

Reimagining Business Education for the Next Generation

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Abstract

Business schools are facing accelerating technological, economic, and social change, prompting an urgent need to rethink traditional teaching models. This study examines how experiential learning can facilitate this transformation by enhancing student engagement, promoting academic growth, and fostering a long-term commitment to business programs. Grounded in the broader push to move beyond the classroom, the research explores how experiential learning experiences shape students' perceptions of the relevance and value of their education. Using a mixed methods approach, the study integrates survey data, student reflections, and established experiential learning frameworks to assess the perceived impact of hands-on activities on academic trajectories. Quantitative results show clear differences between students who have participated in experiential learning and those who have not, with experiential learners reporting higher engagement, stronger confidence in applying business concepts, and greater readiness for future careers. They also express increased motivation to persist in their major and a clearer sense of direction within the field. Qualitative findings deepen these patterns, as students describe relevance, confidence, and belonging as central motivators, frequently citing internships, guest speakers, collaborative projects, case studies, and entrepreneurial experiences as pivotal in making business education feel meaningful and connected to practice. Faculty perspectives add nuance, highlighting both opportunities and institutional barriers that influence implementation, and underscoring that the future of business education depends on professors and institutions embracing experiential learning as a core teaching strategy.

Keywords: Experiential Learning; Future Institutional Goals; Higher Education; Student Engagement; Transforming Academic Models