

IMPACT OF WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING IN TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY PROGRAMS ON STUDENT WORK AND STUDY RELATED SKILLS.

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Observation

Work related learning activities are almost ubiquitous in tertiary tourism, events and hospitality management programs!

Work Integrated Learning (WIL)

“...educational programs which combine and integrate learning and its workplace application, regardless of whether this integration occurs in industry or whether it is real or simulated”.

(Atchison, Pollock, Reeders, & Rizzetti, 2002, p. 3).

According to Atchison *et al.* (2002) WIL can take a number of forms:

- Mentored employment
- University / industry Research
- Supervised work experience
- Customised accredited workplace learning
- Enterprise development
- Entrepreneurial programs
- Simulations

Literature

It has been claimed that WIL:

- Helps to develop **student competences** (Arnold *et al.*, 1999)
- Increases **job knowledge and skills** (Hughes and Moore, 1999)
- Improves **attitudes and behaviours towards work readiness** (Hughes and Moore, 1999)
- Helps students to **identify the relevance of theoretical concepts** taught in class (Freudenberg *et al.*, 2011)
- Improves **generic skills** (Patrick & Crebert, 2004).
- Improved **learning, problem solving, analytical thinking, improved performance in the classroom** and improved **GPA** (Dressler and Keeling, 2004, p.225)

Research justification

- Despite the claims, a number of authors have pointed out that there is very limited empirical support (Freudenberg *et al.*, 2011; O'Shea and Watson, 2007)
- And, the empirical studies that have been done are often contradictory (Freudenberg *et al.*, 2012)
- Notably, the Commonwealth funded report on Graduate Employability Skills for the Business, Industry and Higher Education Collaboration Council stated:

'... there is very little if any evidence-based research that isolates each variable and judges the comparative effectiveness of different strategies' for developing students' employability skills.

(Precision Consultancy, 2007, p. 1).

Research aims

Investigate the effect of various WIL experiences on self-efficacy related to:

1. Work-related skills
2. Study-related skills

Method

Survey of students enrolled in tourism and hospitality programs

Instrument:

- 15 items to measure self-efficacy in **employment-related skills** adapted from Subramaniam and Freudenberg's (2007).
- 21 items to measure self-efficacy in **study-related skills** adapted from the Academic Behavioural Confidence (ABC) scale (Sander & Sanders, 2009).
- Plus various demographic and study progress measures.

Administration:

- Distributed through lectures and tutorials in hotel, tourism and event management subjects at three Queensland Universities: University of Queensland, Griffith University and Bond University.

Measures of work related learning activity in the instrument:

Q1. Please describe any work experience you had before you started your current studies.

a) Paid work	b) Volunteer work	c) Internship with structured learning outcomes
<input type="checkbox"/> ₁ None	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁ None	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁ None
<input type="checkbox"/> ₂ Less than 3 months	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂ Less than 50 hrs total	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂ Less than 50 hrs total
<input type="checkbox"/> ₃ 3 months to 1 year	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃ 50 – 99 hrs total	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃ 50 – 99 hrs total
<input type="checkbox"/> ₄ 1 – 2 years	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄ 100 – 199 hrs total	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄ 100 – 199 hrs total
<input type="checkbox"/> ₅ 3 - 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅ 200 - 400 hrs total	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅ 200 - 400 hrs total
<input type="checkbox"/> ₆ Over 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆ Over 400 hrs	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆ Over 400 hrs

d) Other (please describe):

Q2. Please describe any work experience you have undertaken during your current studies.

a) Paid work	b) Volunteer work	c) Internship with structured learning outcomes
<input type="checkbox"/> ₁ None	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁ None	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁ None
<input type="checkbox"/> ₂ Less than 50 hrs	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂ Less than 50 hrs total	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂ Less than 50 hrs total
<input type="checkbox"/> ₃ 50 – 99 hrs	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃ 50 – 99 hrs total	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃ 50 – 99 hrs total
<input type="checkbox"/> ₄ 100 – 199 hrs	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄ 100 – 199 hrs total	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄ 100 – 199 hrs total
<input type="checkbox"/> ₅ 200 – 400 hrs	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅ 200 - 400 hrs total	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅ 200 – 400 hrs total
<input type="checkbox"/> ₆ Over 400 hrs	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆ Over 400 hrs	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆ Over 400 hrs

d) Other (please describe):

Sample stats (n=312)

		f	Valid %
University	Bond	92	29.5
	Griffith	141	45.2
	UQ	79	25.3
Gender	Female	213	68.3
	Male	99	31.7
Age	Mean = 21.9		
Study mode	Full Time	294	94.2
	Part Time	18	5.8
Subjects completed	Mean = 14.8		
Average grade to date	Pass	72	24.2
	Credit	138	44.2
	Distinction	71	22.8
	High Distinction	16	5.4
	Missing	15	
Country of birth	Non-Asian	147	47.1
	China & SE Asia	165	52.9
Paid Work Experience	None	24	7.7
	< 3 Months	50	16.0
	3-12 Months	81	26.0
	>12 Months	157	50.3
Completed structured Internship	No	172	55.1
	Yes	140	44.9
Volunteer work	No	94	30.1
	Yes	218	69.9

Work Related Skills – Principal Components Analysis (Varimax rotation)

Confidence in my ability to:	Component	
	1	2
General		
... achieve most of the career goals that I have set for myself	.657	.324
... accomplish difficult tasks when faced with them	.816	.177
... obtain outcomes that are important to me	.790	.197
... succeed at almost any endeavour to which I set my mind	.715	.347
... successfully overcome many different challenges	.757	.206
... perform effectively on many different tasks	.656	.448
... most tasks very well compared to other people	.570	.448
... perform quite well even when things are tough	.597	.404
Specific		
... begin a career in my chosen profession / industry sector	.436	.528
... progress through the ranks in a new place of employment	.410	.633
... research industry issues in my chosen profession / industry sector	.172	.603
... manage my time at work	.095	.735
... communicate with customers and colleagues in an effective manner	.250	.637
... perform industry related tasks that may be assigned to me	.358	.721
... seek employment in my chosen profession / industry sector	.403	.623
Eigenvalue	4.667	3.800
Variance (%)	31.112	25.332
Cumulative variance = 56.444		

Study Related Skills – Principal Components Analysis (Varimax rotation)

Confidence in ability to:	Component		
	1	2	3
Verbal:			
...ask lecturers questions about material they are teaching, during a lecture	.825	.130	.105
...respond to questions asked by a lecturer in front of a group of fellow students	.754	.064	.226
...engage effectively in academic debate with my fellow students	.735	.180	.168
...follow the themes and debates in lectures	.724	.243	.253
...ask lecturers questions about the material they are teaching, in a one-to-one setting	.652	.350	.165
...give a presentation to a small group of fellow students	.611	.155	.204
...ask for help if I don't understand	.588	.464	.112
...understand the material outlined and discussed in class	.577	.241	.412
Self-management and motivation:			
...get myself to lectures and tutorials on time	.101	.762	.038
...make the most of the opportunity to study at university	.325	.757	-.038
...plan appropriate revision schedules	.113	.728	.312
...remain adequately motivated throughout semester	.174	.674	.302
...produce my best work in coursework assignments	.323	.634	.280
...pass assessments at the first attempt	.198	.582	.351
Study skills and academic achievement:			
...produce my best work under examination conditions	.145	.014	.851
...study effectively on my own in independent/private study	.231	.373	.625
...achieve good grades in my academic work	.441	.297	.547
...manage my workload to meet coursework deadlines	.319	.282	.540
...produce coursework at the required standard	.401	.428	.477
Eigenvalue	4.625	3.901	2.732
Variance (%)	24.342	20.531	14.378
Cumulative variance = 58.724			

Variables in the models

5 Dependent Variables

Efficacy Dimension		alpha
Work Related – General	8 items	.901
Work Related - Specific	7 items	.839
Study Related - Verbal	8 items	.889
Study Related – Self management and motivation	6 items	.851
Study Related – Study skills and academic achievement	5 items	.805

7 Independent variables

IV	Operationalised as
Age	Scale
Gender	1=Female; 2=Male
Country of birth	1 = Western (Australia, NZ, USA, Canada + UK); 2 = China and SE Asia
Subjects completed	Scale
Academic achievement to date	Average grade (1=Fail, 2=Pass, 3=Credit, etc.)
Completed structured internship	1=No; 2=Yes
Work Experience	Four categories (1= None; 2= <3 months; 3= 3-12 months; 4= > 12 months)

Stepwise Regression to identify the unique contribution of **Work Experience**

Summary of Stepwise Regression Analysis

	Model # (Dependant Variable)				
	Model 1 (DV = Work Related: General)	Model 2 (DV = Work Related: Specific)	Model 3 (DV = Study Related: Verbal)	Model 4 (DV = Study Related: Self-Management & Motivation)	Model 5 (DV = Study Related: Study Skills and Academic Ability)
Adjusted R ²	.206	.151	.171	.110	.146
F	22.957	12.301	27.439	16.858	22.972
Constant	3.501 (t= 11.326)	3.691 (t= 11.375)	2.973 (t= 15.596)	3.917 (t= 17.442)	3.260 (t= 18.310)
Age					
Gender				-.134 (t= -2.270)	
Country of birth	-.125 (t= -1.902)*	-.144 (t= -2.129)			
Subjects completed		.118 (t= 2.041)	.156 (t= 2.747)		.188 (t= 3.264)
Average grade to date	.315 (t= 4.914)	.228 (t= 3.425)	.383 (t= 6.725)	.310 (t= 5.258)	.332 (t= 5.760)
Structured internship					
Paid Work Experience	.153 (t= 2.548)	.126 (t= 2.035)			

*Significant at .1 level

Summary comments

- Hypotheses about the benefits of WIL activities only supported for student efficacy related to Work Related skills (and only for *Paid Work Experience*).
- No support for benefits of *Structured Internships* on any of the DV's (are we doing them right?)
- No support for benefits in relation to study related skills
- R^2 values quite low (.11 - .21). What are we missing?
- Only three universities – all Qld.
- Opportunity to extend to other disciplines?

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