

# Survival Skills Education For Primary School Students Through An Experiential Education Camp Model: A Study in Thai Nguyen Province, Vietnam

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## Abstract:

Survival skills education is an essential component of primary education, enabling children to recognize hazards, make appropriate decisions, protect themselves, and respond effectively to potentially dangerous situations. Experiential learning camps provide opportunities to develop these competencies through practical activities, simulated emergencies, collaborative tasks, and guided reflection. This study examines the current state of survival skills education for primary school students in Thai Nguyen Province, Vietnam, and proposes an evidence-informed experiential camp model. A quantitative cross-sectional descriptive design was employed, using survey data collected in November 2025 from 200 primary school administrators and teachers working in Thai Nguyen Province. Among the respondents, 152 (76.0%) reported that their schools had previously organized experiential learning camps and were included in the camp-specific analyses. Descriptive statistics were used to examine six survival skill domains and the implementation of educational objectives, instructional methods, activities, assessment practices, and organizational conditions. The findings indicate that environmental adaptation received the highest rating ( $M = 4.09$ ), followed by cooperation and mutual assistance ( $M = 4.05$ ), whereas emotional regulation and decision-making received the lowest rating ( $M = 3.90$ ). Particularly low scores were observed for emotional control in dangerous situations ( $M = 3.85$ ) and basic first-aid performance ( $M = 3.88$ ). Camp implementation was characterized by comparatively favorable evaluations of experiential learning procedures ( $M = 4.08$ ) but considerable variation in implementation frequency ( $M = 3.03$ ). Staff competence was identified as an important organizational condition ( $M = 4.17$ ). Based on these findings and relevant international literature, the study proposes a structured experiential learning camp model integrating hazard recognition, scenario-based decision-making, supervised survival skills practice, cooperative problem-solving, and reflective assessment. The findings provide empirical insights into survival skills education in Vietnamese primary schools and a foundation for curriculum development and future intervention research. However, the effectiveness of the proposed model remains to be experimentally established.

**Keywords:** survival skills education; primary school students; experiential learning camps; outdoor education; emergency preparedness; safety education; Vietnam.

## 1. Introduction

Ensuring children's safety and developing their capacity to respond appropriately to everyday hazards are increasingly important responsibilities of primary education. Beyond acquiring academic knowledge, primary school students need opportunities to recognize potentially dangerous situations, evaluate risks, regulate emotional responses, seek appropriate assistance, and perform basic protective actions. These competencies are relevant to situations involving accidental injuries, fires, natural disasters, drowning hazards, unfamiliar environments, and other emergencies.

Survival skills education in primary schools should not be understood narrowly as wilderness survival training. Rather, it encompasses age-appropriate knowledge, attitudes, and practical abilities that help children protect themselves, make responsible decisions, and obtain assistance when necessary. In this sense, survival skills education intersects with safety education, life skills development, social and emotional learning, and experiential education.

Traditional instructional approaches can communicate safety information effectively, but knowledge of appropriate behavior does not necessarily establish the capacity to act in unfamiliar or stressful circumstances. Recognizing a fire hazard, for example, differs from selecting a safe evacuation route and following instructions during an emergency. Similarly, knowing that help should be requested does not automatically ensure that a child can communicate accurate information or remain sufficiently calm to act.

Experiential learning provides a potentially useful pedagogical approach to addressing this knowledge–action gap. By participating in structured activities, encountering simulated challenges, reflecting on decisions, and applying

feedback, students can connect conceptual understanding with practical performance. Mann et al. (2022) identified a substantial body of research associating nature-specific outdoor learning with children's educational and developmental outcomes. Miller et al. (2021) likewise reviewed quantitative evidence concerning nature-based learning among primary school-aged children.

Research on educational camps further suggests that organized camp experiences can provide contexts for personal development, social interaction, responsibility, and independence. Thurber et al. (2007), for example, examined multidimensional youth development outcomes associated with participation in summer camps. Henderson et al. (2007) investigated parental perceptions of developmental outcomes arising from camp experiences. Although these studies do not directly establish improvements in emergency survival performance, they provide relevant foundations for designing structured educational experiences beyond conventional classrooms.

In Vietnam, primary education increasingly emphasizes competency development, practical learning, and the integration of educational activities with real-life situations. Within this context, survival skills education is particularly relevant because students may encounter different safety challenges in their daily lives, including traffic hazards, drowning risks, environmental dangers, and unexpected emergencies. Educational approaches that connect knowledge with practical experience may therefore contribute to strengthening children's preparedness and responsible behavior.

Thai Nguyen Province, located in northern Vietnam, provides a relevant setting for examining survival skills education in primary schools. The province includes urban, rural, and mountainous areas, creating diverse geographical and social contexts in which students participate in educational and everyday activities. These characteristics highlight the importance of developing survival skills that are applicable across different living environments. However, the present study does not compare schools across these geographical settings, and no conclusions concerning differences between urban, rural, and mountainous schools are drawn.

Experiential learning camps represent a possible organizational approach for integrating safety education with practical activities. Such camps can provide structured opportunities for students to practice identifying hazards, making decisions, cooperating with peers, and responding to simulated emergencies under adult supervision. Nevertheless, the educational value of these activities depends on the clarity of learning objectives, the appropriateness of instructional methods, the competence of educators, and the availability of suitable organizational conditions.

Despite the growing interest in experiential education, questions remain regarding students' existing survival competencies, the extent to which experiential camps are implemented, the suitability of educational methods, and the organizational conditions required for effective delivery. These issues are particularly important when educational activities involve young children and potentially hazardous situations.

To address these concerns, the present study examined survey data collected from primary school administrators and teachers in Thai Nguyen Province, Vietnam, in November 2025. The study focused on educators' assessments of students' survival skills and their evaluations of current educational practices and experiential camp implementation.

Three research questions guided the investigation:

**RQ1:** How do primary school administrators and teachers in Thai Nguyen Province evaluate students' survival skills across six competency domains?

**RQ2:** How are survival skills education and experiential learning camps currently implemented in primary schools in Thai Nguyen Province, particularly regarding educational methods, activities, assessment practices, and organizational conditions?

**RQ3:** What components should be incorporated into an experiential learning camp model to address the educational needs identified through the survey?

The study contributes context-specific descriptive evidence from Vietnamese primary education and develops a proposed educational model grounded in observed implementation patterns and relevant international research.

## 2. Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

### 2.1. Survival skills education in primary schools

Survival skills education refers to a structured educational process intended to develop children's ability to recognize hazards, assess situations, protect themselves, seek assistance, and respond appropriately to emergencies. In primary education, these competencies must be adapted to children's cognitive development, physical capabilities, emotional maturity, and need for adult supervision.

The present study organizes survival skills into six interconnected domains: hazard recognition and situational assessment; emotional regulation and decision-making; self-protection and evacuation; first aid and help-seeking; cooperation and mutual assistance; and adaptation to living environments.

Hazard recognition involves identifying sources of danger and recognizing circumstances that require caution or intervention. Situational assessment extends beyond recognition to evaluating the seriousness of a threat and selecting an appropriate initial response. Emotional regulation and decision-making concern children's ability to manage fear, remain attentive to instructions, and choose protective actions under pressure.

Self-protection and evacuation include age-appropriate responses to fires, natural disasters, getting lost, drowning hazards, and unsafe interpersonal situations. First aid and help-seeking involve recognizing when assistance is needed, contacting responsible adults or emergency services, and performing only those basic procedures appropriate to children's training and developmental levels.

Cooperation and environmental adaptation complement these emergency-specific competencies by supporting communication, responsibility, personal hygiene, self-care, and safe participation in group activities.

These six domains should be understood as an organizing framework for the present study rather than an internationally validated measurement instrument.

## **2.2. Experiential learning and outdoor education**

Experiential learning emphasizes the educational value of active participation, reflection, conceptual understanding, and subsequent application. In survival skills education, this approach provides a rationale for replacing exclusively verbal instruction with supervised activities in which students identify hazards, consider alternative responses, practice appropriate actions, and receive feedback.

Ardoin and Bowers (2020), in their systematic review of early childhood environmental education, demonstrated the breadth of educational approaches involving direct engagement with environmental contexts. Although their review focuses on environmental education rather than emergency survival skills, it supports the broader educational relevance of active engagement with real-world settings.

Mann et al. (2022) synthesized research on nature-specific outdoor learning and children's development, while Miller et al. (2021) focused on quantitative outcomes among primary school-aged children. Together, these reviews establish a relevant foundation for considering outdoor learning as part of primary education.

The relationship between outdoor learning and survival skills education, however, requires careful conceptual distinction. Exposure to outdoor environments does not automatically produce competence in emergency response. Learning activities must be deliberately aligned with the protective behaviors students are expected to demonstrate.

## **2.3. Educational camps as structured learning environments**

Educational camps provide temporary learning environments in which students can participate in organized practical activities, cooperative challenges, and supervised simulations outside routine classroom arrangements.

Thurber et al. (2007) investigated developmental outcomes associated with camp participation and identified evidence of growth across multiple dimensions of youth development. Henderson et al. (2007) examined how parents perceived the developmental benefits of summer camp experiences. These findings suggest that camp environments can support educational outcomes extending beyond subject-specific knowledge.

For younger children, experiential camp activities should prioritize developmental appropriateness, emotional security, and carefully managed levels of challenge. Hepworth et al. (2025) investigated Forest School participation among children aged seven to eight, providing particularly relevant evidence concerning outdoor educational experiences and social-emotional outcomes.

In the context of Vietnamese primary schools, educational camps may also provide opportunities to connect school-based instruction with local environments and community resources. Nevertheless, camp activities must be adapted to available facilities, student characteristics, teacher competence, and school safety requirements.

The proposed application to survival skills education involves organizing activities around practical safety challenges rather than treating camp participation itself as the educational outcome.

## **2.4. Conceptual framework**

Drawing on the reviewed literature, this study adopts a framework connecting three components.

The first component comprises educational inputs, including learning objectives, trained educators, safety procedures, facilities, instructional materials, and collaboration with families and community professionals.

The second component comprises experiential learning processes, including preparation, practical participation, guided reflection, and application.

The third component comprises intended student outcomes, represented by the six survival skill domains.

The framework assumes that the alignment of objectives, activities, supervision, and assessment is necessary for coherent educational design. It does not assume that camp participation alone produces measurable improvements in survival competence.

### **3. Materials and Methods**

#### **3.1. Research design**

The study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional descriptive design to examine the current state of survival skills education for primary school students in Thai Nguyen Province, Vietnam.

Data were collected in November 2025 through a survey administered to primary school administrators and teachers working in the province. The survey focused on educators' assessments of students' survival skills, the implementation of survival skills education, and the organization of experiential learning camps.

The research did not include a randomized intervention, control group, or longitudinal assessment. Consequently, the findings are interpreted as descriptive evaluations rather than evidence of educational effectiveness or causal relationships.

#### **3.2. Research setting and participants**

The research was conducted in Thai Nguyen Province, a northern Vietnamese province characterized by diverse geographical and educational contexts. Primary schools in the province serve students living in urban, rural, and mountainous communities, making the development of practical safety competencies an important educational consideration.

The survey was administered in November 2025 to primary school administrators and teachers working in Thai Nguyen Province. The dataset contained 200 valid responses.

Among the respondents, 152 (76.0%) reported that their schools had previously organized experiential learning camps, whereas 48 (24.0%) indicated that such camps had not been organized.

The full sample of 200 respondents was used to examine general survival skills education and educators' evaluations of students' survival competencies. Camp-specific analyses were restricted to the 152 respondents who reported previous experience with school-organized experiential camps.

The available summary also indicated a markedly imbalanced gender distribution, with 10 male and 190 female respondents in the full sample and six male and 146 female respondents in the camp-experienced subgroup.

#### **3.3. Research instrument**

A structured questionnaire was used to collect primary school administrators' and teachers' evaluations of survival skills education and experiential camp implementation.

The survey summary included 16 substantive sections and supplementary gender-based analyses. The principal areas covered were students' survival skills, educational objectives, instructional methods, educational pathways, assessment practices, stakeholder participation, conceptual foundations, camp organization, camp objectives, activity frequency, implementation procedures, teaching methods, activity formats, assessment, enabling conditions, and perceived influencing factors.

Survival skills were represented by 26 indicators distributed across six domains.

The responses were summarized using five-point scales. Higher values generally represented more favorable evaluations, although the interpretation depended on the particular construct. For example, ratings of skill development, implementation frequency, perceived effectiveness, and importance of conditions should not be treated as interchangeable measurements.

#### **3.4. Data analysis**

Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted using the aggregated survey results. The analysis focused on frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations to examine educators' evaluations of students' survival skills and the implementation of educational activities.

Domain-level results were compared descriptively to identify relatively stronger and weaker areas of survival skills development.

The analysis maintained a distinction between the full sample (N = 200) and the subgroup reporting previous camp organization experience (n = 152).

Although the source document included independent-samples comparisons by gender, these were not used as central evidence because of the pronounced imbalance between groups and the small number of male respondents.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Educators' evaluations of students' survival skills

The survey examined primary school administrators' and teachers' evaluations of 26 survival skill indicators organized into six competency domains. The mean ratings ranged from 3.90 to 4.09 across the domains.

**Table 1.** Educators' ratings of six survival skill domains among primary school students in Thai Nguyen Province (N = 200)

| Survival skill domain                         | Mean | Descriptive rank |
|-----------------------------------------------|------|------------------|
| Adaptation to living environments             | 4.09 | 1                |
| Cooperation and mutual assistance             | 4.05 | 2                |
| Hazard recognition and situational assessment | 4.03 | 3                |
| First aid and help-seeking                    | 4.00 | 4                |
| Self-protection and evacuation                | 3.97 | 5                |
| Emotional regulation and decision-making      | 3.90 | 6                |

Note. Means are based on administrators' and teachers' ratings using a five-point scale. Rankings describe relative positions within the sample and do not imply statistically significant differences.

Adaptation to living environments received the highest mean rating. This domain included personal care, management of belongings, hygiene, responsible use of essential resources, and adaptation to outdoor living conditions.

Cooperation and mutual assistance ranked second, suggesting comparatively favorable evaluations of students' ability to share responsibilities, follow instructions, and assist peers.

Hazard recognition and situational assessment ranked third, indicating that respondents generally evaluated students' awareness of common risks positively.

By contrast, emotional regulation and decision-making received the lowest domain-level rating. This finding is particularly relevant because effective emergency responses require more than recognizing a hazard. Children may also need to manage emotional reactions, evaluate available options, and perform appropriate protective actions. The differences among domain means were relatively small. Therefore, these findings should be interpreted as descriptive patterns in educators' evaluations rather than statistically established differences in students' actual competencies.

### 4.2. Differences between individual survival skills

Selected indicators revealed descriptive variation within the six domains.

**Table 2.** Selected highest- and lowest-rated survival skill indicators (N = 200)

| Indicator                                                         | Mean | SD    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-------|
| Maintaining personal and environmental hygiene                    | 4.17 | 0.764 |
| Seeking assistance from responsible adults or emergency personnel | 4.13 | 0.761 |
| Recognizing risks of accidental injuries                          | 4.12 | 0.751 |
| Self-care and management of personal belongings                   | 4.11 | 0.766 |
| Assessing danger and selecting an initial response                | 3.90 | 0.808 |
| Analyzing situations and selecting appropriate responses          | 3.89 | 0.901 |

|                                                                     |      |       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-------|
| Recognizing the need for first aid and performing simple procedures | 3.88 | 0.914 |
| Regulating emotions in dangerous situations                         | 3.85 | 0.939 |

The highest-rated indicators were predominantly associated with familiar behaviors, including hygiene, self-care, and identifying appropriate sources of assistance.

The lowest-rated indicators involved more complex responses, including emotional control, practical first aid, and decision-making in potentially dangerous situations.

The standard deviation for emotional regulation was 0.939, indicating greater variation in educators' ratings than was observed for several routine self-care indicators.

These findings suggest that the proposed educational model should prioritize practical response competencies rather than simply increasing students' awareness of hazards.

#### 4.3. Current implementation of survival skills education

The survey also examined educational objectives, methods, educational pathways, assessment, and stakeholder participation in primary schools in Thai Nguyen Province.

**Table 3.** Educators' evaluations of general survival skills education implementation (N = 200)

| Educational dimension                                   | Overall mean |
|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Assessment of survival skills education                 | 4.17         |
| Stakeholder participation                               | 3.92         |
| Achievement of educational objectives                   | 3.80         |
| Instructional methods                                   | 3.77         |
| Educational pathways                                    | 3.73         |
| Agreement with conceptual foundations of the camp model | 3.62         |

Note. These dimensions measure different constructs. Their means are presented for descriptive comparison and should not be interpreted as scores on a single validated scale.

Assessment-related items received the highest overall rating, while instructional methods and educational pathways were rated less favorably.

Among general instructional methods, modeling and encouragement received the highest mean (M = 3.81), whereas situation-solving methods received the lowest (M = 3.73).

This contrast is relevant to survival skills education because responding to hazards requires opportunities to practice decisions and actions rather than relying exclusively on verbal explanations or demonstrations.

Participation by school-based educators was evaluated more favorably than participation by external community professionals. Teachers received a mean rating of 3.96, whereas the involvement of specialized community personnel, including safety and healthcare professionals, received a mean of 3.84.

These findings indicate potential areas for improving instructional practice and strengthening cooperation between primary schools and relevant community organizations in Thai Nguyen Province.

#### 4.4. Implementation of experiential learning camps

Of the 200 administrators and teachers surveyed, 152 reported that their schools had previously organized experiential learning camps.

Camp-specific ratings revealed relatively favorable evaluations of organizational procedures and assessment, alongside lower and more variable activity frequencies.

**Table 4.** Implementation of experiential learning camps in primary schools in Thai Nguyen Province (n = 152)

| Implementation dimension                           | Overall mean |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Perceived importance of enabling conditions        | 4.13         |
| Implementation of experiential learning procedures | 4.08         |
| Camp-based assessment practices                    | 4.06         |
| Perceived influence of implementation factors      | 4.01         |
| Camp instructional methods                         | 3.86         |
| Achievement of camp educational objectives         | 3.85         |

|                                       |      |
|---------------------------------------|------|
| Camp activity formats                 | 3.82 |
| Frequency of camp educational content | 3.03 |

The implementation of experiential learning procedures received a mean rating of 4.08. Practical participation was the highest-rated stage ( $M = 4.09$ ), while application, extension, and evaluation received a slightly lower rating ( $M = 4.07$ ).

The small difference between these stages should not be interpreted as evidence of a meaningful implementation gap without statistical testing.

The frequency of camp educational content was considerably more variable, with an overall mean of 3.03 and an average item-level standard deviation of approximately 1.21. Across the relevant items, 42.6% of responses were at levels 1–2, while 41.0% were at levels 4–5.

This distribution indicates heterogeneous implementation patterns among the surveyed respondents. The average score should not be interpreted as a uniform number of activities per academic year.

#### **4.5. Instructional methods and activity formats within camps**

Among the camp-specific instructional methods, games received the highest rating ( $M = 3.97$ ), followed by role-playing ( $M = 3.93$ ). Debate-based activities received the lowest rating ( $M = 3.74$ ).

Regarding organizational formats, practical activities and scenario simulations received the highest rating ( $M = 3.84$ ).

These results suggest that participatory and action-oriented activities were evaluated favorably by administrators and teachers familiar with experiential camp implementation.

However, ratings of instructional methods represent respondents' evaluations and do not independently establish that particular methods produce greater student learning gains.

#### **4.6. Organizational conditions and implementation priorities**

The perceived importance of enabling conditions received an overall mean of 4.13.

Among individual conditions, the competence of school leaders and teachers in organizing experiential learning and survival skills education was rated highest ( $M = 4.17$ ,  $SD = 0.679$ ). Coordination among schools, families, and social organizations followed ( $M = 4.14$ ,  $SD = 0.691$ ).

Staff competence also received the highest rating among perceived influencing factors ( $M = 4.05$ ), followed by the school educational program ( $M = 4.03$ ).

These findings indicate that primary school administrators and teachers in Thai Nguyen Province considered educator preparation and curricular integration particularly important for implementing experiential learning camps.

## **5. Discussion**

### **5.1. From hazard awareness to practical emergency response**

The findings reveal a descriptive contrast between relatively familiar survival-related behaviors and more demanding emergency-response competencies, as evaluated by primary school administrators and teachers in Thai Nguyen Province.

Students received favorable ratings for personal hygiene, self-care, recognizing accidental injury risks, and identifying appropriate sources of assistance. Lower ratings were observed for emotional regulation, first aid, and selecting appropriate responses to dangerous situations.

This pattern is consistent with the distinction between declarative knowledge and practical performance. A child may recognize that a situation is dangerous while still experiencing difficulty determining what action to take.

The findings support the educational rationale for providing structured opportunities to rehearse protective actions. Such activities should incorporate manageable challenges, clear instructions, immediate feedback, and repeated opportunities to apply learning.

Research on outdoor learning provides a broader foundation for this approach. Mann et al. (2022) and Miller et al. (2021) identify potential developmental and educational benefits associated with structured nature-based learning. Nevertheless, their findings should not be interpreted as direct evidence that outdoor activities improve emergency survival performance.

Within the Thai Nguyen educational context, survival skills instruction could incorporate supervised activities reflecting relevant school and community environments. The selection of scenarios should be informed by local safety assessments rather than assumptions that all schools in the province face identical risks.

### **5.2. Emotional regulation as a central component of survival skills education**

Emotional regulation and decision-making constituted the lowest-rated survival skill domain in the survey.

This finding has implications for instructional design. Children may struggle to apply previously learned safety procedures when they feel frightened, confused, or pressured.

Educational activities should therefore incorporate emotional awareness, simple self-regulation strategies, and guided decision-making. For example, students could practice pausing, identifying a danger, seeking a safe location, and communicating with a responsible adult.

These activities must remain psychologically appropriate. Simulated emergencies should not expose children to intense fear, humiliation, or unnecessary physical risk.

The broader literature on outdoor educational experiences suggests that structured participation can support aspects of children's emotional and social development. Hepworth et al. (2025), for example, examined changes in mood and cooperation associated with Forest School participation among young children.

However, improvements in mood or cooperation cannot automatically be equated with competence in managing actual emergencies.

The relatively low ratings of emotional regulation in the present study suggest that future educational programs in Thai Nguyen Province should include explicit learning objectives related to maintaining composure, following instructions, and selecting safe responses.

### **5.3. Experiential camps as environments for integrated competency development**

The camp survey findings suggest that experiential learning camps were already familiar to a substantial proportion of the surveyed administrators and teachers in Thai Nguyen Province. Nevertheless, implementation frequency varied considerably.

This variation highlights the importance of moving from occasional camp events toward a coherent educational sequence.

Research by Thurber et al. (2007) and Henderson et al. (2007) supports the broader developmental relevance of organized camp experiences. Such environments can provide opportunities for independence, responsibility, cooperation, and participation in challenging activities.

For survival skills education, these developmental opportunities should be linked to explicit learning objectives.

A camp activity should therefore specify what students are expected to recognize, decide, demonstrate, and explain. For instance, a navigation exercise should not be assessed solely by successful task completion; it should also examine whether students can recognize unsafe routes, remain with their group, follow instructions, and seek assistance appropriately.

The diversity of educational settings within Thai Nguyen Province also suggests that a flexible camp model may be more appropriate than a uniform set of activities. Schools should be able to adapt learning scenarios to their facilities, student characteristics, and locally identified safety needs while maintaining consistent competency objectives and safeguarding requirements.

### **5.4. The role of educators and external professionals**

The importance assigned to educator competence indicates that implementation quality depends on more than access to outdoor facilities or instructional equipment.

Teachers and school leaders require preparation in instructional design, risk assessment, child safeguarding, emergency procedures, and performance-based assessment.

Specialized activities involving first aid, fire safety, water safety, or emergency communication should involve appropriately qualified personnel.

The relatively lower rating for participation by community professionals suggests an area for organizational development. Primary schools in Thai Nguyen Province may benefit from structured partnerships with healthcare professionals, emergency services, and other relevant organizations.

Such partnerships should supplement rather than replace the school's responsibility for child protection, educational supervision, and curriculum implementation.

Professional development programs could therefore focus on designing experiential activities, managing controlled simulations, assessing practical competencies, and coordinating with external specialists.

### **5.5. Implications for assessment**

The comparatively favorable ratings of assessment-related practices suggest that surveyed administrators and teachers recognized the importance of evaluating survival skills education.

However, high ratings of assessment principles do not necessarily demonstrate that students' practical competencies are being measured reliably.

Survival skills assessment should distinguish among knowledge, decision-making, procedural performance, and appropriate help-seeking behavior.

Direct observation during controlled simulations may provide more relevant evidence of practical competence than knowledge-based questionnaires alone.

Future research in Thai Nguyen Province should develop and validate assessment rubrics for the six proposed survival skill domains. Such instruments could support comparisons across educational settings and provide more reliable evidence of student learning outcomes.

## 6. Proposed Experiential Learning Camp Model for Survival Skills Education

Based on the descriptive findings from Thai Nguyen Province and the reviewed literature, this study proposes a structured model integrating six survival skill domains within a four-stage experiential learning process.

### 6.1. Educational objectives

The proposed model aims to develop primary school students' ability to recognize hazards, regulate emotional responses, select safe actions, perform age-appropriate protective procedures, seek assistance, cooperate with others, and adapt responsibly to everyday and outdoor environments.

Objectives should be translated into observable behavioral indicators appropriate to students' ages and developmental characteristics.

In the context of Thai Nguyen Province, the model should allow schools to select scenarios reflecting locally relevant risks while maintaining a common framework of intended competencies.

### 6.2. Content and activity structure

**Table 5.** Proposed experiential learning camp modules for primary schools in Thai Nguyen Province

| Module                                      | Learning focus                                           | Illustrative activities                                                                 | Assessment evidence                                         |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Hazard recognition                       | Identifying risks and evaluating situations              | Hazard identification games, illustrated scenarios, supervised safety walks             | Correct identification and explanation of hazards           |
| 2. Emotional regulation and decision-making | Managing reactions and selecting safe responses          | Guided role-playing, decision scenarios, reflection activities                          | Appropriate response selection and communication            |
| 3. Self-protection and evacuation           | Responding to emergencies and avoiding unsafe situations | Supervised evacuation drills, safe-route identification, simulated lost-child scenarios | Following safety procedures and seeking assistance          |
| 4. First aid and help-seeking               | Recognizing emergencies and requesting support           | Emergency communication practice, age-appropriate first-aid demonstrations              | Accurate help-seeking and supervised procedural performance |
| 5. Cooperation and mutual assistance        | Communication, responsibility, and teamwork              | Cooperative safety challenges, group tasks, peer-support exercises                      | Safe cooperation and adherence to instructions              |
| 6. Environmental adaptation                 | Self-care and responsible outdoor participation          | Hygiene tasks, management of personal supplies, supervised outdoor activities           | Demonstrated self-care and responsible resource use         |

All activities should be conducted under appropriate supervision. Water-related, fire-related, and first-aid activities should use controlled educational simulations and qualified instructors where required.

### 6.3. Four-stage experiential learning process

The proposed model consists of four connected stages.

Stage 1: Preparation and orientation. Educators identify intended competencies, assess students' developmental needs, establish safety procedures, prepare materials, and explain activity expectations. Baseline assessments may be conducted to identify existing knowledge and practical skills.

Stage 2: Guided experiential participation. Students participate in supervised scenarios, cooperative tasks, and practical exercises. Instructors observe behavior and provide assistance when necessary. Challenges should be sufficiently realistic to support learning without creating avoidable danger.

Stage 3: Reflection and feedback. Students discuss their decisions, explain the reasons for selected actions, identify difficulties, and receive constructive feedback. Reflection should be adapted to children's language abilities and may include drawings, short discussions, and guided questions.

Stage 4: Application and assessment. Students apply their learning in new simulated situations. Educators assess performance using observable indicators and identify competencies requiring additional practice. Follow-up activities at school and home reinforce appropriate safety behaviors.

This sequence is consistent with the experiential learning principles identified in the literature and with the four implementation stages represented in the survey.

#### **6.4. Organizational requirements**

Effective implementation requires trained educators, clear responsibilities, appropriate facilities, and collaboration among relevant stakeholders.

School leaders in Thai Nguyen Province should integrate the camp program into annual educational plans and establish procedures for approval, supervision, risk management, and evaluation.

Teachers should design age-appropriate learning tasks and coordinate instructional activities. Families can reinforce selected safety behaviors through supervised home-based practice.

Healthcare professionals and emergency services may provide technical guidance for specialized activities.

The model should also incorporate child safeguarding, accessibility, emergency communication arrangements, medical preparedness, and appropriate adult-to-child supervision.

Because primary schools in Thai Nguyen Province operate in different geographical and socioeconomic settings, implementation plans should be adaptable to local conditions without compromising educational objectives or student safety.

#### **6.5. Proposed assessment framework**

Assessment should cover both learning processes and observable performance.

A competency-based rubric could use four developmental levels: emerging, developing, proficient, and independently demonstrated within an age-appropriate supervised scenario.

Performance indicators may include recognizing a hazard, selecting a safe response, communicating with an adult, following evacuation instructions, demonstrating basic self-care, and cooperating without exposing oneself or others to additional danger.

Importantly, independence should not be interpreted as acting without adult assistance in circumstances where seeking adult help is the safest response.

Assessment results should be used formatively to guide further instruction rather than to label children as capable or incapable of surviving emergencies.

## **7. Conclusion**

This study examined the current state of survival skills education for primary school students in Thai Nguyen Province, Vietnam, based on survey data collected in November 2025 from 200 primary school administrators and teachers. Among these respondents, 152 reported that their schools had previously organized experiential learning camps.

The findings identified relatively favorable educators' ratings for environmental adaptation, cooperation, and hazard recognition, while emotional regulation, decision-making, and basic first-aid performance received lower ratings. These results suggest a need to strengthen practical competencies requiring children to respond appropriately to unfamiliar or potentially stressful situations.

Although experiential learning camps had been organized in schools represented by a substantial proportion of respondents, implementation frequency was heterogeneous. Educator competence, curricular integration, and stakeholder collaboration emerged as important organizational priorities.

In response, the study proposed an experiential learning camp model integrating six survival skill domains within a four-stage educational process comprising preparation, guided participation, reflection, and application. The principal contribution lies in connecting descriptive evidence from Thai Nguyen Province with a structured model for curriculum and instructional development. The proposed framework offers a context-sensitive approach to integrating survival skills education into primary school experiential learning activities. However, the model should not be regarded as an empirically validated intervention. Further research involving direct assessment of students' practical competencies and controlled educational interventions is necessary to determine its effectiveness and potential transferability to other educational contexts.

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