



Original Article

A Quantitative Survey on Students Majoring in Preschool Education to Build Vocational Practice Program

Ho Thi Tuong Van^{1,*}, Pham Phuoc Manh²

¹National College of Education Ho Chi Minh, Nguyen Chi Thanh, District 10, Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam

²University of Pedagogy Ho Chi Minh, An Duong Vuong, District 5, Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam

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Abstract: In order to build a vocational practice program for students majoring in preschool education at the college level according to the connection model between pedagogical schools (colleges of preschool education) and kindergartens (preschools), the authors have the study in 2 years (from 2023 to 2024) based on previous studies by many different authors and the authors ourselves. The surveys in the plan of the study obtained positive results but did not clearly demonstrate the diversity ideas of many subjects nor did it specifically supplement the content, the subjects of the on-going building vocational practice program. Therefore, the study should be conducted one more quantitative survey on students to the original plan in order to expand diversity and express the wishes of learners while carrying out the vocational practice program. The results of this survey on students are also hoped by the authors to add some specific content and subjects in the process of building a vocational practice program.

Keywords: Vocational practice program, connection model, participatory approach, students majoring in preschool education.

1. Introduction

The survey and interview results at the 2nd stage (end of the year 2023) of the project "Building a vocational practice program for students majoring in preschool education at college level according to the connection model between pedagogical schools and preschools" - end of year 2023 from the management staff

and lecturers of the pedagogical schools, the board of directors and preschool teachers guide the internship, representatives of the Department of Education and Training have gradually formed an overall orientation picture to build a vocational practice program for students majoring in preschool education at the college level according to the model of connection between pedagogical schools and preschools. However, the overall orientation picture largely focuses on connection methods, connection models, current situation and

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: hoothituongvan@gmail.com

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proposed policies for better organization and coordination between pedagogical schools and preschools. Meanwhile, the results obtained the overview program and specific content of the vocational practice program all range from agree to strongly agree, as well as not demonstrate the urgency of building a vocational practice program according to the connection model between pedagogical schools and preschools - the initial hypothesis of the project/the study. Therefore, the author decided to conduct an additional surveys (beyond the original plan) on learners - students majoring in preschool education at college level - subjects who are less affected by the organizational process or management process but who participate in implementing to meet the content, subjects, goals, requirements, products, etc. from the vocational practice program. From there, the author expects survey results from students majoring in preschool education at the college level will provide more concrete evidence of the urgency of building and adjusting a vocational practice program before entering the 3rd stage - the proposing a vocational practice program according to the connection model between pedagogical schools and preschools. The information from the survey results below will contribute to orienting adjustments and building vocational practice programs that closely meet learner'/subjects' needs and social needs better, suggesting an appropriate approach - participatory approach.

This article will be briefly presented the main theories related to the study and survey content, thereby describing the questions, the purpose of survey and the results from students majoring in preschool education at the college level.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Definition of Vocational Practice Program in Preschool Education

From many different perspectives and definitions about "the program" (Irma., 2007,

pp. 275), the program can be defined as a comprehensive plan for selecting content and organizing learning experiences that consider all philosophical factors, social and administrative factors contribute to the aim of changing and developing learners' behavior and understanding. The program typically includes purpose, content, methods, assessment and the process by which the program is developed, implemented and evaluated.

In the training program for a specific major, the structure is designed to include theory and practice to meet the needs of equipping the profession with appropriate knowledge, skills, and attitudes towards social needs. Practice and internship are a mandatory period of vocational training for students in some training majors. For the pedagogy field, vocational practice and pedagogical internship are the practical stages that synthesize vocational knowledge to form abilities for future teacher's tasks. Vocational practice activities have a clear purpose to practice therefore improving pedagogical capacity and forming necessary personality qualities for pedagogical students through interacting and working at a specific school, contributing to training future teachers that meet the requirements of society and employers.

The vocational practice program for students majoring in preschool education at the college level is a practice plan linked to the profession with a comprehensive purpose, content, method, organization, coordination and evaluation methods to change and develop the vocational knowledge, skills and competencies for students majoring in preschool education. The vocational practice program for students majoring in preschool education at the college level is an opportunity to help students perform the pedagogical activities of a teacher, practice therefore improving pedagogical capacity and forming necessary personality qualities for pedagogical students through interacting and working at a specific preschool, contributing to training future preschool teachers that meet the

requirements of society and employers (Ho., 2023, ongoing research project).

2.2. *The Connection Model between Pedagogical Schools and Preschools*

From the “model” definition (Institute of Linguistics (2003), pp. 634.) and “connection” definition (N. Nhu Y (1998)), the author summarizes the definition of “the connection model between pedagogical schools and preschools” as follows: The connection model between pedagogical schools (colleges of preschool education) and preschools is the result of one or a set of principles and theories stemming from scientific achievements created over a period of time, as a result of searching for solutions and are condensed for easy understanding and implementation to solve specific problems or situations that arise in the process of cooperation and attachment between pedagogical schools and preschools for some common purpose in education.

Van., 2022, has built two (02) connection models between pedagogical schools and preschools, specifically:

Mixed model: is a connection model being implemented in pedagogical schools, connected with different types of preschools, through the coordination of local Departments - Departments of Education and Training or contact directly from the pedagogical schools or students depending on the feature of the internships.

Supplemental model: is a connection model applied in specific situations when students have to re-intern or practice additionally for unavoidable situations that have been verified and have a decision to re-intern. At this time, the pedagogical school chooses to use a supplemental model in the case of small groups or a few of students in group contacting themselves by direct way to increase initiative’ student and catch up with the progress”.

David Clarke and Hilary Hollingsworth (2002) presented a model of teacher professional growth. A key feature of the model is its inclusion of four analytic domains in close

correspondence to those employed identifies the specific mechanisms by which change in one domain is associated with change in another. The interconnected, non-linear structure of the model enabled the identification of particular “change sequences” and “growth networks”, giving recognition to the idiosyncratic and individual nature of teacher professional growth. One major value of a change model grounded in empirical data lies in its capacity to stimulate speculation, research and development regarding possible change mechanisms as yet unexplored and unexploited. In its current form, this model offers a powerful framework to support the analyses of those studying teacher change (or growth) and the planning of those responsible for teacher professional development.

The training process of future preschool teachers from pedagogical schools can apply this model to orient the impact domain leading to changes and development of students during the training process, including the implementation of the training program at pedagogical schools and the vocational practice program at preschools.

Accordingly, if the personal domain plays an important role in the development of teachers' careers, the practice domain, the external domain, plays an important role, affecting the career development process of students - future teachers. At the same time, students - those who are “learning” the profession, are subject to the regulations of the training program, the vocational practice program of the pedagogical school. Therefore, the organization of vocational practice program plays an important role, often chosen to be the first to improve in order to improve the quality of professional training for students.

2.3. *Participatory Approach*

In order to propose directions for adjusting and building a vocational practice program that closely meets the needs of learners and social needs better, suggesting an appropriate approach, the author of the article describes

some content related to the participatory approach at this theoretical basic.

In the document of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the 2005 report from Peter Taylor's 2004 article states:

“As with all development processes, power relations have an enormous impact on curriculum development, which may be dominated by one group or individual, particularly where curriculum development is centralised, for example in many primary education systems. In recognition of the varying importance and influence of different stakeholders in the curriculum development process, more and more education and training institutions around the world are encouraging participatory curriculum development (PCD) processes, and at the same time building functional linkages with their local communities. PCD approaches create working partnerships between teachers, learners and other stakeholders, and aim to increase ownership of the full learning process, thus improving the potential for effective learning through participation.”

Vu Dung, Psychology Dictionary (2012) defines: “Participation is participating in a certain activity; attending with someone in some activities that influences each other”. Stakeholder engagement can occur throughout the entire educational program development process, including planning, delivery and evaluation.

It can be understood, from a more general perspective, that the participatory approach creates collaborative working between schools, learners and other stakeholders, with the aim of enhancing ownership of the entire learning process, thereby improving the potential for more effective learning through stakeholder engagement.

Pedagogical schools use a participatory approach (pedagogical schools - preschools - students - educational experts/representatives of the Department of Education and Training - community) in building vocational practice programs for students majoring in preschool

education at the college level, on the one hand, to promote the socialization of education, and on the other hand, to bring the best benefits to the development of the vocational training process, learners and local - regional characteristics, aiming to develop and improve the training quality of pedagogical schools.

2.4. Building a Vocational Practice Program in Preschool Education According to the Connection Model between Pedagogical Schools and Preschools

Building a vocational practice program for students majoring in preschool education at the college level according to the connection model between pedagogical schools and preschools is understood as creating, developing and perfecting a vocational practice program for students majoring in early childhood education at the college level. The program is a practice plan associated with the profession of preschool teacher, with a comprehensive purpose, content, method, form of organization, form of coordination and evaluation for the purpose of change and develop relevant vocational knowledge, skills and vocational competencies for learners (Van, 2023, ongoing research project).

From above definition, a new understanding “Building a vocational practice program for students majoring in preschool education at college level according to the connection model between pedagogical schools and preschools focusing on participatory approach” is understood as creating, developing and perfecting a vocational practice program for students majoring in early childhood education at the college level. The program is a practice plan associated with the profession of preschool teacher, with a comprehensive purpose, content, method, form of organization, form of coordination and evaluation for the purpose of change and develop relevant vocational knowledge, skills and vocational competencies for learners with the participation of lecturers, experts, and managers in pedagogical schools - preschools - students - education experts/representatives of the Department of Education

and Training - community to create the best benefits to the development of the vocational training process, learners and local - regional characteristics, aiming to develop and improve the training quality of pedagogical schools.

2.4.1. Basis for Building a Vocational Practice Program in Preschool Education

The Decisions and Circulars were issued by the Minister of Education and Training related to vocational practice program to colleges training preschool teachers, standards for preschool teachers, guiding the usage of vocational standards for preschool teachers,... have the basic for colleges building a vocational practice program for students students majoring in preschool education.

Furthermore, the authors need to base on the practical basis of the connection model between pedagogical schools and preschools; the essence of building a vocational practice program for students majoring in preschool education at the college level to be adapted to different connection models that are managed, organized and carried out by many individuals and organizations; the vocational practice programs for students majoring in preschool education are required to have some adjustments so that they could be transformed and responded flexibility to the new era.

2.4.2. Participatory Approach in Building a Vocational Practice Program in Preschool Education

Participatory approach is aimed at using the role, form and level of participation of relevant stakeholders in building a vocational practice program for students majoring in preschool education at the college level, including collective of lecturers, experts, managers in pedagogical schools - preschools - students - educational experts/representatives of the Department of Education and Training - community, in order to create the best benefits to the development of the vocational training process, learners and local - regional characteristics, aiming to develop and improve the training quality of pedagogical schools. Based on theories and reality, we can summarize the figure below.

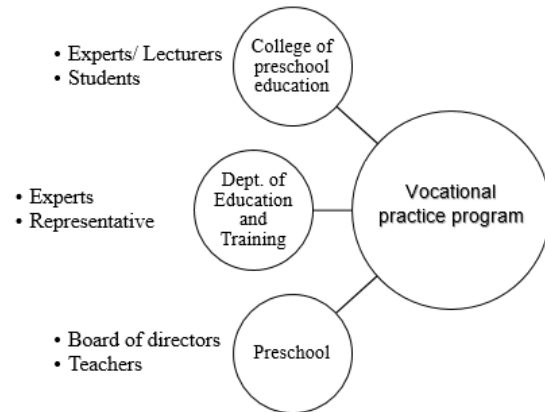


Figure 1. Connection model in building vocational practice program based on participatory approach.

3. Methodology

To survey the current status of the vocational practice program for students majoring in preschool education at the college level according to the connection model between pedagogical schools and preschools, we used the questionnaire - survey method combined with in-depth interviews with subjects - at the 2nd stage of the project. The survey was designed in the form of close-ended questions combined with open-ended questions to find out the awareness of managers and lecturers of the pedagogical schools; managers and internship guidance teachers of the preschools on the vocational practice program for students majoring in preschool education at the college level according to the connection model between pedagogical schools and preschools as well as the advantages and disadvantages in implementing a vocational practice program for students majoring in preschool education at the college level according to the connection model between pedagogical schools and preschools.

However, as mentioned in the Introduction, the results related to the program and the specific content of the vocational practice program all range from agree to strongly agree and are not many proposals for building a new program, nor have they shown the urgency of

building a vocational practice program according to the connection model between pedagogical schools and preschools - the initial hypothesis of the project.

The newly research purpose is established one more quantitative survey (beyond the original plan) on learners - students majoring in preschool education at college level to demonstrate the specifically urgency of building and adjusting the vocational practice program before entering the 3rd stage - the proposing a vocational practice program according to the connection model between pedagogical schools and preschools.

The survey method was designed in the form of a 10-question questionnaire on Google form including close-ended questions combined with open-ended questions. We used purposive sampling to find out the perceptions of the second year and third year students studying at the National College of Education Ho Chi Minh City on the urgency and suggestions of building vocational training programs for students majoring in preschool education at the college level according to the connection model between pedagogical schools and preschools.

Way to calculate: we use points on the Likert scale level 3 and 5 at some answers and put a ranking order from 1 to 7 at an answer.

The survey content was mainly designed with 2 types of questions: short answer questions and 3-level, 5-level Likert scale questions.

The meaning of each average value for the 5-level Interval Scale is considered as follows:

$$\text{Distance value} = (\text{Maximum} - \text{Minimum})/n = (5-1)/5 = 0.8$$

Table 1. Caculate points for the 5-level Likert scale questions

Average value	Meaning/Equivalent meaning
1.0 \approx 1.8	Totally disagree
1.8 \approx 2.6	Disagree
2.6 \approx 3.4	Neutral
3.4 \approx 4.2	Agree
4.2 \approx 5.0	Totally agree

4. Survey Results and Discussion

4.1. Survey Results

4.1.1. Summary of Survey and Interview Results about the Current Status of the Vocational Practice Program in Preschool at the National Colleges of Education

The process of researching the current situation and evaluating the vocational practice program for students majoring in preschool education at the college level according to the connection model between pedagogical schools and preschools shows:

In terms of awareness, survey respondents (including management staff and lecturers of the pedagogical school, Board of Directors and guiding internships preschool teachers, representatives of the Department of Education and Training) included 152 survey responses all clearly defined the role, meaning and importance of the vocational practice program, assessed the quality of the vocational practice program and the response level of the program at the present. The results showed the unity and achieved general consensus. Through surveys and interviews, the obtained results were promoted the adjustment and the change of vocational practice programs, core elements of vocational practice programs and influenced factors of vocational practice programs.

Overall, on the 5 levels of the question to collect opinions about the vocational practice program, the agree level (needs to be maintained/needs to be adjusted) accounts for 87.5%. By the way, the result shows that the criterion "Meets and contributes to meeting the output standards of the training program" at the highest score as well as the 3 criterias left are at totally agree level when they access the curent vocational practice program.

The results of the survey and interviews also obtained a fairly comprehensive picture of the current situation advantages and disadvantages in the connection between pedagogical schools and preschools, in the implementation of vocational practice programs. The current implementation process of the vocational training program shows that

the connection between the trio of pedagogical schools - the Department of Education and Training - the preschools has not really created a breakthrough and development in the connection model and in implementation of the vocational training program. Managers and experts in the preschool education also suggested some appropriate connection models between pedagogical schools and preschools in implementing the program; the methods of organizing and implementing the program which were appropriate and flexible, met the rapid and continuous changes in the new era.

At the same time, managers and experts have stated some directions to maintain and expand current links with preschools in implementing the vocational practice program; some proposals related to policy and the flexibility when implementing vocational practice programs according to connection models between pedagogical schools and preschools.

Thus, the investigating and evaluating results about the vocational practice program for students majoring in preschool education at the college level according to the connection model between pedagogical schools and preschools are not demonstrated a practical basis to help the research team build a more effective vocational practice program, promoting the strengths of the current vocational practice program as well as meeting social needs and updating in the new era. Initially, it is possible to orient in building a vocational practice program needs to have a suitable approach to ensure greater connection and participation among stakeholders; simultaneously, it is possible conduct an additional survey (beyond the original plan) on learners - students majoring in preschool education - the stakeholder participating directly in the implementation of the vocational practice program.

4.1.2. Results from Respondents - Students Majoring in Preschool Education During the Process of Building a Vocational Practice Program

The additional survey - mainly described in this article - was conducted by non - random sampling on second and third year students

majoring in preschool education at the National College of Education Ho Chi Minh City in the 2023 - 2024 school year, data is mentioned at Table 2.

Table 2. Number of survey respondents

Number of survey respondents	Percentage %	Number
Third year students	40.5	128
Second year students	59.5	188
Total number of respondents	100.0	316

They are suitable respondents to participate in the survey because they had completed from 2 to 5 official internships and a number of different thematics/specialized topics internships.

i) Results obtained for the question: "In your opinion, does the development of a vocational practice program need to gather learner's opinion?" demonstrated the important of building a vocational practice program from the perspective of the learner as follows:

Table 3. The need to gather learner's opinion when developing vocational practice programs

The need to gather learner's opinion	Percentage %	Number	Rank
Very necessary	33.5	106	3
Necessary	56.3	178	2
Not necessary, just make sure to follow the training program	10.1	32	1

There are 33.5% of students think that it is very necessary to gather learner's opinion and 56.3% of students choosing the necessary answer. It can be seen that 89.8% of students agree to have opinions, reference ideas in building a vocational practice program for themselves while participating the college's training process. This result shows the specific way and the expand of participants is necessary to build vocational practice programs for students majoring in preschool education.

ii) When asking about the relevance ranking, the quality or the comment and the evaluation to the content in specific vocational practice programs, in general, students' comments are positive, objective and appropriate compared to the current situation which is described in Table 4. This is almost completely consistent with the results of the survey in pedagogical schools and preschools mentioned briefly at the above content. Therefore, some answers mentioned about the difficult or easy, more or less of the content, with a rate of 4.1%, does not make a significant difference when surveyed.

Table 4. Content of the vocational practice program

Content of the vocational practice program	Percentage %	Number	Rank
Good	60.4	191	5
Suitable	35.4	112	4
Few and easy to complete	2.5	8	3
Too much and difficult to complete	1.6	5	2
Completely unacceptable	0.0	0	1

iii) Each specific vocational practice program mentions required products that must be met depending on the specific vocational practice program. The survey results in this content, although still achieved at a high level, accounting for 93.4% of the total number of responses, showed good and appropriate results, but the remaining opinions still help the work of building vocational practice program that needs to be considered. We need to adjust and evaluate the level of difficulty - ease, quantify less - more compared to the dupercentage of internship practice in preschool as well as update appropriate requirements according to the changes and developments of the profession and society.

Table 5. The requirements of the products in vocational practice program

The requirements of the products in vocational practice program	Percentage %	Number	Rank
On target, suitable for each vocational practice session	56.0	177	5
Suitable for each vocational practice session	37.3	118	4
Few and easy to complete	4.7	15	3
Too much and difficult to complete	1.9	6	2
Completely unacceptable	0.0	0	1

iv) In general, when giving comments and evaluating the achieved quality of vocational practice sessions, the surveyed students still determined that the quality of specific vocational practice session was good, suitable (Mean is 2.6) in particular as well as the general training program. Some comments mentioned that the quality is not good and not suitable for vocational practice sessions that need to be considered when we have another interviews.

Table 6. Quality of organization process of vocational practice program

Quality of organization process of vocational practice program	Percentage %	Number	Rank
Good	64.6	204	3
Suitable	33.5	106	2

v) To determine the clarity of the vocational practice program when presenting and issuing to relevant stakeholders: guiding practice lecturers - students - preschool administrators - guiding practice preschool teachers, the survey had taken specific opinions from 316 students participating in the survey. The results obtained are shown in Table 7.

Table 7. The clarity of the vocational practice program

The clarity of the vocational practice program	Percentage %	Number	Rank
Clear, specific, easy to implement	57.9	183	3
Neutral, need to read carefully many times to do	33.2	105	2
Difficult to understand, need to ask the guiding practice lecturers or academic advisor to be able to comply with the requirements	8.9	28	1

With 8.9% of students showing that the content is difficult to understand, the authors need to pay attention to the clarity of the content to meets the criteria of clarity, specificity and easy to follow. We are expected to build a new vocational program that get a higher rating than the current program. This is also a right and legitimate motivation when describing the structure of the vocational practice program needs to be newly built.

vi) The necessity of stakeholders' participation in the process of developing a vocational practice program is described in the chart below (Figure 2).

Obviously, in order to build a vocational practice program that meets many different criteria and needs of relevant stakeholders, the work of building a vocational practice program needs to demonstrate the necessary level of participation and mobilization of at least 3 main target groups: pedagogical schools - preschools - students.

The survey also mentioned other subjects such as: Departments of Education and Training, guiding practice preschool teachers, educational experts outside pedagogical schools, as well as other stakeholders.

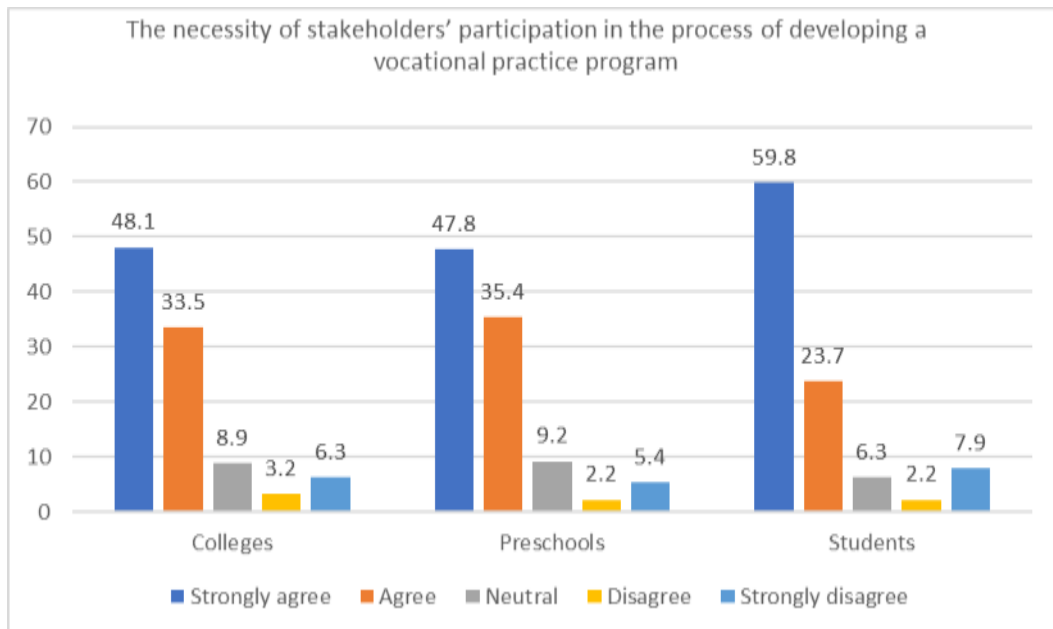


Figure 2. The necessity of stakeholders' participation in the process of developing a vocational practice program.

However, the results showing the necessary level of participation of the 3 target groups in the chart show that students appreciate their own participation role in the process of building the vocational practice program the most, accounting for 83.5% at a very necessary and necessary level compared to 83.2% of the preschool

administrators and 81.6% agreeing to the very necessary and necessary level for the pedagogical school group with average scores of 4.18 - 4.16 - 4.08 respectively has necessary significance (level 4) in the assessment. The level of necessity also shows correlation when the data are arranged in order from column 1 to column 7 in the following table:

Table 8. The correlation when the data are arranged in order from column 1 to column 7

The necessity of stakeholders' participation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Student	1						
2. Preschool	0.7410	1					
3. College	0.6822	0.8533	1				
4. Departments of Education and Training	0.5674	0.7971	0.8508	1			
5. Guiding practice preschool teacher	0.6691	0.7573	0.7968	0.8320	1		
6. Educational expert	0.5631	0.7461	0.749	0.8461	0.8345	1	
7. Other stakeholders	0.4418	0.5878	0.5899	0.6686	0.6795	0.7691	1

Thus, the above results show that students have a high appreciation for the role and necessity to participate in the process of building a vocational practice program as the part of the current preschool teacher training program. Simultaneously, the survey content also recorded specific ideas that need to be improved and taken into account when building and promulgating a vocational practice program. The results of this quantitative survey basically met the newly established research purpose which is described in the introduction and additional research goals of the project.

4.2. Discussion

The results of the current practical situation and basic analysis are presented in section 4.1. showed the awareness of learners - students majoring in preschool education at the college level in the process of building a vocational practice program according to the connection model between pedagogical schools and preschools for the students of the National College of Education Ho Chi Minh City - is clear about the urgency of building a vocational practice program and supports many ideas for the proposal to build a vocational practice

program at continuous 3rd stage of the project. This can be considered a valuable extra survey and provided many outstanding grounds and evidence for the topic, the research content to be developed more deeply and widely. The results could be contributed to the explanation of the general expectation at the Introduction: The vocational practice program for students majoring in preschool education at college level according to the connection model between pedagogical schools and preschools should be demonstrated the role and participation of many stakeholders, especially learners - students.

Within the scope of the article, some issues that need further discussion are:

i) From the pedagogical schools' perspective that existed for a long time, could the results of this survey be changed the process of building a vocational practice program for students majoring in preschool education?

ii) Is it necessary for students participating in building a vocational practice program for students majoring in preschool education at the college level according to the connection model between pedagogical schools and preschools throughout the entire process?

iii) What level and form should students participate in the process of developing a vocational practice program for students majoring in preschool education at the college level according to the connection model between pedagogical schools and preschools?

5. Conclusion and Suggestions

Based on the students survey results, the basic direction to build a vocational practice program for students majoring in preschool education according to the connection model is a new approach - participatory approach.

Based on the essence of building a vocational practice program for students majoring in preschool education at the college level according to the connection model between pedagogical schools and preschools, it can be seen that in addition to complying with the regulations, legal basis, theoretical basis and real situation - practical basis from many different perspectives and viewpoints also help the work of building a vocational practice program for students majoring in preschool education to have more diverse approaches access. The results presented in this article emphasize the participation of stakeholders in the process of building a vocational practice program for students majoring in preschool education at the college level according to the connection model between pedagogical schools and preschools. Hopefully with this approach, the feasibility and practicality of the developed vocational practice program will increasingly meet the necessity of the general training program, profession and society; while bringing benefits to all stakeholders.

Based on the results just presented, some directions for adjusting and building a vocational practice program for students majoring in preschool education at the college level according to the connection model between pedagogical schools and preschools need to be considered is:

i) Recognize the role, importance, and necessity of stakeholders who directly organize and participate in vocational practice programs;

ii) Expanding participants in the process of building vocational practice programs for students majoring in preschool education;

iii) Determine the process of developing a vocational practice program with the participation of specific stakeholders;

iv) Effectively filter the opinions of participants, harmoniously meet the different needs of different participants when building a vocational practice program for students majoring in preschool education;

v) Pay attention to presenting and promulgating specific vocational practice programs that ensure scientific, clear, specific, clearly expressed criteria, and consider supplementing the User Manual or Appendix. according to the vocational practice program in order to help stakeholders organize and implement the vocational practice program more uniformly and synchronously.

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