes important implications for educators and administrators in business education. Efforts should be made to address gender disparity in self-efficacy beliefs and to create inclusive and equitable learning environments that support the confidence and motivation of all students regardless of gender. This aspect may involve the implementation of targeted interventions and support systems, such as mentoring programmes, leadership development opportunities and workshops on building self-efficacy and resilience, for female students (Kezar & Lester, 2009; Margolis et al., 2001).

The quantitative analysis also revealed a negative relationship between years of working experience and self-efficacy motivation, which implies that the self-efficacy motivation of students tends to decrease with the increase in work experience. This finding raises important questions on the potential impact of prior work experience on the confidence and self-beliefs of students in the context of experiential learning activities. Furthermore, it suggests that students with extensive work experience may face unique challenges and barriers in the development and maintenance of self-efficacy in academic settings, particularly when engaging in hands-on, interactive learning experiences (Kasworm, 2008; Knowles et al., 2012).

The negative relationship between working experience and self-efficacy motivation offers important implications for educators and administrators in business education. Efforts should be made to recognise and address the unique needs and challenges of students with extensive work experience and to provide targeted support and resources to help them build and maintain self-efficacy in experiential learning activities. This initiative may involve the provision of opportunities for reflection, feedback and peer support and the creation of safe and supportive learning environments that value the diverse experiences and perspectives of all students (Kasworm, 2003; Knowles et al., 2012).

5.2.3 Importance of Reflection and Debriefing in Experiential Learning

The qualitative analysis highlighted the importance of reflection and debriefing sessions as key strategies for enhancing the effectiveness of experiential learning activities. The instructors emphasised that offering structured opportunities in which students can reflect on experiences, share insights and discuss lessons learned helps them to develop an in-depth understanding of the subject matter and transfer

learning to new situations. This finding aligns with ELT, which posits that reflection is a crucial component of the learning cycle and enables learners to transform experience into knowledge (Kolb, 1984; Boud et al., 1985).

The quantitative analysis provided further support for the importance of reflection, which demonstrated that the format of experiential learning (real versus hypothetical) predicted professor–student interaction satisfaction, which includes items related to reflective observation sharing and abstract conceptualisation debriefing. This finding implies that real-world experiential learning activities tend to foster more positive and satisfying interactions between students and professors, which may be attributed to opportunities for meaningful reflection and debriefing in the context of authentic learning experiences (Ash & Clayton, 2009; Bringle & Hatcher, 1999).

The importance of reflection and debriefing in experiential learning poses certain implications for educators and administrators in business education. Efforts should be exerted to prioritise the incorporation of structured opportunities in which students can reflect on experiences, share insights and discuss lessons learned. The reason is that previous scholars demonstrated that these practices enhance the understanding, transfer of learning and overall satisfaction of students with learning experiences (Ash & Clayton, 2009; Boud et al., 1985; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Doing so may involve the use of journaling, group discussion, self-assessment and other reflective activities that encourage students to critically analyse and derive meaning from their experiences (Bringle & Hatcher, 1999; Eyler, 2002).

5.2.4 Impact of Experiential Learning on Incremental Domain Knowledge and Positive Influence on Work and Life Aspects

The quantitative analysis revealed that the format of experiential learning (real

versus hypothetical) is a predictor of domain knowledge improvement and positive influence on work and life aspects. Students who participated in real-world experiential learning activities reported higher levels of perceived improvement in domain knowledge and a greater positive impact on work and life aspects compared with those who participated in hypothetical activities. These findings denote that real-world experiential learning activities not only enhance student motivation and satisfaction but also contribute to the acquisition of domain-specific knowledge and the development of transferable skills and competencies that positively influence work and life outcomes. By engaging in authentic, real-world learning experiences, students gain opportunities to apply theoretical concepts to practical situations, enhance their understanding of the subject matter and develop a nuanced and contextual comprehension of domain knowledge (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Matsuo, 2015). Moreover, real experiential learning activities expose students to the challenges, complexities and opportunities that occur in the business world, which promotes the development of valuable skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, communication and teamwork. Employers highly prioritise these skills, which are essential for success in various professional and personal contexts (Beard & Wilson, 2013; Smith & Worsfold, 2015). By fostering the development of these transferable competencies, real-world experiential learning activities can exert a long-term positive impact on the work and life outcomes of students, which enhances employability, career advancement and overall well-being (Jackson, 2015; Kuh, 2008).

5.3 Implications for Theory and Practice

The findings pose certain implications for theory and practice in the fields of

experiential learning and business education. From the theoretical perspective, the study provides empirical support for several key principles and frameworks of experiential learning, such as ELT and the theory of experience and education. The strong impact of real-world experiential learning activities on various aspects of student motivation and satisfaction aligns with the emphasis of these models on concrete experiences and active experimentation. It also agrees with the importance of authenticity and relevance in the promotion of student engagement and learning (Beard, 2010; Kolb & Kolb, 2005).

Additionally, the study contributes to the literature on the roles of gender and self-efficacy in experiential learning. The findings related to gender differences in self-efficacy motivation are consistent with those of previous studies (e.g. Fallan & Opstad, 2016; Huang, 2013) and highlight the need for further research on the factors that shape self-efficacy beliefs in the context of experiential learning. The negative relationship between years of working experience and self-efficacy motivation is a novel finding that warrants further investigation, because it indicates that prior work experience may exert a complex and potentially negative impact on the confidence and self-beliefs of students in experiential learning settings (Kasworm, 2008; Knowles et al., 2012). Furthermore, the current findings on the impact of real-world experiential learning activities on incremental domain knowledge and positive influence on work and life aspects offer important implications for theory and practice. From the theoretical perspective, these findings contribute to the growing stream of literature on the effectiveness of experiential learning in the promotion of in-depth learning, knowledge acquisition and transfer of learning to real-world contexts (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Matsuo, 2015). The results also extend the understanding of the potential long-term benefits of experiential learning

beyond immediate learning outcomes. This notion highlights its role in fostering the development of transferable skills and competencies that can positively influence the future work and life experiences of students (Jackson, 2015; Kuh, 2008).

From the practical perspective, the findings provide valuable insights and recommendations for educators, administrators and policy makers involved in the design and implementation of experiential learning programmes in business education. The results underscore the importance of the integration of real-world, authentic learning experiences into business curricula and guidance on the optimisation of student motivation and satisfaction in experiential learning activities (Hodge et al., 2014; Jackson, 2015; Smith & Worsfold, 2015).

From the practical standpoint, the findings underscore the importance of the design and implementation of experiential learning activities that promote real-world relevance, authenticity and opportunities, such that students can apply their knowledge and skills in meaningful ways. Business educators should endeavour to create learning experiences that closely mirror the challenges and opportunities that occur in the business world. Towards this end, they can leverage partnerships with industry, alumni and community organisations to provide students with access to real projects, clients and mentors (Hodge et al., 2014; Jackson, 2015). If they emphasise the development of domain-specific knowledge and transferable skills through real-world learning experiences, then educators can better prepare students for success in future careers and personal lives, which enhances employability, adaptability and overall well-being (Smith & Worsfold, 2015; Beard & Wilson, 2013).

Furthermore, educators should attempt to create experiential learning activities that are grounded in real-world contexts and challenges and that provide students with

opportunities to apply knowledge and skills to authentic problems and create value for stakeholders. This aspect may involve the development of partnerships and collaboration with industry partners, alumni and community organisations. They may also leverage technology and digital tools to facilitate real-world projects and simulations (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Eyler, 2009).

The study's findings on the roles of gender and working experience in shaping the outcomes of experiential learning contribute to the theoretical understanding of the differential learning effects of individuals. From a theoretical perspective, the study's findings on gender differences in experiential learning outcomes can be explained by social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) and experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984). The study's findings suggest that female students may have learning styles that are more compatible with experiential learning activities (Kolb & Kolb, 2013). Regarding working experience, the study's findings can be explained by adult learning theory (Knowles et al., 2012) and constructivist learning theory (Piaget, 1972; Vygotsky, 1978). The study's findings suggest that students with more working experience may have a richer knowledge base and a greater capacity for reflective thinking, which can enhance their learning outcomes and satisfaction in experiential learning settings. By accounting for these individual characteristics in the design and implementation of experiential learning activities, educators can create more inclusive, engaging, and effective learning environments that promote student success (Beard, 2010; Kolb & Kolb, 2005).

Moreover, educators should be attentive to individual differences in the motivational profiles and learning preferences of students and adapt teaching strategies and assessment practices accordingly. This process may involve targeted support and resources for students with different levels of self-efficacy and working experience

as well as the creation of inclusive and equitable learning environments that support the confidence and motivation of all students regardless of gender or background (Fallan & Opstad, 2016; Huang, 2013; Kasworm, 2003).

At the programme and institutional levels, administrators and policy makers should prioritise the development and implementation of experiential learning initiatives that are aligned with the needs and goals of students, employers and society. This aspect may require investment in faculty development and support, establishment of partnerships and networks with external stakeholders and creation of policies and incentives that encourage and reward innovative and effective practices in experiential learning (Eyler, 2009; Kolb & Kolb, 2005).

Furthermore, the current findings highlight the need for additional research and evaluation of experiential learning programmes and outcomes in business education. Although the current study provides valuable insights into the factors that influence student motivation and satisfaction, further research is warranted to explore the long-term impact of experiential learning on student learning, career readiness and post-graduation outcomes (Gault et al., 2000; Knouse et al., 1999). Longitudinal studies could track the development and progress of students over time, while comparative studies could examine the effectiveness of different types and formats of experiential learning activities across educational contexts and student populations (Eyler, 2009; Steinert et al., 2006).

5.4 Practical Recommendations for Educators and Administrators

Based on the findings and the implications for theory and practice, the study puts forward several practical recommendations for educators and administrators who intend to optimise experiential learning practices in business education.

First, educators should facilitate the incorporation of real-world, authentic learning experiences into courses and curricula. The study consistently illustrated that students who participated in real-world experiential learning activities reported higher levels of motivation, satisfaction and skill development compared with those who engaged in hypothetical activities. To facilitate real-world learning, educators can develop partnerships and collaborate with industry partners, alumni and community organisations. Furthermore, they can leverage technology and digital tools to create immersive simulations and virtual projects (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Eyler, 2009). By offering students with opportunities to engage with real clients, cases and challenges, educators create more meaningful and impactful learning experiences that foster student engagement, motivation and career readiness (Hodge et al., 2014; Jackson, 2015; Smith & Worsfold, 2015).

Second, educators should be attentive to individual differences in the motivational profiles, learning preferences and demographic characteristics of students and adapt teaching strategies and assessment practices accordingly. The study revealed the effects of gender and years of working experience on the self-efficacy motivation of students. This result highlights the need for targeted support and resources for students with different levels of confidence and experience. As such,. educators can create inclusive and equitable learning environments that support the motivation and success of all students through mentoring programmes, opportunities for leadership development and workshops on building self-efficacy and resilience. These initiatives can particularly target for female students and those with extensive work experience (Fallan & Opstad, 2016; Huang, 2013; Kasworm, 2003; Kezar & Lester, 2009).

Third, educators should consider the incorporation of structured opportunities for

reflection and debriefing in experiential learning activities. The current study highlighted the importance of reflection and debriefing sessions as key strategies for enhancing the understanding, transfer of learning and overall satisfaction of students with learning experiences. Educators can promote reflection through journaling, group discussion, self-assessment or other reflective activities that encourage students to critically analyse and derive meaning from their experiences (Ash & Clayton, 2009; Boud et al., 1985; Bringle & Hatcher, 1999; Eyler, 2002). By positioning reflection as an integral part of the experiential learning process, educators can help students develop metacognitive skills, self-awareness and the ability to apply learning to new situations (Kolb & Kolb, 2005).

Fourthly, educators should attempt to align their expectations and learning objectives with student outcomes in experiential learning activities. The study revealed the importance of designing experiential learning activities that target specific learning objectives and clearly communicating these objectives to students. Educators can use learning agreements, rubrics or other tools to establish expectations and provide a framework for assessment and feedback (Ash & Clayton, 2009; Suskie, 2018). They should also encourage ongoing feedback and support to ensure that students are making progress towards the intended learning outcomes. They may identify areas for improvement in the design and delivery of experiential learning activities (Bransford et al., 2000; Chickering & Gamson, 1987).

At the programme and institutional levels, administrators should promote the development and implementation of experiential learning initiatives that align with the needs and goals of students, employers and society. Doing so may involve investing in faculty development and support, building partnerships and networks with external stakeholders. It includes the creation of policies and incentives that

encourage and reward innovative and effective experiential learning practices (Eyler, 2009; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Administrators can also support the integration of experiential learning into the curriculum by providing resource and infrastructure for the design, conducting an implementation and assessment of experiential learning activities such as dedicated experiential learning centres, funding for student projects and opportunities for travel and professional development for faculty (Kuh, 2008).

Furthermore, administrators should prioritise the evaluation and continued improvement of experiential learning programmes and outcomes in business education. This notion involve conducting regular assessments of the learning outcomes, satisfaction and post-graduation outcomes of students, including gathering feedback from faculty, industry partners and other stakeholders (Eyler, 2009; Kuh, 2008). Using data-driven approaches to evaluate and refine experiential learning practices, administrators can ensure that programmes meet the needs of students and employers and contribute to the overall mission and goals of the institution.

To optimise the impact of experiential learning on the domain knowledge acquisition and positive work and life outcomes of students, educators and administrators could consider the prioritisation of the following strategies:

(1) Align experiential learning activities with specific learning objectives and industry needs: educators should carefully design experiential learning activities that target the development of key knowledge, skills and competencies that are relevant to the future careers of students and aligned with the needs and expectations of industry partners (Jackson, 2015; Smith & Worsfold, 2015).

(2) Provide opportunities for real-world application and problem-solving: experiential learning activities should engage students in authentic, real-world problems and projects that require them to apply their knowledge and skills in meaningful and contextually relevant ways (Beard & Wilson, 2013; Matsuo, 2015).

(3) Foster collaboration and teamwork: educators should design experiential learning activities that promote collaboration, teamwork and the development of interpersonal skills, because employers highly value these competencies, which are essential for success in various work and life contexts (Kuh, 2008; Smith & Worsfold, 2015).

(4) Incorporate reflection and feedback: experiential learning activities should employ structured opportunities for students to reflect on experiences, receive feedback on performance and engage in continuous improvement and self-directed learning (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Matsuo, 2015).

(5) Leverage industry partnerships and mentorship: administrators could cultivate partnerships with industry, alumni and community organisations, such that students gain access to real-world projects, mentors and resources, which can enhance the relevance and impact of learning experiences (Hodge et al., 2014; Jackson, 2015).

By implementing these strategies, educators and administrators can promote experiential learning environments that not only enhance student motivation and satisfaction but also foster the development of in-depth, transferable knowledge and skills, which, in turn, positively influence future work and life outcomes. Educators and administrators should foster a culture of collaboration, innovation and

continuous improvement in experiential learning. Towards this end, opportunities in which faculty can share best practices, collaborate on interdisciplinary projects and engage in professional development related to experiential learning pedagogy can be created (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). It may also involve partnering with students, alumni and industry leaders to co-create opportunities for experiential learning that are relevant, engaging and impactful (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002). By cultivating a culture of experimentation, reflection and continuous improvement, educators and administrators can create a dynamic and responsive ecosystem for experiential learning that adapts to the changing needs and demands of students, employers and society.

5.5 Implications for Policy and Accreditation

The findings also pose important implications for policy and accreditation in business education. Policy makers and accreditation bodies play a critical role in ensuring the quality, relevance and accessibility of experiential learning programmes and initiatives with the increase in the demand for experiential learning. At the policy level, policy makers should prioritise the development and implementation of policies and funding mechanisms that support the integration of experiential learning into business education. Thus, targeted funding for experiential learning initiatives, such as grants for student projects, faculty development and industry partnerships, may be provided (Eyler, 2009). Policies and incentives that encourage and reward institutions and programmes that demonstrate commitment to experiential learning, such as performance-based funding models or recognition programmes for innovative teaching practices, may be formulated (Kolb & Kolb, 2005).

The results suggest that different formats of experiential learning, real-world and hypothetical, can have differential impacts on student learning outcomes, motivation, and satisfaction (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Kuh, 2008). These findings raise the question of whether experiential learning should be a requirement for accreditation and quality assurance processes in business education. Given the strong evidence of the benefits of experiential learning for student learning and development, accreditation bodies should consider incorporating experiential learning as a key criterion for program quality and effectiveness (Hodge et al., 2014; Eyler, 2009). This could involve requiring programs to demonstrate a commitment to experiential learning through the inclusion of experiential learning activities in the curriculum, the assessment of student learning outcomes related to experiential learning, and the provision of resources and support for faculty and students engaged in experiential learning (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Kuh, 2008). By making experiential learning a core component of accreditation and quality assurance processes, accreditation bodies can help to ensure that business education programs are providing students with the skills, knowledge, and experiences they need to succeed in the rapidly changing and complex business world (Hodge et al., 2014; Eyler, 2009; Steinert et al., 2006). By using the results of the study as the base, the details of the assessment requirements to ascertain the quality of learning in the accreditation process can be further examined in the future researches.

Policy makers should also address issues in access and equity in experiential learning, particularly for underserved and underrepresented student populations. Towards this concern, need-based financial aid and scholarships can be granted to students to encourage them to participate in experiential learning opportunities such as internships, study abroad programmes or community-based projects (Kuh, 2008).

The development of experiential learning programmes and initiatives specifically designed to serve the needs and interests of diverse student populations, such as first-generation college students, students of colour or adult learners, should be supported (Kasworm, 2003).

At the accreditation level, accreditation bodies should prioritise the integration of experiential learning into the standards and criteria for business education programmes. Thus, programmes that demonstrate commitment to experiential learning through the inclusion of experiential learning activities in the curriculum, the assessment of student learning outcomes related to experiential learning and the provision of resources and support for faculty and students engaged in experiential learning may be required (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Accreditation bodies also play a role in promoting best practices and innovation in experiential learning by recognising and disseminating exemplary models and initiatives from across the field (Kuh, 2008).

Lastly, accreditation bodies should ensure that experiential learning programmes and initiatives align with the needs and expectations of employers and industry partners. For this reason, employers and industry leaders should be engaged in the development and review of accreditation standards and criteria and the collect of feedback on the relevance and effectiveness of experiential learning programmes in preparing graduates for the workforce (Hodge et al., 2014). By fostering close collaboration and communication between business education programmes and industry partners, accreditation bodies can help to bridge the gap between academia and practice and ensure that experiential learning programmes meet the needs of students and employers.

Finally, policy makers and accreditation bodies should prioritise research and

evaluation on the effectiveness and impact of experiential learning in business education. Thus, funding for large-scale, longitudinal studies that examine the long-term outcomes of experiential learning programmes and initiatives can be offered. Moreover, the development of new research methodologies and assessment tools for measuring the impact of experiential learning on student learning, motivation and career readiness should be supported (Eyler, 2009; Steinert et al., 2006). By investing in research and evaluation, policy makers and accreditation bodies can help to build a stronger evidence base for experiential learning in business education and inform the development of further effective policies, standards and practices.

5.6 Limitations of the Study

Although this study provides a comprehensive examination of the factors that influence student motivation and satisfaction in experiential learning activities, acknowledging its limitations is vital.

One of the limitations is reliance on self-reported measures of motivation, satisfaction, incremental domain knowledge and positive influence on work and life aspects, which may be subject to response bias and social desirability effects. Alternatively, self-report measures can provide valuable insights into the perceptions and experiences of students; however, they are susceptible to various biases and limitations such as social desirability, memory recall and lack of objectivity (Paulhus & Vazire, 2007). Future research could incorporate other objective measures of student outcomes, such as academic performance, skill assessments or behavioural indicators of engagement and persistence (Astin, 1993; Kuh, 2009). The continual measurements before and after the courses for the same students would provide a comprehensive and reliable assessment of the impact of

experiential learning on student learning and development.

Another limitation is the cross-sectional design of the study, which limits the ability to make causal inferences on the relationships between variables. Although the regression analyses identified the predictors of student motivation and satisfaction, the study was unable to definitely establish the direction and nature of these relationships on the basis of the current data. Future research could employ longitudinal or experimental designs to examine the causal effects of experiential learning activities on student outcomes over time, while controlling for potential confounding variables (Shadish et al., 2002; Tinto, 1993).

The study is also limited by its focus on a specific population of business students at a single institution in Hong Kong, which may limit the generalisability of the findings to other educational contexts and student populations. Thus, future research could replicate the study across cultural and institutional settings, including students from different disciplines and backgrounds (Kuh et al., 2006; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). This process could provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence student motivation and satisfaction in experiential learning across contexts and populations.

Moreover, the study only partially captured the complexity and nuance of the subjective experiences and perceptions of students in experiential learning activities. Future research could incorporate qualitative methods, such as interviews, focus groups or observations, to gain an in-depth understanding of the motivations, challenges and learning processes of students in experiential learning (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Patton, 2015). Doing so would provide valuable insights into the lived experiences of students and inform the development of other student-centred and personalised approaches to experiential learning. The conceptualisation of the

current study of incremental domain knowledge and positive influence on work and life aspects was relatively broad and multidimensional, which encompassed various aspects of learning, skill development and personal growth. Future research could benefit from a fine-grained and targeted examination of these constructs with a particular focus on the specific dimensions or indicators of domain knowledge (e.g. conceptual understanding, procedural fluency and strategic competence) and work and life outcomes (e.g. job satisfaction, work–life balance and civic engagement) (Kraiger et al., 1993; Kuh, 2008). By adopting a nuanced and theory-driven approach to the measurement and conceptualisation of these variables, future studies can provide an in-depth understanding of the mechanisms and boundary conditions that influence the impact of experiential learning on the academic, professional and personal development of students.

Finally, the study primarily focused on the individual and contextual factors that influence student motivation and satisfaction in experiential learning activities. However, it only indirectly examined the strategies and practices of educators to facilitate experiential learning. Future research could investigate the specific instructional methods, assessment practices and support structures that are most effective in promoting student engagement, skill development and learning outcomes in experiential learning activities (Ambrose et al., 2010; Fink, 2013). The results could provide valuable guidance for educators and administrators in designing and implementing high-quality programmes for experiential learning in business education.

5.7 Final Thoughts and Future Directions

As the landscape of business education continues to evolve in response to dynamic

needs and demands of the global economy, experiential learning will undoubtedly play an increasingly central role in preparing the next generation of business leaders and entrepreneurs. The findings provide valuable insights and recommendations for educators, administrators, policy makers and accreditation bodies that endeavour to optimise experiential learning practices and outcomes in business education.

As the business world continues to evolve at an unprecedented pace, which is driven by technological advancement, globalisation and shifting societal demand, the importance of experiential learning in preparing students for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century cannot be overstated. The findings underscore the critical role of real-world, authentic learning experiences in fostering the acquisition of domain-specific knowledge, transferable skills and positive work and life outcomes among students. As such, educators, administrators, policy makers and industry partners can collaborate to create a more dynamic, responsive and impactful ecosystem that empowers students to thrive in an increasingly complex and uncertain world by prioritising experiential learning in business education.

However, realising the full potential of experiential learning in business education requires ongoing research, innovation and collaboration across stakeholders and disciplines. Future research should continue to investigate the complex interplay among the individual, contextual and pedagogical factors that shape the effectiveness of experiential learning. Moreover, new methodologies, technologies and assessment practices that can enhance the design, delivery and evaluation of experiential learning programmes should be explored. By leveraging the collective wisdom and resources of researchers, educators, practitioners and policy makers, the advancement of the theory and practice of experiential learning can be continued and further transformative and empowering educational experiences can

be created for all students.

First, future research should continue to investigate the complex interplay among the individual, contextual and pedagogical factors that shape student motivation, satisfaction and learning outcomes in experiential learning. As such, other variables and constructs, such as student personality traits, learning styles or cultural backgrounds should be explored. Moreover, the role of specific instructional strategies, assessment practices or support structures in facilitating experiential learning should be examined (Ambrose et al., 2010; Kolb & Kolb, 2005).

Second, future research should aim to expand the scope and generalisability of the findings by replicating the study in different cultural, institutional and disciplinary contexts. Cross-cultural comparisons of experiential learning practices and outcomes in business education can be conducted, while the transferability of the findings to other fields and sectors, such as engineering, healthcare or social services, can be examined (Eyler, 2009; Kuh et al., 2006). By broadening the research base and exploring the boundary conditions of experiential learning, future studies can help to build a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of this complex and multifaceted phenomenon.

Third, future research should continue to explore the long-term impacts and outcomes of experiential learning in business education, particularly in terms of the career readiness, employability and post-graduation success of students. To address this concern, longitudinal studies that track the development and progress of students over time can be conducted and the perspectives and experiences of employers and industry partners in hiring and working with graduates that underwent experiential learning programmes can be explored (Gault et al., 2000; Knouse et al., 1999). By providing evidence of the long-term value and impact of

experiential learning, future research can help to establish a strong case for the integration of experiential learning into business education and to inform the development of further effective policies and practices.

Finally, future research should seek to advance the theory and practice of experiential learning by developing new conceptual frameworks, methodologies and tools for the design, implementation and assessment of experiential learning activities. Towards this end, insights and approaches from other fields, such as cognitive science, educational psychology or design thinking can be drawn, while emerging technologies, such as virtual and augmented reality, can be leveraged to create immersive and engaging experiential learning environments (Kolb & Kolb, 2017; Schön, 1983). By pushing the boundaries of ELT and practice, future research can help to unlock new possibilities for student learning, motivation and growth in business education and beyond.

In summary, this study provides a valuable contribution to the field of experiential learning in business education by offering empirical evidence, practical insights and theoretical advancements, which could be used to enhance student motivation and satisfaction in experiential learning activities. Business educators, administrators, policy makers and accreditation bodies can create more engaging, effective and impactful learning experiences that benefit students, employers and society as a whole. This initiative includes embracing the principles and practices of experiential learning and using evidence-based strategies and assessment practices to continuously improve and optimise experiential learning programmes and initiatives. As we look to the future of business education, experiential learning will undoubtedly play a central role in preparing the next generation of business leaders and change-makers to enable them to navigate the complexities and challenges of the 21st

century. By continuing to invest in research, innovation and collaboration in relation to experiential learning, the full potential of this powerful and transformative approach to education can be unlocked and a brighter, more sustainable and more equitable future for all can be created.

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APPENDIXES

Exhibit 1: List of Qualitative Interview Questions

1. a. What are the courses which you have practiced experiential learnings? Why do you practice experiential learnings? How long had the practices been done?
   b. What are the courses which you have NOT practiced experiential learnings? Why do you NOT practice experiential learnings for these subjects? How long had the practices been done?
2. Can you describe the business education course in terms of its overall nature? For example, is it more focused on developing soft skills or hard skills?
3. What types of experiential learning activities do you have planned for this course?
4. Can you provide an example of a real-world experiential learning activity that students will participate in during this course?
5. Can you provide an example of a hypothetical experiential learning activity that students will participate in during this course?
6. What are the expected learning outcomes for this course, based on the experiential activities you have planned?
7. What are the result of the experiential learning versus your expected learning outcomes?
8. How do you evaluate the effectiveness of experiential learning outcome?
9. Are there any challenges you have faced in implementing these experiential learning activities? If so, how do you plan to address them?

Exhibit 2: Consent From from the Interviewees

DBA programme

University of Wales Trinity Saint David

Consent Form:

Title of Research Project: How various experiential learning activities affecting on students' learning motivation and satisfaction in business education

Name of Researcher: Choi Wai Shan, Tina

Contact Information: +...

Introduction:

Thank you for considering participating in this research project for my research DBA programme of University of Wales Trinity Sant David. The purpose of this study is to investigate how various experiential learning activities affect students' learning motivation and satisfaction in business education. Your participation is voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw or have breaks at any time without giving any reason. Please read the following information and sign the form to indicate that you have understood and agreed to participate in the study.

Research Aims & Objectives:

The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of different types of experiential learning activities on students' learning motivation and satisfaction in business education.

Procedure:

The study involves a 1:1 semi-structured interview that will last approximately 30

minutes. The interview will be conducted in a private setting, and all information obtained will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous. Your name will not be used in any reports or publications, and all data will be stored securely.

Confidentiality:

All information obtained in this study will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous. Your name will not be used in any reports or publications, and all data will be stored securely. No individually identifiable information, including images of participants, will be published, shared, or disseminated. All participants will be informed before having the interview. The research data management, including working with data, preserving data and sharing of data will strictly follow the University's Research Data Management guideline and follow university codes and practice.

Risks and Benefits:

There are no known risks associated with participating in this study. You may not receive any direct benefits from participating in the study, but your participation will help us to better understand how various experiential learning activities affect students' learning motivation and satisfaction in business education. However, if there is any potential physical health and safety- potential medical or trauma concerns, including emotional distress aroused from the interview, you are free to have breaks or withdraw from the interviews or questionaries at any point of the study without giving any reason or explanation.

Voluntary Participation:

Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw at any time without giving any reason.

Contact Information:

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact Choi Wai Shan (Tina) at ……...

I have read the information above and voluntarily agree to participate in the study.

Participant's signature: _____

Date: _____

Exhibit 3: Quantitative Questionnaire (Sample)

Students' motivation and satisfaction of experiential learning activities in business education -

Instruction Research Survey Topic: Students' motivation and satisfaction of experiential learning activities in business disciplines

Q1 Which of the following course(s) had you taken in the past?

Please answer the following questions regarding the course …….. by Prof. / Dr. ……. Experiential Learning activities used in this course are c…..y, si…… and……...

Q2 The experiential learning content in this course had added value to my learning experience.

- ○ Strongly disagree (1)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat agree (4)
- ○ Strongly agree (5)

Q3 The experiential learning content in this course was applicable and useful to my work in the workplace.

- ○ Strongly disagree (1)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat agree (4)
- ○ Strongly agree (5)

Q4 The experiential learning content had designed to stress important concepts.

- ○ Strongly disagree (1)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat agree (4)
- ○ Strongly agree (5)

Q5 The professor had actively facilitated discussions in class with reflective observation sharing.

- ○ Strongly disagree (1)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat agree (4)
- ○ Strongly agree (5)

Q6 The professor had debriefed the experiential learning activity with abstract conceptualization observation.

- ○ Strongly disagree (1)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat agree (4)
- ○ Strongly agree (5)

Q7 The professor was very responsive to students' concerns.

- ○ Strongly disagree (1)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat agree (4)
- ○ Strongly agree (5)

Q8 I learnt a lot in this course.

- ○ Strongly disagree (1)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat agree (4)
- ○ Strongly agree (5)

Q9 I was very satisfied with this course.

- ○ Strongly disagree (6)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (7)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (8)
- ○ Somewhat agree (9)
- ○ Strongly agree (10)

Q10 Overall, I was disappointed with this course.

- ○ Strongly disagree (1)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat agree (4)
- ○ Strongly agree (5)

Q11 I enjoyed learning the course content with the experiential learning activities.

- ○ Strongly disagree (1)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat agree (4)
- ○ Strongly agree (5)

Q12 I liked the course that had challenged me with experiential learning activities.

- ○ Strongly disagree (1)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat agree (4)
- ○ Strongly agree (5)

Q13 Understanding the experiential learning content gave me a sense of accomplishment.

- ○ Strongly disagree (1)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat agree (4)
- ○ Strongly agree (5)

Q14 What I had learnt in the course was more important to me than the grade I received.

- ○ Strongly disagree (1)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat agree (4)
- ○ Strongly agree (5)

Q15 I had the belief that I could master the knowledge and skills in the course when I was studying the course.

- ○ Strongly disagree (1)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat agree (4)
- ○ Strongly agree (5)

Q16 I had the belief that I could earn a grade of "A" in the course when I was studying the course.

- ○ Strongly disagree (1)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat agree (4)
- ○ Strongly agree (5)

Q17 I was confident I would do well on the assessment and exam when I was studying the course.

- ○ Strongly disagree (1)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat agree (4)
- ○ Strongly agree (5)

Q18 I expected to do as well as or better than other students in the course with the experiential learning activities when I was studying the course.

- ○ Strongly disagree (1)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat agree (4)
- ○ Strongly agree (5)

Q19 I was confident I would do well on the practicing the knowledge and projects with experiential learning activities when I was studying the course.

- ○ Strongly disagree (1)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat agree (4)
- ○ Strongly agree (5)

Q20 Overall, I was motivated to learn in this course.

- ○ Strongly disagree (1)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat agree (4)
- ○ Strongly agree (5)

Q21 The experiential learning course has positive influence on my behaviour in work and/or life aspect(s).

- ○ Strongly disagree (1)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat agree (4)
- ○ Strongly agree (5)

Q22 I have acquired a deeper understanding on the domain knowledge with experiential learning course.

- ○ Strongly disagree (1)
- ○ Somewhat disagree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Somewhat agree (4)
- ○ Strongly agree (5)

Q23 How old are you?

Age

18 39 59 80

Please slide to indicate the answer ()	

Q24 Your ethnicity

- White or Caucasian (1)
- Black or African American (2)
- Hispanic or Latino (3)
- Asian (4)
- Other race (Please specify as below) (5)

_____

Q25 Your estimated annual income (in HKD $ '000)

Annual income (in HKD $ '000)

0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000

Please select 5000 (i.e. 5 Million) if your salary exceed the range, thanks! ()	

Q26 Your years of working experience

- ○ 0 year (1)
- ○ > 0 year - 10 years (2)
- ○ 11 years - 20 years (3)
- ○ 20 years + (4)

Q27 Year of Graduation or Expected Year of Graduation

- ○ 2019 or before (please specify your year of graduation in below box) (1)

_____

- ○ 2020 (17)
- ○ 2021 (10)
- ○ 2022 (11)
- ○ 2023 (13)
- ○ 2024 or later (9)

Q28 How do you describe yourself?

- ○ Male (1)
- ○ Female (2)
- ○ Non-binary / third gender (3)
- ○ Prefer not to say (5)

Q29 What best describes your employment status over the last three months?

- ○ Working full-time (1)
- ○ Working part-time / Slash (2)
- ○ Unemployed and looking for work (3)
- ○ A homemaker or stay-at-home parent (4)
- ○ Student (5)
- ○ Retired (6)
- ○ Other (7)