

Activate the Field Training to develop the students' professional skills Case study: Students of the Interior Design and Furniture Department / Faculty of Applied Arts / October 6 University

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ABSTRACT:

The research problem was observed that the effectiveness of students' field training of the interior design and furniture program was weak, and that there was a clear gap between (academic study) and (practical application and labor market needs), which led students and graduates to lose a lot of professional skills, with no development in academic courses to meet the labor market needs.

The research **aims to** activate the role of student's field training of the interior design and furniture program in the faculties of applied arts, to develop their professional skills and qualifying them for the labor market, to expand job opportunities for them after graduation, by bridging the gap between academic study and practical application. And benefit from field training in developing academic courses, to provide an efficient graduate.

The research dealt with several concepts: interior design profession practicing, professional skills, graduate specifications, and students' field training, through an **inductive and descriptive approach**, and a **quasi-experimental approach** to observe the effect of an independent variable (field training) on a dependent variable (students' professional skills), and an **inferential analysis** based on the exploratory questionnaire to survey the students and graduates opinion about the effectiveness of field training period they performed, and another questionnaire to measure the labor market needs in the graduates of the interior design and furniture program. **Limited to** students of 2nd and 3rd grade of the Interior Design and Furniture Program, during four academic years (from 2017:2021).

The results were presented and discussed, as experiment proved the validity of the research hypothesis, that working to activate the role of students' field training led to a real development of their professional skills and job opportunities for them after graduation, the experiment enabled an increase in comprehension skills and academic achievement when companies were used to develop academic courses.

Keywords:

Interior Design, Students' Field Training, Professional skills, Labor market.

1. INTRODUCTION

Interior design and furniture education aims to produce a distinguished interior designer who meets the labor market needs in terms of: preparing design drawings –preparing shop drawings –implementation supervision - quantity surveying (B.O.Q) – pricing – specifications (Spec's) – invoices – Material Submittal - contract others. Those with the greatest professional skills are

the ones who are accepted into different job, so it has become necessary for education to keep pace with the labor market needs and variables. According to the quality requirements; the ability of the educational system to train students has become a basic criterion for measuring its efficiency. The field training effectiveness has become a prerequisite for progress. Therefore, the research seeks to activate the role of field training to upgrade the professional skills of interior design and furniture program graduates to keep pace with the local labor market. In addition to using field training in developing academic courses, which also would lead to obtaining a competent graduate, the study adopted the quasi-experimental approach, inferential analysis, and questionnaires to measure and evaluate the extent to which the graduate's specifications conform to the profession practicing needs.

2. OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND

2-1- Interior design and profession practice: Definition of some concepts related to the research, such as: Interior design - Graduate professional skills of the applied arts sector and graduate professional skills of the interior design and furniture program through NARS - General professional skills related to improving performance and excellence - graduate work fields - interior designer work Fields - interior designer profession practicing - project Steps - profession practicing company of interior designer.

2-2- Field training for students: definition of field training - its objectives.

2-3- Practical Experiment

2-3-1- Experiment description: Article (14) of Applied Arts Faculty bylaw - October 6 University states that: To get a bachelor's degree, students of academic teams must undergo practical training in a design and production companies for a period of three weeks annually during the summer vacation. Accordingly, the researcher observed shortcomings in the students' field training process that didn't yield the desired result, so she did an experiment, relied on the (quasi-experimental approach) to measure the relationship between an independent variable (field training) and a dependent variable (students' professional skills) under study. In an attempt to activate the role of field training to develop their professional skills. In an attempt to bridge the gap between (academic study) and (practical application), the researcher held field trainings for (2nd and 3rd year) students, over four consecutive years: (2017/2018, 2018/2019, 2019/2020 and 2020/2021), and they were monitored, then measured and analyzed. Where about (2,153) training opportunities were provided by companies in the field of interior design and furniture, an example is shown in table (1) In addition to the attendance of about (500) students for a number of company's webinar, to develop academic courses by linking their scientific content with the variables of the labor market during the study. A sample of (30) trainee students who completed extensive and varied field training, led to a clear shift in the level of professional perception and skill, was selected to measure the experiment.

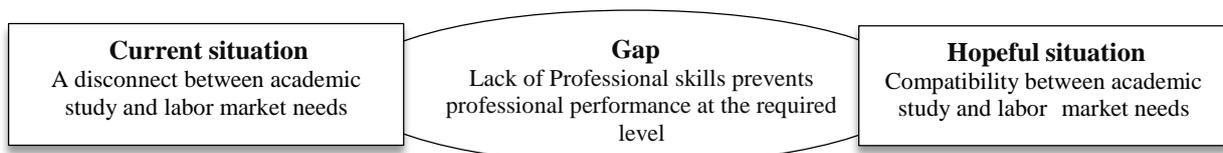


Figure (1) a diagram showing the goal of applying the quasi-experimental approach to bridge that gap by activating the role of field training

2-3-2- Study procedures:First: Laying the principles and mechanisms:

Seeking every year to communicate with many companies and factories to provide real field training opportunities for students - Estimating training needs: (setting goals - building the program - designing the training content) - Make joining field training (optional), according to the student's desire to qualify himself for the labor market to ensure effectiveness - Preparing rules for joining field training, to ensure the practice seriousness - A media mechanism has been set up, and social media groups have been created via Facebook and What's app to communicate with students.

Second: Preparation, coordination and organization:

- The researcher coordinated with the companies in terms of: (scientific and applied content, training times and periods, number of trainees, training sites and their safety, transportations, printed scientific content and materials samples, employment opportunities after graduation, holding workshops inside the college).
- She prepared a training program for each academic year according to a timetable, as shown in (Table1), then distributed the students groups to the company.
- The researcher coordinated with the companies to conclude cooperation protocols between them and the college, to train the students. Accordingly, a protocols were signed with: the Chamber of Wood and Furniture Products Industry - CMB Company - Dr. Ahmed Bahgat Group of Companies, the researcher was appointed as the coordinating officer.

Third: Implementation:

- The researcher attended all the trainings for the purpose of: (increasing the effectiveness of training by explaining and guiding, following up students, solving problems, providing students with soft skills, monitoring labor market requirements, developing academic courses, providing job opportunities after graduation, signing cooperation protocols, Monitoring the Experiment and measuring its effectiveness).
- A (field training report) has been designed, to document the content presented to the student.

Fourth: Measuring the Impact of Training:

- Questionnaires at the Quality Assurance Center were used to evaluate the field training impact.
- Preparing a questionnaire for distinguished trainees' students (30 trainee students).
- Preparing a questionnaire measuring the labor market needs for graduates of interior design and furniture program.
- The researcher presented thanks certificates to the distinguished trainees to encourage them, and appreciation certificates to the training companies.

Fifth: Improvement and Development: Forming a (Field Training Committee) and made the researcher its head - preparing (Field Training Guide) and holding meetings to introduce it - the trainings were held during the mid and end of the year vacations together, to increase its effectiveness.

Sixth: Benefiting from companies in developing academic courses: by involving them in the educational process, through field visits and seminars complementing the course content topics.
Seventh: Digital training: A digital training group was established on Microsoft Teams application, the researcher held digital workshops synchronous with the field training period, to increase the training effectiveness.

2-3-3- Measurement Tool (Questionnaire)

- A Student Questionnaire: aims to measure the training effectiveness for a number of (30) trainees whose had extensive and varied field training, which led to a clear shift in their professional awareness level.
- A Labor market needs questionnaire: aims to measure the labor market needs for graduates of the Interior Design and Furniture Program.

The field training organized by the researcher for students in the fourth year (2020/2021) (**526** field training opportunities and **476** digital training opportunities) in 18 Companies During the second wave of the novel coronavirus pandemic Table 1 - by researcher



Fig (1) Al Nadim factory in Abu Rawash, 10 students were trained for a week, accompanied by the researcher, January 2019.



Fig (2) Announcement of an digital webinar aimed at qualifying students of the interior design and furniture program for the labor market.

N	Field Training content	Period: from ... to ...	Students number	Academic Year	Company
1	Zowil City	27 June to 7 July	10	The second class	For a week – Finishing and technical works in administrative buildings.
		August 3	10		
2	Design Point	3 to 15 July	16		For 2 weeks - practicing design drawings - implementation follow-up.
3	CMB	5 to 7 July	48	The second class	For 3 days - specialized seminars in isolation materials, Epoxy, other materials and some finishes.
		12 to 14 July			
		26 to 28 July			
4	Golden Metal Gypsum Board Systems	7 to 8 July	45	The second class	For 2 days - types of suspended ceilings and accessories - installation methods - aluminum cladding - hydraulic works elevators and others.
		10 to 11 July			
		15 July			
		3 to 4 September			

5	Knauf Gypsum Board Ceiling/Partitions	25 to 28 July - 1 to 4 August	140	The second and Third class	For 4 days - gypsum board suspended ceiling systems - gypsum tiles - gypsum partition systems.
		8 to 11 August - 15 to 18 August			
		22 to 25 August - 29 August to 1 September			
		5 to 8 September - 12 to 15 September			
6	Al Nadim Factory	1 August to 9 September	6	The Third class	For 6 weeks - job opportunity after graduation - production lines, factory departments, and technical office work.
7	Elbadry Factory	1 to 5 September	12	The second class	For 2 weeks - production lines, factory departments-technical office.
8	ConCreative Consultancy	25 August to 25 September	2	The Third class	For a month - working in the technical office: quantities survey - technical specifications – Shop drawings.
9	المقاولون العرب	4 July to 18 August	102	The second and Third class	For 3 weeks visiting many work sites at different state projects
10	Notre Art Factory	6 to 20 August	10	The Third class	For 2 weeks - production lines, factory departments-technical office.
11	Modern Space Residential Projects	27 to 30 July - 28 to 31 July	122	The second class	Field visits for 4 days at the sites - with attendance of digital training on architectural finishes in 14 seminars.
		29 July to 1 August - 8 to 11 August			
12	Abdelrazzak Factory	The whole month of August	3	The Third class	For a month - production lines, factory departments-technical office.
Digital Training					
Supports the development of students professional skills					
13	Webinar: Float Glass TAL Glass Factory	Saturday 17th July	45	The second and Third class	For 3 hours - glass types - its uses – manufacture - external Cladding - its operation.
14	Webinar: How to start finishing an apartment?	Thursday 1 July	120		2 hours - all residential finishing works.
15	:Webinar Vocational qualification	Saturday July 31	101	All Classes	A comprehensive explanation of the companies of the labor market needs.

	for interior design and furniture program students (Researcher)			and graduates	
16	Project Management	Saturday August 7	80		For 2 hours - project management companies
17	Webinar: CV & Interview	August 1 and 5	90		For 3 hours - how to write a CV? - How to do an interview?
18	Webinar: Technical Terms	August	40		For 2 hours - Technical English terms
(526 field training opportunities and 476 digital training opportunities)					Total number of training companies is: 18

2-4- Discuss the results

2-4-1- Results Analysis

- The result of students' questionnaire analysis showed a clear satisfaction that reflects the strength effectiveness of the students' field training during the four years, and this appeared in: the development skills of the ability to search for work got (88.3% agree) - skills of design and implementation supervision got (80.7% agree) - implementation skills got (70% agree) - General professional skills related to improving performance and excellence got (69.2% agree) - Project management skills got (65% agree).
- The students pointed out the weaknesses: the short period of training they obtained within the same company - and the lack of work sites.
- The students pointed out the strengths: the multiplicity of companies in one specialty.
- Students explained their improvement suggestions: Providing training opportunities for longer periods of time.
- The experiment of involving companies in the educational process resulted in a development in students' awareness of the academic courses content, and linking them to the developments in the labor market.
- Labor market companies' opinion of graduates of the interior design and furniture program is not satisfactory, as the criterion of suitability of graduate qualifications for labor market jobs got a percentage of only (35% agree) - The graduate's dealings with information technology and operating processes developments got a percentage of (33.3% agree) - Administrative skills and ability to perform tasks got (46.52% agree). The graduate's awareness of work etiquette and ethics got (73.3% agree). All of this indicates weakness of the graduate of the interior design and furniture program, and his/her inability to practice the profession at the required level from the perspective of labor market.
- The digital training resulted in the students' cognitive development, and then those professional skills.

2-4-2- Checking the research hypotheses

The study proved the validity of the first hypothesis, which is that working on the role of students' field training activating of the interior design and furniture program in the faculties of applied arts is an important and basic need of the educational process, as it leads to improve the student's professional skills, provided that the student gets a real opportunity for training, according to Well-thought-out plans, their implementation with serious follow-up, and then

discussions, all of this leads to an increase in job opportunities for students after graduation, and this is shown in the following:

- The student's use of the correct market terminology to describe materials and in explaining the production methods.
- The student's design thought were developed, by preparing executable designs.
- Preparing shop drawings consciously by translating knowledge into an accurate description of the material and production methods.
- The student's discuss ability, manage dialogue, present ideas, and breaking the fear of expressing an opinion has been developed.
- The students were able to form work relationships, which enabled them to communicate with specialists and technicians in order to seek technical advice, they benefited from this throughout study for years and after graduation as well.
- Some graduates, by the support and coordination of the researcher, were able to get job opportunities at the companies which they were trained at during the study, the researcher hired about (15 students) from 2018 to 2020, in the following factories: Al Nadim Factory, Al Badry Factory, Andalusia Factory, WAM Factory.

The study highlighted a remarkable progress in the level of the student who had workshops and field visits in the academic courses during the study period, which led to an increase in understanding, and was able to gain early access to the labor market developments, which supported the need to take advantage of companies to develop the academic courses for furniture and interior design program students, by linking the academic content to the labor market.

3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

- The researcher observed a weakness of the students' field training effectiveness of the interior design and furniture program in the colleges of applied arts.
- The clear gap between (academic study) and (practical application and labor market needs) in the field of interior design and furniture, which led to a lack of students and graduates professional skills.
- Is it possible to benefit from field training companies to develop academic courses for the students under study?

4. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- Activating the role of field training to develop the students' professional skills of the Interior Design and Furniture Department / Faculty of Applied Arts / October 6 University- and qualifying them for the labor market, and expanding job opportunities for them after graduation by bridging the gap between academic study and practical application.
- Benefiting from field training in developing academic courses, to provide an efficient graduate capable of professional practice.

5. HYPOTHESIS AND METHODOLOGIES

Inductive and descriptive approach - Quasi-Experimental approach - Inferential analysis

6. CONCLUSIONS

1. The study proved the research hypothesis, that activating the role of field training for students of the interior design and furniture program at the College of Applied Arts is an important and basic need of the educational process, which leads to improve the student's professional skills, and increased job opportunities for the graduate.

2. The performance of field training is not limited only to the vacations study period, but can be extended also during the study period, through the help of companies to develop academic courses, it makes the students being connected to the labor market throughout the year.
3. Activating the role of students' field training gives them a sense of satisfaction towards the profession, develops their excellence skills, helps them understand academic study, and enables them to contribute to the future industry.
4. The importance of activating the role of the academic supervisor on training, through his constant presence with the trainees, for guidance, moral support and explaining professional and life experiences.
5. It was found that the appropriate period of time that enables the trainee student to gain professional experience through practice would not be less than 3 weeks to 3 months at the same company.
6. The most important factors to support the effectiveness of students' field training is to make it optional according to each student's aspirations in creating his/her future, while establishing rule to ensure seriousness and commitment.

7. RECOMENDATIONS

1. Disseminating the experiment to all applied arts disciplines, by presenting an effective students' field training proposal in line with the program, achieving the graduate's specifications, provided that it is under supervision and follow-up by faculty staff members.
2. Urging faculty staff members to participate actively in order to promote annual field training programs and plans due to their importance.
3. We recommend to hold training courses in companies for faculty staff members, in the field of applied arts in general, to develop academic courses, to make them keep pace with the labor market needs.
4. Linking students' projects at different levels with real projects at the companies, to develop the students' professional skills, as they participated in a real project under the supervision and guidance of a faculty staff member and a specialized company.
5. The colleges of applied arts have to hold cooperation protocols in order to link scientific researches to the industry problems, which leads to linking the theoretical study with practical application, and making real development.
6. Encouraging the students to perform field trainings throughout the years of study, through holding awareness workshops.

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