

Domestic Field Trips: Exploring English Majors' Perceptions at a Vietnamese University

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Abstract

This study examines how English majors at Saigon University perceive domestic field trips as part of their language learning. A mixed-methods design was used to collect data. First, a survey was administered to 132 students. Then, ten students were interviewed using open-ended questions to gain deeper insights. The study examines how students view the role of domestic field trips in their academic programme, especially in supporting language learning. It also explores the advantages and challenges students associate with these trips, particularly in relation to real-life language use and professional development. The survey results show that most students consider field trips useful because they help them use language in real-life situations, learn about different cultures, and feel more motivated to learn. Qualitative insights from survey responses and interviews provide a deeper understanding of how students value the trips for developing practical skills and planning their careers. Despite these benefits, several problems were identified, including organisational issues, inconsistent student engagement, and limited opportunities to practise speaking during the activities. These results show how experiential learning can support language education and suggest that teaching methods should include organised, practical activities as part of English language courses at tertiary level.

Keywords domestic field trips, English majors, practical skills, professional development

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INTRODUCTION

Field trips have become an important form of experiential learning in higher education, particularly in programmes that emphasise language development and professional skills. By bringing students into real-life settings, these activities allow them to apply classroom knowledge in more authentic situations (Dang & Le, 2022). Previous studies suggest that field trips can enhance students' motivation, autonomy, and soft skills while also encouraging deeper engagement with learning tasks (Campbell & Gedat, 2021; Kolb, 1984). In the context of English language education, such experiences may also support the development of communicative competence and cultural awareness, as learners interact with people and environments beyond the classroom (Hariyanti et al., 2024).

In Vietnam, field trips are receiving increasing institutional support as universities seek to improve graduates' job readiness and alignment with employer needs (Nguyen, 2022). However, problems

remain, including limited English use during activities and weak alignment with the curriculum (Doan, 2020).

In Vietnam's higher education system, English language programmes are placing greater emphasis on practical learning to help students connect classroom learning with real-life use (Dang, 2026). At Saigon University, field trips are part of the regular course to help English majors improve their communication skills, develop intercultural understanding, and prepare for their future careers. These efforts align with national efforts to improve job readiness and keep students involved through activities that go beyond the traditional classroom (Jackson & Bridgstock, 2021; Tran, 2017).

The present study investigates English majors' perceptions of domestic field trips at a Vietnamese university. In particular, it examines how students view the contribution of these experiences to language practice, learning motivation, and preparation for future careers. The study draws on two theories, namely Kolb and Kolb's (2017) Experiential Learning Theory and Eccles and Wigfield's (2002) Expectancy-Value Theory to interpret students' perspectives and to provide insights that may inform the future design and implementation of field-trip activities in tertiary English language education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Field Trips in Higher Education

Field trips, although sometimes viewed as extra-curricular activities, can function as an important extension of formal education. They reinforce previously learned knowledge and provide opportunities to develop practical skills that are often difficult to cultivate in traditional classroom settings (Tran, 2017). Research has also shown that field-based learning can increase students' motivation, encourage cognitive engagement, and strengthen social interaction among learners (Larsen et al., 2017).

In recent years, universities have increasingly sought to improve students' employability after graduation. They use programmes that integrate academic learning with work experience and other activities outside regular classes (Jackson, 2017; Jackson & Bridgstock, 2021; Nguyen, 2022). These efforts include everything from supporting first-year students' transition to preparing final-year students for their careers, and they highlight the importance of active student involvement in hands-on activities.

Within Vietnamese higher education, field trips are increasingly recognised as meaningful academic activities that enable students to apply theoretical knowledge in practical environments. At Saigon University (SGU), such activities have been incorporated into several programmes, including Foreign Languages, Tourism, and Education. For English majors in particular, domestic field trips are intended to support the development of professional competencies such as communication, interpretation, and interaction in social, business, and tourism-related contexts. These objectives are closely aligned with the Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs) established by the university.

Experiential Learning Theory

David Kolb's experiential learning theory (1984) is widely used to explain how learning develops through experience. The theory proposes that knowledge is created when individuals reflect on and transform their experiences into new understanding. Given this focus on experience and reflection, the framework has frequently been applied in educational contexts that involve practice-based activities such as field trips or internships (Sharlanova, 2004).

Kolb describes learning as a cycle consisting of four related stages, namely Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualisation, and Active Experimentation.

- Concrete Experience refers to learners' direct involvement in an activity or situation. At this stage, students participate in a new experience or reinterpret an existing one, which provides the starting point for further learning.
- Reflective Observation occurs when learners step back and reflect on what they have experienced. Tom and Kumar (2024) argued that experiential English language teaching strategies increased young learners' engagement, motivation, and active participation in English learning by connecting language use with meaningful real-world experiences.
- Abstract Conceptualisation represents the stage in which learners attempt to interpret their experiences and develop broader ideas or explanations. Reflection is gradually connected with existing knowledge to form more general concepts (Illeris, 2007).
- Active Experimentation takes place when learners apply these ideas in new situations. By testing their understanding in practice, they are able to refine their thinking and continue the learning process (Corbett, 2005).

In this study, the Kolb model was used to examine how SGU students experienced their field trips. Rather than applying the whole process, the researchers examined the model through four dimensions. These dimensions helped to create a questionnaire and interview questions to understand students' perceptions and learning outcomes.

Expectancy-Value Theory

Expectancy-Value Theory (EVT) was proposed by Eccles and Wigfield (2002) and widely used in educational psychology to explain why students choose to engage in particular learning activities. The theory suggests that learners' motivation is shaped by three main components, namely expectancy beliefs, value beliefs, and cost beliefs.

Expectancy beliefs refer to students' confidence in their ability to perform well, and this confidence comes from their past experiences, their self-perceptions, and the feedback they receive. For example, students who previously performed well in English presentations might feel more confident when doing similar tasks in the future. Value beliefs focus on how important or valuable a task seems and are divided into three areas, namely intrinsic value, utility value, and attainment value.

- Intrinsic value refers to the enjoyment or personal interest students experience when engaging in the task.
- Utility value reflects the perceived usefulness of the activity for achieving future academic or career goals.
- Attainment value concerns the importance of performing well because it relates to one's identity or sense of personal achievement.

Cost beliefs include concerns such as anxiety, fear of failure, and missed opportunities, which can prevent learners from engaging in the task.

In this study, the Expectancy-Value Theory framework was used to develop a questionnaire designed to assess students' motivation to learn English through domestic field trips at SGU. The instrument was constructed based on the three central components of EVT, namely expectancy beliefs, value beliefs, and cost beliefs. This theoretical foundation provided a structured approach to exploring students' perceptions of the learning experience and served as a basis for both quantitative and qualitative data collection within the study's context.

Implications of These Theories for English Language Teaching (ELT)

Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory in ELT

Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory has been widely applied in English Language Teaching, particularly in contexts where learning through experience is emphasised. The framework highlights the role of active participation, reflection, and the application of knowledge in real-life situations. Later developments, such as the Kolb Experiential Learning Profile (KELP), further explored how different learning styles relate to instructional practices and how teachers can design activities that support experiential learning processes (Kolb, 2015; Kolb & Kolb, 2017).

Recent research has shown that experiential learning has an important effect on English language teaching. For example, Javahery and Bavandi (2026) used Kolb's model in teacher training and found that involving language teachers in hands-on learning activities helped improve their empathy, reflective thinking, and ability to adjust their lessons in the classroom. Boud et al. (1985) found that experiential learning activities increased young learners' interest and involvement in English lessons. These results indicate that learning through experience can help students become more engaged, develop practical skills, and develop stronger emotional connections in language learning settings.

Expectancy-Value Theory in ELT

Expectancy-Value Theory remains a useful framework for understanding what motivates teachers and students in English language education. Recent studies show that it helps explain why students remain engaged and continue trying to learn English. Pan et al. (2025) found that combining EVT with flow theory in digital game-based learning settings helped improve students' motivation, teamwork, and problem-solving ability. Johari et al. (2025) found that both utility value and intrinsic value play an important role in how willing students are to communicate in English when they are learning through task-based language teaching. Together, these studies show that EVT helps to create teaching methods that support students' motivation by matching students' perceived value and learning expectations with their participation in activities that involve using English in real-life and interactive ways.

Related Studies

In recent years, experiential learning has attracted increasing attention in English language education, particularly through activities such as field trips. These activities are often viewed as opportunities

for learners to connect classroom knowledge with real-world experiences. In Vietnam, field trips have gradually been incorporated into English language programmes at the tertiary level as a way to enhance students' engagement and provide more practical learning experiences.

Several studies in Vietnam have explored the educational value of field trips. Their findings generally indicate that field trips can enhance students' engagement, motivation, and practical learning experiences. Universities and industry partners are also considered important in creating meaningful field trip opportunities for students.

Doan (2020) also highlighted the importance of field trips in the Vietnamese education system by examining their effectiveness in teaching English in Vietnam. The study suggested ways to integrate field trips into the school curriculum and addressed potential challenges that may arise in the Vietnamese educational context.

Another study by Nguyen (2024) examined a teacher training programme called "The Art of English Usages", which provided aspiring teachers with real experiences of how English is used in public settings. The results showed that participants not only gained confidence in their language skills but also developed a better understanding of different cultures and teaching practices beyond the classroom.

At a broader level, Campbell et al. (2021) investigated how field trips influence students' learning, social interactions, and personal development. Their findings showed that students developed a better understanding of academic subjects, became more willing to use English in conversations, and adapted more easily to new social situations. Similarly, Hariyanti et al. (2024) found that field-based learning helped students connect theoretical knowledge with real-life contexts and build social skills relevant to professional environments.

Overall, these studies highlight the potential benefits of field trips in English language education, including increased engagement, practical learning opportunities, and the development of professional and intercultural skills. Building on these insights, the present study further explores how SGU students perceive the role of domestic field trips in their learning experiences, particularly in relation to motivation, language use, and real-world application of knowledge.

Research Questions

Two core research questions guided the examination of the impact of domestic field trips on English-major students, particularly experiential learning and motivation related to language practice and professional development based on the Programme Learning Outcomes.

1. How do English majors perceive the role of domestic field trips in their learning programme at Saigon University?
2. What benefits and limitations do English majors associate with domestic field trips, particularly concerning language practice and professional development?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, which combined quantitative and qualitative approaches. In the first phase, questionnaire data were collected from English-major students to examine their perceptions of domestic field trips. In the second phase, semi-structured interviews were conducted to provide deeper explanations and further insights into students' experiences, motivations, and perceived benefits and limitations of the field trips. The combination of these two approaches helped provide a more broad understanding of the research problem and allowed the findings to be cross-checked (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The questionnaire addressed Research Question 1, while semi-structured interviews were conducted to examine Research Question 2 in greater detail. Two main research instruments were used.

Research Participants and Sites

The participants were 132 English-major students, mainly in the second and third years of the programme. They had recently taken part in either Field Trip 1 or Field Trip 2 depending on their year of study. When the field trips had just been completed, the students were able to share fresh reflections on their experiences. Participants' responses provided useful insights into language practice, intercultural exposure, and aspects of professional development during domestic field trips.

Overview of Field Trip 1 and Field Trip 2 at Saigon University

The present study was conducted within the undergraduate English Language programme at Saigon University (SGU), Vietnam. As part of the curriculum, students are required to complete two credit-based modules, namely Field Trip 1 and Field Trip 2. These modules aim to provide experiential learning opportunities through organised travel activities. Although the programme offers both domestic and international field trips, most students participate in domestic trips because they are more convenient and affordable.

Field Trip 1, which is worth two credits, is designed for second-year students and focuses on tourism in the Mekong Delta area. Students visit cultural and economic locations in southern Vietnam as part of the field trip activities. The main goal is to help students better understand tourism facilities, local development, and the social and economic context of these destinations. During the trip, students are encouraged to communicate in English, although Vietnamese is still commonly used in many interactions. English is mainly emphasised during the final stage of the module when students produce their video projects as part of the assessment.

Field Trip 2, which is worth three credits, is designed for third-year students and involves travelling to central and northern regions. This module expands the learning scope to include hospitality, services, and retail environments. Students are expected to interact with international tourists and practise using English in authentic situations, which helps improve their communication skills in real-life contexts.

Assessment for domestic field trip 1 and field trip 2

In Field Trip 1, students are required to produce a short video presentation based on their experiences during the trip. The video typically provides a descriptive and reflective account of the places visited and the observations students made throughout the activities. Although the presentation is delivered in English, the module places greater emphasis on teamwork, cultural awareness, and basic communication skills rather than advanced language accuracy.

Evaluation for Field Trip 1 focuses mainly on participation, collaboration with group members, and the ability to reflect on learning experiences. Students are assessed based on their level of involvement in fieldwork, teamwork, and how effectively they document and present their observations. The final video is evaluated for clarity, organisation, and creativity rather than strict language accuracy.

For Field Trip 2, students are required to produce a longer and more detailed video project that involves greater planning and use of English. In addition to documenting their experiences, students are expected to interview international tourists, present their findings in English, and reflect on how the trip contributes to their academic learning and future career development. The final video serves both as a course assessment and as a portfolio example demonstrating the practical use of English.

Compared with Field Trip 1, the assessment for Field Trip 2 places greater emphasis on language use, reflective analysis, and the ability to communicate effectively in English. Overall, while both modules aim to develop communication, collaboration, and professionalism, Field Trip 2 requires a higher level of English proficiency and intercultural engagement as students' progress through the programme.

Table 1. *Key Differences between Field Trip 1 and Field Trip 2*

Aspect	Field Trip 1	Field Trip 2
Video Content	Travel vlog	Travel vlog with interviews
Video Duration	7–12 minutes	15–20 minutes
Main Focus	Tour experience and self-reflection	Tour experience, self-reflection, and interview content
Narration Requirement	Real voice narration (minimum 4 mins visible face)	Real voice narration, and integrated with more diverse speaking tasks
Evaluation Structure	Common rubric with creativity bonus	Same rubric but expectation of higher complexity

Data Collection

Data for this study were collected through both questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaires provided quantitative information about students' perceptions of domestic field trips, while the interviews offered additional explanations and examples from students' experiences. Using these two sources helped capture different aspects of how the field trips supported language practice and professional development (Creswell, 2014).

Methods and Procedure

The questionnaire, consisting of three sections, was intended to answer Research Question 1. Section A collected demographic information and participants' field trip experience. Section B examined students' perceptions of the field trips, particularly their learning experiences and motivation. Section C asked students about the benefits, challenges, and possible improvements for future field trips. A Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" was used to record participants' responses.

Regarding students' perceptions of the field trip experience in section B, the questionnaire items were developed based on relevant theoretical foundations, especially Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory. Statements 1 to 10 reflect key aspects of experiential learning. The relationship between the statements and the theoretical framework is shown below.

Table 2. *Questionnaire's Alignment in Experiential Learning (Kolb & Kolb, 2017)*

Statement	Kolb Dimension	Explanation
1. I actively engaged in new learning experiences.	Concrete Experience	Reflecting direct participation in practical learning tasks.
2. Field trips allowed me to directly apply what I had learned in class.	Active Experimentation	Describing testing and applying classroom knowledge in a real-world context.
3. Field trips made me feel more involved in my language learning.	Concrete Experience	Expressing immersion and presence during the learning process.
4. I reflected on my learning experiences after each field trip.	Reflective Observation	Demonstrating self-review and awareness post-experience.
5. Discussions with classmates after field trips helped me understand concepts better.	Reflective Observation	Showing reflection through social interaction and dialogue.
6. Field trips encouraged me to think critically about real-world language use.	Abstract Conceptualization	Involving analyzing and making sense of language use in context.
7. I could connect field trip activities with theoretical knowledge from lectures.	Abstract Conceptualization	Reflecting integration of practical and theoretical learning.
8. I generated new ideas about language learning through experiences during trips.	Abstract Conceptualization	Showing idea generation based on experience.
9. Field trips helped me recognize gaps in my understanding of English usage.	Reflective Observation	Involving critical reflection and identifying learning needs.
10. Field trips gave me opportunities to test my communication skills in authentic contexts.	Active Experimentation	Involving putting learned skills into practice in real-life situations.

In terms of students' perceptions of the field trip motivation in section B, the Expectancy-Value Theory (EVT) framework was employed to develop statements from 11 to 20. The interrelationship is shown below.

Table 3. *Questionnaire's Alignment in Expectancy-Value Theory (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002)*

Statement	EVT Component	Explanation
11. I felt confident in my English abilities when participating in field trip activities.	Expectancy Beliefs	Reflecting learners' self-confidence and belief in their language ability.
12. I considered field trips a valuable part of my language learning journey.	Value Beliefs (Attainment)	Indicating personal importance of the task to learners' academic development.
13. I thought field trips made the learning program more meaningful.	Value Beliefs (Intrinsic & Utility)	Showing enjoyment and relevance of the task to overall learning.
14. I found it easier to stay motivated during field trips compared to regular classroom lessons.	Value Beliefs (Intrinsic)	Reflecting increased engagement and internal motivation through real-world experience.
15. I did not feel that participating in field trips distracted me from other important academic tasks.	Cost Beliefs	Suggesting students did not perceive field trips as a burden or conflict with academic responsibilities.
16. I found field trips enjoyable and interesting.	Value Beliefs (Intrinsic)	Expressing pleasure and interest derived from the learning activity.
17. I believed field trips positively influenced my motivation to continue improving my English skills.	Value Beliefs (Utility)	Reflecting perceived usefulness of field trips in supporting long-term language goals.
18. I believed the skills developed through field trips were important for my future career.	Value Beliefs (Utility)	Indicating learners recognize the career relevance of skills gained through field trips.
19. I felt it was necessary to engage fully during field trips to maximize my learning outcomes.	Expectancy Beliefs	Showing commitment and confidence that effort leads to meaningful results.
20. I felt motivated to learn English more after the trip.	Value Beliefs (Motivation rooted in value)	Demonstrating increased motivation grounded in the perceived value of the activity.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to answer Research Question 2. The aim was to understand how students viewed the benefits and limitations of domestic field trips, especially in terms of language practice and professional development. The interview protocol included ten open-ended questions. These questions were grouped into five main topics, namely general experience, learning value, skill development, challenges, and suggestions. The interview questions were developed with reference to Kolb and Kolb's (2017) Experiential Learning Theory and Eccles and Wigfield's (2002) Expectancy-Value Theory.

Questionnaire protocol

Using Google Forms, the teachers responsible distributed the questionnaire to second- and third-year English-major students shortly after they completed Domestic Field Trip 1 or Field Trip 2. With

the support of academic advisors, the online questionnaire was shared through class communication channels so that students who had recently joined the trips could respond.

The questionnaire items were developed with reference to Kolb and Kolb's (2017) Experiential Learning Theory and Eccles and Wigfield's (2002) Expectancy-Value Theory. The questions mainly examined students' engagement during the trips, their motivation to participate, opportunities to use English, and the development of relevant skills.

Interview sampling protocol

To enrich the data, ten students were invited to take part in semi-structured interviews. They were selected based on their questionnaire responses and suggestions from academic advisors. This purposeful selection helped identify students who could provide detailed reflections on their experiences (Patton, 2002).

The interviews focused on five main topics, namely students' overall experiences during the field trips, the learning value of the activities, professional skill development, challenges they encountered, and suggestions for improvement. The interviews were conducted in Vietnamese and later translated into English for analysis.

Data Analysis

The questionnaire data were analysed using descriptive statistics to summarise students' responses and identify general patterns in their perceptions of the field trips. The interview transcripts were analysed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework. First, the interview recordings were transcribed and reviewed several times to gain familiarity with the data. Relevant responses were then coded based on recurring ideas and grouped into categories. From these categories, five major themes were identified to reflect students' perceptions and experiences related to the field trips. Representative excerpts from the interviews were used as evidence to support the identified themes. Finally, findings from both quantitative and qualitative data were integrated to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how the field trips influenced students' language learning and preparation for the professional work environment.

Validity and Reliability

Table 4. *The Reliability of Questionnaire*

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.93	20

A 20-item questionnaire was used to collect data from the participants. The questionnaire mainly examined students' perceptions in two main areas, namely their experience on field trips and their motivation for learning. The reliability of the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's Alpha, and the result showed high internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.93$).

RESULTS

Research Question 1 Questionnaire Findings

To address Research Question 1, the questionnaire results were presented in two main areas, namely students' perceptions of the field trip experience and their motivation for participating in the field trip. These two aspects help to show how students evaluated the learning experience and how the trip influenced their motivation. The findings also provide initial insights into SGU students' perceptions of domestic field trips.

Students' perceptions of the field trip experience

The questionnaire results indicate that SGU students generally had positive views of the field trip experience. This is evident in the relatively high mean scores across the ten statements, ranging from 3.58 to 4.47. The statements were designed based on Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, which includes four dimensions, namely Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualisation, and Active Experimentation.

Table 5. *SGU Students' Perceptions of Field Trip Experience*

Statements	n	M	SD
Statement 1	132	4.19	0.84
Statement 2	132	3.58	0.95
Statement 3	132	4.00	0.91
Statement 4	132	3.94	0.87
Statement 5	132	4.18	0.90
Statement 6	132	4.15	0.86
Statement 7	132	3.63	0.99
Statement 8	132	3.99	0.92
Statement 9	132	4.26	0.86
Statement 10	132	4.47	0.84

The highest mean score was found in Statement 10 ($M = 4.47$, $SD = 0.84$), which belongs to the dimension of Active Experimentation. This item referred to students' opportunity to use communication skills in real-life situations during the field trip. The result suggests that many students viewed the field trip as a useful way of applying what they had learned in class to practical contexts.

Statement 9 ($M = 4.26$, $SD = 0.86$) also received a high mean score under the Reflective Observation dimension. The finding suggests that the field trip encouraged students to reflect on their English use during the activities and to identify areas for improvement. This type of reflection helps learners review their experiences and become more aware of their learning needs.

Items related to concrete experience also received relatively high ratings. Statement 1 ($M = 4.19$, $SD = 0.84$) and Statement 5 ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 0.90$) indicate that students were actively involved in the field trip activities and showed a positive level of engagement.

Even though all items scored above the midpoint, Statement 2 had the lowest mean score ($M = 3.58$, $SD = 0.95$). This item focused on applying classroom knowledge to real-world situations, suggesting that some students did not clearly see the connection between classroom lessons and field trip activities.

In summary, the results show that most SGU students viewed the field trip as a positive learning experience that helped them practise English, reflect on their learning, and develop communication skills beyond the classroom.

Students' perceptions of the field trip motivation

Based on the descriptive statistics and alignment with Expectancy-Value Theory (EVT), the results revealed key insights into SGU students' perceptions of field trip motivation.

Table 6. *SGU Students' Perceptions of Field Trip Motivation*

Statements	n	M	SD
Statement 11	132	3.60	0.96
Statement 12	132	4.27	0.86
Statement 13	132	4.21	0.93
Statement 14	132	4.20	0.92
Statement 15	132	3.86	0.98
Statement 16	132	4.40	0.86
Statement 17	132	4.15	0.86
Statement 18	132	4.21	0.82
Statement 19	132	4.08	0.84
Statement 20	132	4.02	0.92

Participants generally felt motivated, with average scores ranging from 3.60 to 4.40. Statement 12, which states “I considered field trips a valuable part of my language learning journey.” received a high mean score ($M = 4.27$, $SD = 0.86$), indicating that students viewed field trips as helpful for their learning. Statement 16, which states “Field trips were fun and interesting.” had the highest mean score ($M = 4.40$, $SD = 0.86$). Statement 13, “Field trips made learning more meaningful.” also received a high score ($M = 4.21$, $SD = 0.93$), suggesting that students valued the learning experiences gained from these activities. Statement 20, “I felt motivated to learn English well after field trips.” had a mean score of 4.02 ($SD = 0.92$), showing that the trips encouraged students to stay interested in learning English.

In contrast, Statement 11, “I felt confident in my English abilities during field trips.” had the lowest mean score ($M = 3.60$, $SD = 0.96$). This result suggests that although students had positive experiences, some of them still lacked confidence when using English in real-life conversations. Overall, the results indicate that field trips helped increase students’ motivation by making learning more enjoyable and meaningful, while encouraging them to stay engaged in learning English.

Research Question 2 Interview Findings

To address Research Question 2 regarding the benefits and limitations English majors associate with domestic field trips, particularly language practice and professional development at SGU. The qualitative results from the semi-structured interviews helped clarify students’ perceptions through five thematic areas, namely experiences, learning values, motivations and professional preparation, challenges and limitations, and suggestions for improvement. These themes provided additional insights that complemented the quantitative findings and helped answer Research Question 2.

Students’ perceptions of practical experiences

Students generally viewed the field trips as engaging learning experiences that helped them connect theoretical knowledge with real-life observations. Many described the trips as opportunities to learn more about regional culture and tourism development while also renewing their interest in learning. For example, as Participant 1 explained, the trip was “fantastic” because they “got to learn and experience a lot of things about different regions in Vietnam” and also had opportunities to “interact and talk to some foreign tourists and locals.” Similarly, Participant 10 noted that a field trip may seem like “a short vacation,” but at the same time it is “an opportunity for us to learn and discover many interesting things about the places.”

These responses show that the real-life setting made learning more meaningful and helped students see the connection between academic knowledge and practical experience. Many students also felt that the trips renewed their motivation to learn.

Students’ perceptions of learning values

Although English was not consistently used in all activities, students still valued the moments when they could communicate in English in meaningful ways. Interviews with foreign tourists and English-language video presentations were mentioned as the most important opportunities for authentic language use. For example, Participant 5 recalled interviewing “a very friendly girl from New Jersey,” noting that she was “supportive and kind” and that the interview ended “in a happy atmosphere.” Likewise, Participant 8 reported that interacting with foreign tourists from countries such as France and Russia helped them improve their listening and speaking skills and emphasised that it was “real conversation, not classroom practice.” These experiences allowed students to practise communication outside the classroom and gain more confidence in real interactions.

However, some students also pointed out that English was mainly used during specific tasks. In many other activities such as group discussions or sightseeing, Vietnamese was still the main language.

Students' motivations and professional preparation

Students also emphasised that the field trips helped them develop several soft skills that are important for their future careers. These included communication, teamwork, adaptability, and public speaking. The activities required students to cooperate with others, complete assigned tasks, and interact with different people during the trip. For instance, Participant 2 explained that the trip taught them how to work effectively in teams, noting that each person had a different role and that team members needed to support one another to complete their tasks. Similarly, Participant 6 reported developing several important soft skills during the trip and emphasised that communication was particularly important, as they had opportunities to interact with teammates, instructors, and even strangers in both Vietnamese and English.

Through these activities, students felt that the field trip was not only part of their academic programme but also a useful preparation for future professional environments.

Students' perceptions of challenges and limitations

Despite the positive experiences, students also mentioned several challenges. One common issue was the limited use of English in some parts of the trip. Although English was required for interviews and video tasks, many other activities were conducted mainly in Vietnamese. For example, Participant 7 pointed out that not all aspects of the trip were conducted in English and noted that some sessions were entirely in Vietnamese, which limited students' opportunities to practise the language.

Some students also faced difficulties when conducting interviews with tourists. Participant 3 explained that many of the tourists they encountered were Russian and did not speak English, while some English-speaking tourists declined to participate in interviews, making it difficult to complete the assigned tasks.

In addition, a few students mentioned organisational issues, especially related to group arrangements. For instance, Participant 6 reported being disappointed that, unlike Field Trip 1, students could not choose their own groups or travel companions, although they acknowledged that the situation improved as the trip progressed.

These comments suggest that while the trips were valuable overall, there are still aspects that could be improved.

Students' perceptions of suggestions for improvement

Students also provided several suggestions to improve future field trips. One common recommendation was to increase the use of English throughout the trip rather than limiting it to a few specific tasks. For example, Participant 9 suggested including teamwork activities that require students to communicate in English. Some students also suggested adding more interactive activities that encourage communication and group bonding. Participant 10 proposed organising an evening picnic where students could sing, tell stories, and share difficulties in English, explaining that such an activity would provide a valuable opportunity for communication and interaction. Another

suggestion was to combine Field Trip 1 and Field Trip 2 into a single programme to create a more continuous learning experience. These suggestions show that students would like the field trips to include more opportunities for communication, interaction, and practical learning.

DISCUSSION

The findings are discussed in relation to the two research questions and links them with relevant theories and previous studies. Instead of repeating the results, the discussion focuses on how students perceive domestic field trips and what these perceptions suggest about experiential learning, motivation, and professional preparation in English language education.

The findings for Research Question 1 indicate that English majors at SGU generally held positive perceptions towards domestic field trips as part of their academic programme. These findings suggest that domestic field trips created meaningful opportunities for authentic language use and reflective learning beyond the classroom. Overall, the results suggest that domestic field trips contributed positively to students' learning experiences by promoting practical language use, active participation, and sustained motivation in learning English. Similar findings were reported by Nguyen (2024), who found that experiential learning activities helped students develop greater confidence in language use and cultural understanding in real-world contexts. Likewise, Campbell et al. (2021) observed that field trips promoted students' engagement, social interaction, and willingness to communicate in English.

Concerning motivation, most participants expressed a high level of interest, enjoyment, and engagement during the trips. This result is consistent with Hariyanti et al. (2024), who found that field-based learning increased students' motivation and helped them connect theoretical knowledge with practical experiences. Similarly, Doan (2020) emphasised the educational value of field trips in promoting active learning and student participation in English language education. Overall, the findings suggest that domestic field trips contributed positively to students' learning experiences by promoting practical language use, active participation, and sustained motivation in learning English.

The findings for Research Question 2 reveal three major themes related to students' perceptions of domestic field trips, namely practical language learning experiences, professional skill development, and limitations in English-language interaction during some activities. Participants believed that the trips helped them strengthen various soft skills, broaden their cultural understanding, and gain exposure to real-world environments related to tourism and communication. However, despite these positive experiences, students also identified several limitations. In particular, the limited use of English during certain activities reduced opportunities for meaningful language practice and interaction. To enhance the educational value of future field trips, students suggested incorporating more English-based tasks, communicative activities, and interactive learning experiences. These improvements would better support both language development and professional preparation for English-major students.

The results are generally consistent with previous research on the role of field trips in English language programmes, particularly in Vietnam and other Southeast Asian contexts. For example, Pham and Nguyen (2022) examined field trips as extracurricular activities that enhance graduate employability. Their findings showed that students appreciated institutional support and that

motivation influenced their enjoyment of these activities. Similar patterns appeared in the present study, where students highlighted enjoyment and career relevance as important benefits.

Likewise, Doan (2020) discussed practical challenges in implementing field trips in English language teaching in Vietnam. The current study supports these observations by showing that students expect clearer planning and better integration of English tasks, especially in activities related to language practice and assessment. At the international level, Campbell et al. (2021) reported that field trips can support students' motivation, adaptability, and understanding of course content. The findings of this study reflect similar outcomes, particularly in terms of engagement and experiential learning.

In addition, Hariyanti et al. (2024) found that field trips can improve students' academic understanding, real-world application, and social interaction in English for professional purposes. Students in this study described comparable benefits, including the development of soft skills, the application of theoretical knowledge, and greater confidence when interacting with others.

Overall, the findings show that domestic field trips are considered valuable by English majors for supporting language learning, motivation, and professional development. At the same time, the results also suggest that improvements in planning and language integration could make these activities more effective.

CONCLUSION

This study examined English majors' perceptions of domestic field trips in their learning experience. Based on Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) and Expectancy-Value Theory (EVT), the results show that students consider field trips a useful way to reinforce classroom knowledge, reflect on their learning, and build confidence in speaking English. Most participants expressed positive attitudes towards both the experiential and motivational aspects of these activities. They viewed field trips as engaging, meaningful, and supportive of their academic as well as personal development.

The findings suggest that domestic field trips can play an important role in the language learning process. When integrated into the curriculum, they can support active learning and help maintain students' motivation.

Based on both the positive results and the challenges identified in this study, domestic field trip modules should be maintained but further improved. More structured English-speaking activities could be incorporated throughout the trip instead of focusing mainly on the final video project. In addition, collaboration with tour guides and local partners could include more bilingual explanations to create natural opportunities for students to use English in real situations.

To address practical issues such as uneven group assignments and limited interaction with foreign tourists, the programme may consider more flexible planning and a wider range of destinations. The assessment rubric could also place greater emphasis on reflective learning and students' English performance during the activities. In the long term, introducing optional international field trip

components may help broaden students' intercultural competence and support SGU's internationalisation goals.

Despite these contributions, this study was limited to English majors at a single institution and relied mainly on self-reported data. Future research could involve students from multiple universities, include classroom observations, or compare domestic and international field trip models in English language education.

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