

Novelty-Based Learning Experiences and their influence on student presence

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ABSTRACT

This study analyses the relationship between novelty and student presence within the framework of experiential learning in higher education. A quantitative approach was adopted, with a non-experimental, cross-sectional, descriptive-correlational design. The sample consisted of 50 students enrolled in the Business Management and Organizational Theories course in an online higher education program. Data were collected using an adaptation of the Experiencing Scale, administered on a five-point Likert scale, and analysed using partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) with ADANCO software. The results show a positive and statistically significant relationship between novelty and student presence ($\beta = 0.9248$; $p < .001$), with high explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.8553$). These findings indicate that experiences perceived as novel are associated with higher levels of attention, concentration, and cognitive involvement during learning. It is concluded that the intentional design of innovative educational experiences, such as company visits, can strengthen the connection between theory and practice and foster meaningful learning in online higher education.

Keywords: experiential learning, higher education, novelty, student presence, PLS-SEM

1. INTRODUCTION

In the current context of higher education, experiential learning has acquired a central role as a pedagogical approach aimed at strengthening the connection between theory and practice. This approach proposes that knowledge is constructed from direct experience, favouring processes of reflection, conceptualization, and application in real contexts (Kolb, 1986).

In online education settings, one of the main challenges lies in promoting student engagement and active participation, since virtuality can limit interaction, sustained attention, and connection with real situations (Martin & Borup, 2022; Salas-Pilco et al., 2022). The incorporation of strategies based on experiential learning, such as company visits, is presented as an effective alternative for increasing student involvement.

Novelty emerges as a key element in the design of educational experiences, since activities that break the routine and expose students to unusual situations tend to generate higher levels of attention, interest, and motivation. It acts as a stimulus that favours cognitive engagement and active participation, facilitating the meaningful learning process (Stock & Kolb, 2021; Morris, 2019).

Student presence, in turn, is related to the degree of attention, concentration, and involvement during the learning experience, constituting an essential component for the construction of knowledge within the framework of experiential learning.

Despite the growing interest in experiential learning in higher education, there is limited empirical evidence specifically examining the relationship between novelty and student presence in online education contexts. Most studies have focused on general variables of engagement or academic participation, without examining in depth the role of novel experiences as possible triggers of cognitive involvement within experiential learning.

This gap is relevant, particularly in virtual programs, where one of the main challenges is to promote sustained attention, connection with practice, and active student participation. In this context, the present study seeks to provide empirical evidence on the relationship between novelty and presence through a structural model based on PLS-SEM applied to an educational experience involving a company visit.

A quantitative approach and a partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) model are used to provide empirical evidence that contributes to the understanding of experiential learning in contemporary contexts.

The study seeks to contribute both to the theoretical field, by deepening the relationship between the constructs of novelty and presence, and to the practical field, by offering guidelines for the design of educational experiences that promote greater student involvement in higher education.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AS A THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Experiential learning is grounded in the idea that knowledge is not received passively but is constructed through the transformation of experience in a cyclical process of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. This framework has clear roots in Dewey, Lewin, and Piaget, although Kolb consolidated it as a widely adopted pedagogical model in higher education (Miettinen, 2000; Kolb & Kolb, 2022; Morris, 2019).

Recent literature agrees that this approach remains relevant because it links action, reflection, and application in complex educational contexts. In pedagogical terms, Kolb's cycle makes it possible to structure experiences in which students participate actively, reflect critically, formulate explanations, and then test new responses in subsequent situations, thereby strengthening the transfer of learning to professional contexts (Rodríguez et al., 2024; Cheng et al., 2025; Wei et al., 2025).

Kolb defines experiential learning as a cyclical process in which knowledge is created through the transformation of experience, integrating feeling, thinking, reflecting, and acting (Morris, 2019; Tomkins & Ulus, 2016; Kong, 2021). Concrete experience consists of actively participating in real situations, openly and without preconceived ideas, situated in a specific time and place, often novel and involving a certain degree of risk (Morris, 2019; Kee et al., 2023; Leal-Rodríguez & Albort-Morant, 2019). Company visits provide this type of authentic experience by exposing students to real processes, people, and problems in the business world (Tembrevilla et al., 2023; Leal-Rodríguez & Albort-Morant, 2019).

The reflection stage involves observing and critically analysing what was experienced, connecting perceptions, emotions, and results to make sense of the experience (Morris, 2019; Kee et al., 2023; Veine et al., 2020). The literature emphasizes that systematic reflection

is the key mediator that transforms lived experience into meaningful learning and professional identity development (Morris, 2019; Colomer et al., 2020; Veine et al., 2020).

In the abstract conceptualization stage, students integrate their observations into theoretical frameworks and models that make it possible to explain what was experienced and generalize it to other contexts (Morris, 2019; Wang et al., 2025; Kee et al., 2023). Studies in engineering, business, and health show that explicitly connecting experience with disciplinary concepts strengthens complex reasoning and deep understanding of curricular content (Tembrevilla et al., 2023; Kee et al., 2023; Leal-Rodríguez & Albort-Morant, 2019; Cheng et al., 2025).

The action or active experimentation phase involves applying new ideas to solve problems, make decisions, or improve practices in subsequent situations (Morris, 2019; Wang et al., 2025; Leal-Rodríguez & Albort-Morant, 2019). Evidence in business education indicates that methodologies based on simulations, projects, and field experiences increase academic performance and the development of professional competencies by promoting continuous cycles of testing, feedback, and adjustment (Leal-Rodríguez & Albort-Morant, 2019; Kong, 2021; Cheng et al., 2025).

Kolb's theory proposes that experience becomes learning only when a complete cycle of concrete experience, deep analysis, idea formulation, and implementation is articulated, which is effective when activities are designed to break the routine, generate authentic challenges, and require active student participation (Morris, 2019; Tembrevilla et al., 2023; Kee et al., 2023; Kong, 2021).

Table 1 - Kolb's Cycle and Company Visits

Kolb Phase	Relationship to Company Visits
Concrete experience	Guided observation of real processes and interaction with executives.
Reflection	Reflective journals, forums, and structured infographics after the visit.
Abstract conceptualization	Connection with theories of management, entrepreneurship, operations, and finance.
Action / experimentation	Applied projects, case studies, and proposals for the visited company.

Source: Adapted from Morris (2019), relationship between Kolb's cycle and company visits.

2.2 THE CONCEPT OF "EXPERIENCING" IN LEARNING

Stock and Kolb conceptualize "experiencing" as the level of involvement with which a person lives through a learning situation, integrating attention, emotion, and participation (Stock & Kolb, 2021). Their Experiencing Scale identifies three factors: novelty, presence, and embodiment, which describe how students become involved in the different phases of the experiential cycle (Stock & Kolb, 2021).

The literature on active learning shows that it is not enough to design practical activities; learning is enhanced when students are truly present, feel challenged, become emotionally involved, and assume responsibility for their process (Tembrevilla et al., 2023; Leal-Rodríguez & Albort-Morant, 2019; Kong, 2021). Studies on engagement in the classroom and in digital environments highlight that the combination of cognitive participation (thinking), behavioural participation (doing), and socioemotional participation (interest or motivation) better predicts competency development than mere exposure to content or superficial activities (Isohätälä et al., 2020; Kong, 2021; Elsayary et al., 2022).

Experiential learning appears as a space where bodies, emotions, and ideas move in close relationship, and where agency is not always fully individual, since students may appropriate the teacher's experience instead of developing their own. This suggests that "experiencing" in higher education is not a strictly individual phenomenon, but rather a situated experience co-produced with others (Tomkins & Ulus, 2016).

From this perspective, learning occurs when students are mentally present, participate actively, and perceive the experience as personally meaningful, which suggests that company visits should be designed to maximize the quality of experiencing and not merely the quantity of activities (Kee et al., 2023; Kong, 2021; Stock & Kolb, 2021).

2.3 DIMENSIONS OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

2.3.1 NOVELTY

Novelty linked to meaningful learning is related to breaking the routine and exposure to unfamiliar contexts and challenges. The systematic analysis of concrete experience in Kolb's theory shows that novel situations, situated in real contexts and with a certain degree of uncertainty, are especially powerful for triggering processes of inquiry and deep reflection (Morris, 2019; Tembrevilla et al., 2023; Kee et al., 2023). Stock and Kolb empirically validate novelty as a central dimension of experiencing; when students live through something new, they report greater engagement and a greater capacity to move through the four phases of the experiential cycle (Stock & Kolb, 2021).

In immersive technological environments, the so-called novelty effect can, paradoxically, distract and reduce learning if attention focuses on the technology rather than on the task; however, when properly managed through tutoring or scaffolding, novelty increases satisfaction, curiosity, and higher levels of understanding (Miguel-Alonso et al., 2024; Natale et al., 2020). Studies in experiential learning show that exposure to real business contexts, such as company visits or business simulations, increases intrinsic motivation, perceived relevance of content, and academic performance by offering experiences outside the traditional academic routine (Leal-Rodríguez & Albort-Morant, 2019; Kong, 2021).

Company visits in online higher education can leverage novelty by enabling remote students to access organizations, markets, and practices that they would hardly encounter otherwise, activating curiosity and facilitating meaningful learning based on real problems (Natale et al., 2020; Tembrevilla et al., 2023; Leal-Rodríguez & Albort-Morant, 2019).

2.3.2 PRESENCE

Presence refers to the degree to which students are attentionally, emotionally, and behaviourally connected with the experience, that is, their level of attention and connection with the learning experience. Stock and Kolb define this dimension as a state of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural connection with the learning situation, in which the person feels inside the experience and not as a distant observer (Stock & Kolb, 2021). Research on virtual reality and educational immersion indicates that a greater sense of presence is associated with greater attention, involvement, and satisfaction, although not always with better learning outcomes if cognitive load is excessive or instructional design is deficient (Liu et al., 2024; Natale et al., 2020; Ochs & Sonderegger, 2022).

The literature in online contexts indicates that the combination of cognitive presence as deep information processing, social presence as meaningful interaction with others, and teaching presence as support or guidance is fundamental for sustaining learning in digital environments (Liu et al., 2024; Kong, 2021; Elsayary et al., 2022). In experiential learning experiences mediated by technology, such as simulations or virtual visits, students have been observed to positively value the feeling of being immersed and connected with the

context, especially when they can interact with professionals and participate in authentic tasks (Liu et al., 2024; Kee et al., 2023; Sinha, 2023).

Within experiential learning, greater presence translates into more effective movement through the phases of reflection and conceptualization, since focused attention facilitates critical observation and the elaboration of meaning from what was experienced (Morris, 2019; Kee et al., 2023; Veine et al., 2020). Therefore, designing company visits for online students that promote sustained attention, active participation (questions, real-time tasks), and social interaction increases the probability of achieving deep and transferable learning (Liu et al., 2024; Kee et al., 2023; Kong, 2021).

2.3.3 IMMERSION (EMBODIMENT-CORPOREALITY)

The dimension of embodiment or corporeality represents the deepest level of experiential learning. Stock and Kolb describe it as a state in which students feel the experience, integrate body, emotion, and cognition, and perceive a direct connection between what they do, think, and learn (Stock & Kolb, 2021). From contemporary perspectives such as 4E cognition (embodied, embedded, extended, enactive), it is argued that learning emerges from the subject's situated interaction with the physical and social environment, so concrete experience always involves a bodily and contextual component that cannot be reduced to abstract mental processes (Lebert & Vilarroya, 2024).

Qualitative studies on experiential learning in higher education show that field experiences, including professional internships, community projects, and experiential activities, create spaces where the body, emotions, and thoughts are integrated, allowing students to transform their experiences into applied knowledge and professional identity development (Tomkins & Ulus, 2016; Colomer et al., 2020; Veine et al., 2020). Immersion, understood as living the context in the first person, favours the integration of theory and practice by requiring students to make decisions, respond to unforeseen situations, and reflect on their own responses (Tembrevilla et al., 2023; Tomkins & Ulus, 2016; Leal-Rodríguez & Albort-Morant, 2019).

In immersive digital environments, the sense of embodiment has been linked to higher levels of empathy, understanding of others' perspectives, and affective engagement, especially when experiences simulate complex situations in the professional field (Liu et al., 2024; Natale et al., 2020). Although online company visits do not always reach the same degree of corporeality as face-to-face visits, the combination of virtual tours, synchronous interaction, situated tasks, and reflective activities can generate embodied learning, in which students not only understand concepts but also live them and incorporate them into their repertoire of professional action (Liu et al., 2024; Lebert & Vilarroya, 2024; Kee et al., 2023; Stock & Kolb, 2021).

2.4 LEARNING IN REAL CONTEXTS (COMPANY VISIT)

Companies constitute authentic learning environments in which processes, cultures, and market dynamics are manifested in an integrated way. The literature on experiential learning in business and engineering education highlights that direct contact with real organizations allows students to observe management practices, identify complex problems, and understand the interaction among technical, economic, and social decisions (Tembrevilla et al., 2023; Kee et al., 2023; Leal-Rodríguez & Albort-Morant, 2019).

Their pedagogical value depends not only on contact with the company but also on curricular integration. The best results appear when the visit includes guided observation, interaction with professionals, reflection exercises, and subsequent conceptualization and application

activities, so that the concrete experience is transformed into transferable learning (Jusoh & Hadibarata, 2024; Bensusan et al., 2007).

Company visits facilitate the observation of real processes, dialogue with professionals, and exploration of specific market contexts, which increases the perceived relevance of academic content and strengthens intrinsic motivation (Natale et al., 2020; Leal-Rodríguez & Albort-Morant, 2019; Kong, 2021). This type of activity is associated with improvements in academic performance, applied understanding of theoretical concepts, and the development of competencies such as decision-making, teamwork, and problem-solving (Tembrevilla et al., 2023; Leal-Rodríguez & Albort-Morant, 2019; Cheng et al., 2025).

In the field of business education, methodologies centred on field experiences and managerial simulations have been linked to better academic performance and greater preparation to face labour market challenges (Leal-Rodríguez & Albort-Morant, 2019; Kong, 2021). Company visits constitute a privileged strategy for linking theory and practice in online higher education when they are conceived as experiential learning devices that maximize novelty, presence, and corporeality, and are integrated with structured processes of reflection, conceptual construction, and action focused on the development of professional competencies (Liu et al., 2024; Colomer et al., 2020; Veine et al., 2020; Cheng et al., 2025).

Classroom-industry partnerships constitute a relevant pedagogical strategy for reducing the distance between academic training and labour market demands. By placing students in front of real problems, actors, and organizational dynamics, these experiences favour the development of critical thinking, collaborative work, communication, adaptability, and other transversal skills necessary for professional performance. They also allow for a situated understanding of work practices by linking disciplinary content with concrete scenarios of action. Studies on career readiness and the academia-industry gap argue that experiential learning contributes to more realistic, relevant, and transferable training by preparing students to respond flexibly to changing and complex work contexts (Haritha & Rao, 2024; Khan et al., 2025; Spanjaard et al., 2018).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 RESEARCH APPROACH AND DESIGN

This study adopted a quantitative approach, with a non-experimental, cross-sectional, descriptive-correlational design aimed at analysing experiential learning among students who participated in a company visit.

The research was conducted in three phases. First, the instrument was designed and adapted, which involved contextualizing the scale to the company visit setting to ensure the relevance of the items. Second, the questionnaire was administered at the end of the experience to obtain responses grounded in the immediate lived experience. Finally, the information was coded, cleaned, and systematized for subsequent statistical analysis.

The study followed a deductive logic, since the instrument used was based on the experiential learning theory proposed by Kolb (1986) and on the Experiencing Scale developed by Stock and Kolb (2021), which makes it possible to assess the level of student involvement in experiential contexts.

3.2 RESEARCH MODEL

The conceptual model of the study is grounded in experiential learning and proposes that perceived novelty in an educational experience is related to student presence. Presence is understood as the level of attention, concentration, and cognitive involvement during the learning process.

In this framework, the following relationship is proposed:

Novelty → Presence

Based on experiential learning theory and on the Experiencing Scale proposed by Stock and Kolb (2021), the following research hypothesis is formulated:

H1: Perceived novelty in experiential learning experiences is positively related to student presence.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

Data were collected using an adaptation of the Experiencing Scale, designed to measure students' level of involvement in experiential learning processes.

The instrument was structured using a five-point Likert scale, with response options ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." The questionnaire was administered to university students who participated in a learning experience based on a company visit as part of the Business Management and Organizational Theories course.

The sample comprised 100% of the enrolled students, yielding 50 valid responses. Because the entire academic cohort was included, sampling error within the analysed population was avoided; however, the specificity of this population limits the generalizability of the results to other programs and institutions.

The instrument was adapted from the Experiencing Scale developed by Stock and Kolb (2021), which conceptualizes involvement in experiential learning through the dimensions of novelty, presence, and immersion or embodiment. In the first stage, the items were translated from English into Spanish while seeking to preserve their conceptual meaning. The wording was subsequently adapted to the specific context so that the statements explicitly referred to the company visit and were understandable to students enrolled in online higher education.

The adapted version was reviewed by two experts in higher education and educational research, who assessed the relevance, clarity, and coherence of the items in relation to the context analysed. A pilot test was subsequently conducted with students whose characteristics were like those of the target population to assess the comprehensibility of the statements and their semantic appropriateness. Participants adequately understood the questions; therefore, no further substantial modifications were required. Although the adapted instrument covered the three dimensions of the scale, the measurement and structural models in the present study were restricted to Novelty and Presence, in accordance with the hypothesis formulated. The adapted version of the instrument is available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request, while the original scale can be consulted in Stock and Kolb (2021).

Partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) was used to analyse the research model with ADANCO software. The analysis included the assessment of both the measurement model and the structural model to examine the hypothesized relationship between novelty and student presence.

The use of PLS-SEM was justified by the exploratory nature of the study, the small sample size, and the absence of strict normality assumptions, conditions under which this technique is appropriate (Hair et al., 2011).

Regarding age, the sample exhibited a heterogeneous intergenerational distribution: 16% of the students were between 18 and 24 years old ($n = 8$); 22% were between 25 and 30 years old ($n = 11$); 20% were between 31 and 36 years old ($n = 10$); 22% were between 37 and 42 years old ($n = 11$); and 20% were over 42 years old ($n = 10$). This distribution reflects the age heterogeneity of the academic cohort analysed.

3.4 MEASUREMENT MODEL

The measurement model was evaluated through internal reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Regarding internal reliability, high levels of internal consistency were identified in both constructs. For Presence, Cronbach's alpha was 0.9589, rho_A was 0.9618, and composite reliability (pc) was 0.9588. For Novelty, the values were $\alpha = 0.9271$, rho_A = 0.9391, and pc = 0.9308.

Regarding convergent validity, the average variance extracted (AVE) values were satisfactory, reaching 0.8238 for Presence and 0.7724 for Novelty, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.50.

Regarding discriminant validity, the HTMT criterion yielded a value of 0.9262, slightly above the reference threshold of 0.90. This result indicates that the empirical differentiation between Novelty and Presence is not fully conclusive and that the two constructs exhibit substantial proximity. Therefore, although reliability and convergent validity were satisfactory, the results should be interpreted cautiously and within the exploratory nature of the study.

3.5 STRUCTURAL MODEL

The structural model was evaluated through the analysis of path coefficients, their statistical significance, and the explanatory power of the model. The results showed a positive and statistically significant relationship between novelty and student presence ($\beta = 0.9248$; $t = 15.5146$; $p < .001$), providing empirical support for the proposed hypothesis.

Regarding explanatory power, the coefficient of determination was $R^2 = 0.8553$, indicating that, within the analysed sample, novelty explains 85.5% of the variance in presence. This result represents high explanatory power for the proposed model.

Likewise, the effect size was $f^2 = 5.9111$, corresponding to a very large effect of novelty on presence within the structural specification evaluated.

Table 2 - Structural Model Results

Relationship	β	t	p	R ²	f ²
Novelty → Presence	0.925	15.515	< .001	0.855	5.911

Note. β = standardized path coefficient; R^2 = coefficient of determination; f^2 = effect size.

4. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The results of this study show a positive and statistically significant relationship between novelty and student presence ($\beta = 0.9248$; $p < .001$), providing empirical support for the hypothesis within the context analysed. This finding is consistent with experiential learning theory, according to which experiences that break routine and place students in authentic contexts are associated with greater cognitive activation and greater involvement in the learning process (Kolb, 1986; Morris, 2019).

From a conceptual perspective, the results reinforce the notion of novelty as a relevant element of the "experiencing" process, given that new and meaningful experiences are related to higher levels of student engagement and participation in the different phases of

the experiential cycle (Stock & Kolb, 2021). The magnitude of the structural coefficient suggests that novelty is a relevant predictor of presence within the model studied.

The coefficient of determination obtained ($R^2 = 0.8553$) indicates that, within the analysed sample, novelty explains 85.5% of the variance in student presence, representing high explanatory power. This result supports the relevance of designing experiences that break the academic routine and connect students with authentic contexts. However, owing to the cross-sectional and non-experimental nature of the research, R^2 should not be interpreted as evidence of definitive causality or automatically generalized to other programs, institutions, or educational modalities. Furthermore, its magnitude should be considered because Novelty and Presence are part of the same conceptual framework of experiencing and therefore share a closely related experiential domain (Stock & Kolb, 2021).

Presence constitutes a fundamental component in the development of reflection and conceptualization processes, since focused attention enables students to observe, analyse, and critically interpret the lived experience (Morris, 2019; Veine et al., 2020). In this sense, the association identified suggests that an experience perceived as novel may foster the attentional conditions required to transform experience into learning.

The interpretation of the high R^2 should be complemented by the HTMT value of 0.9262, which is slightly above the reference threshold of 0.90. This result indicates that the empirical differentiation between Novelty and Presence is not completely conclusive in the context studied. During a company visit, students may simultaneously perceive a break from routine, interest generated by a new situation, and a high level of attention and involvement, which may explain the proximity between the two constructs (Kee et al., 2023; Kong, 2021).

Although this result does not invalidate the exploratory nature of the model, it limits claims of full distinctiveness between the constructs and requires the high explanatory power obtained to be interpreted cautiously. Future research should examine possible semantic similarity among some items, compare alternative specifications of the measurement model, and replicate the study with larger and more heterogeneous samples to determine whether the relationship is maintained when the conceptual differentiation between the variables is clearer.

The small sample size ($n = 50$) and its origin in a single academic cohort may also have limited response variability. This characteristic reinforces the need to interpret the findings within the specific context of the study and subsequently compare them with other higher education populations (Hair et al., 2011; Ghasemy et al., 2020).

The sample included students from different age ranges, describing a diverse intergenerational group. However, the study did not conduct multigroup analyses or moderation tests by age; therefore, it is not possible to establish whether the relationship between novelty and presence differs across age segments.

The findings are particularly relevant when considering the online education context. The literature indicates that engagement levels in virtual environments can be affected when strategies that promote interaction, connection with practice, and active participation are not incorporated (Martin & Borup, 2022; Salas-Pilco et al., 2022). In the context analysed, participation in a face-to-face experience was associated with high levels of student presence, suggesting that such activities may help compensate for some of the limitations in interaction and connection with real situations that are characteristic of online education.

Novelty constitutes a strategic element in the design of learning experiences in online education contexts. By offering authentic, situated, and out-of-routine experiences, company visits can enhance experiential learning, if they are intentionally designed and integrate processes of interaction, reflection, and application.

From an institutional perspective, the findings suggest that online higher education institutions should incorporate experiences involving contact with real organizations as a planned component of the curriculum rather than only as complementary or isolated activities. To this end, it is advisable to establish stable partnerships with companies, define participation protocols, ensure accessible conditions for students located in different territories, and provide face-to-face, hybrid, or virtual alternatives when geographical limitations exist. Institutional planning should also link these experiences to learning outcomes, course content, and the professional competencies expected to be developed.

For educators, the results show that novelty can function as an initial stimulus for capturing attention, but its educational potential depends on the pedagogical design that accompanies the experience. Before the visit, learning objectives should be presented, observation guides provided, and questions formulated in connection with theoretical content. During the activity, participation should be encouraged through questions to professionals, process analysis, problem identification, and evidence collection. After the visit, the experience should be complemented with reflection and application activities, such as reflective journals, forums, case studies, infographics, or improvement proposals for the organization visited. This sequence enables novelty to move beyond momentary interest and be transformed into sustained presence, critical reflection, conceptualization, and application of learning.

The analysed model focused specifically on the relationship between Novelty and Presence within experiential learning and therefore represents an exploratory approach to a complex phenomenon. Consequently, future studies could expand the model by incorporating additional variables, such as motivation, academic engagement, social interaction, immersion, or the development of professional competencies, to enrich the theoretical explanation of student involvement.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The present study aimed to analyse the relationship between novelty and student presence within the framework of experiential learning in higher education. The results show that novelty is a relevant predictor of presence within the model analysed, as evidenced by a positive and statistically significant relationship with high explanatory power.

Experiences perceived as novel were associated with higher levels of student attention, concentration, and involvement. This finding is consistent with experiential learning perspectives, according to which activities that break routine and place students in authentic contexts can support processes of participation, reflection, and the construction of meaningful learning.

The high explanatory power of the model suggests that novelty may play a relevant role in the design of educational experiences aimed at strengthening student presence. In this regard, company visits represent an appropriate pedagogical strategy for promoting the connection between theory and practice, especially in online higher education programs. Their effectiveness, however, depends on planning that articulates objectives, guided observation, interaction with professionals, subsequent reflection, and application of what has been learned.

Based on the results obtained, it is recommended that the model be expanded by incorporating other dimensions of experiencing, such as immersion or embodiment, as well as variables related to motivation, social interaction, and the development of professional competencies. This would make it possible to analyse student involvement in learning experiences more comprehensively.

The study presents limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results. First, the research was conducted with a small sample (n = 50) corresponding to a single course and a single higher education institution, which limits the generalizability of the findings. In addition, the information was obtained through a self-report instrument; therefore, the responses may be subject to perception or social desirability biases.

Likewise, the cross-sectional design does not allow definitive causal relationships to be established between the constructs analysed. The results reflect significant statistical associations within the context studied but should be interpreted cautiously.

Discriminant validity between Novelty and Presence was also not fully conclusive, since the HTMT value slightly exceeded the threshold of 0.90. In addition, variables such as prior motivation, the dynamics of the activity, social interaction, or teaching support may have influenced student presence and were not incorporated into the model.

Future studies should replicate the analysis with larger and more heterogeneous samples, different programs, modalities, and academic levels, and examine alternative models that strengthen the differentiation between the constructs. It would also be relevant to analyse the relationships among novelty, presence, immersion, competency development, and the transfer of knowledge to professional contexts.

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Conceptualization, KSSM, LMCR, and MALV; methodology, KSSM, LMCR, and MALV; software, KSSM; validation, KSSM, LMCR, and MALV; formal analysis, KSSM, LMCR, and MALV; investigation, KSSM, LMCR, and MALV; resources, KSSM, LMCR, and MALV; data curation, KSSM; writing—original draft preparation, KSSM, LMCR, and MALV; writing—review and editing, KSSM. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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The authors declare that there are no competing interests related to the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The anonymized data supporting the results of this study are available upon reasonable request from the corresponding author. They are not publicly available to protect participant confidentiality. The adapted version of the instrument may also be requested from the corresponding author.

ETHICS STATEMENT

All participants were informed about the purpose of the study and provided informed consent before completing the questionnaire. Participation was voluntary, and no personally identifiable information was collected. All data were treated confidentially and analysed anonymously.

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