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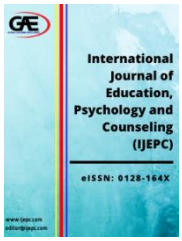

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EXPLORING EFL STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES OF ESSENTIAL SURVIVAL SKILLS DURING HAZARDS AT A UNIVERSITY IN VIETNAM: A PROJECT-BASED APPROACH

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Abstract:

This study explores the perceptions and practices experienced by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students at University of Foreign Language Studies, The University of Danang (UD-UFLS), Vietnam regarding essential survival skills during hazards. Employing a mixed-method approach, with a focus on Project-based Learning (PBL), the study involves 140 EFL students at UD-UFLS. Key insights were gathered, revealing concerns primarily about electrical shocks, fire outbreaks, drownings, floods, and hurricanes. The results show that, given the recognition of their importance, many students showed a significant lack of exposure to, and awareness of, essential survival skills, indicating potential gaps in proper preparedness. The challenges were then outlined including an absence of adequate emergency response training, obstacles in obtaining timely and accurate information, and a limited grasp of warning signs and evacuation protocols. The significance of PBL in improving EFL students' survival skills was accordingly emphasized with strong focus on the critical role of social media and multi-modal output in disseminating

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hazard-related information. *The Lighthouse Project* was thus initiated, aiming to equip EFL students with essential survival skills through multimodal means with a view to enhancing EFL students' preparedness and awareness of essential survival skills for effectively navigating and responding to hazards.

Keywords:

Hazards, Essential Survival Skills, Project-Based Learning (PBL), Perceptions, Practices

Introduction

Over the past decades, global disasters have claimed millions of lives and caused trillions in economic losses, with recent events like bushfires in Australia (2019 - 2020) and earthquakes in Turkey, Syria, and Japan (2023 - 2024) highlighting the urgency of disaster preparedness. Vietnam is no exception. It has endured a multitude of hazards and incidents, which could be attributed to both natural causes and human behaviors. And no doubt, it is its long coastline that frequently takes the brunt of natural disasters, be they geophysical ones like landslides in mountainous areas, or hydrometeorological ones like typhoons, floods, intense rains, and droughts in low-lying areas.

In recent years, the coastal city of Danang, and Vietnam at large, has become the hot spots, prone to water-related hazards and threatened with unprecedented challenges. In addition, according to the Directorate for Standards, Metrology and Quality (2022), unintentional fire, electric shock, explosion, radiation, and other risks that could cause harm to individuals or their property. This begs the question of who should be held responsible for all these happenings, and what preventative measures could be taken to lessen the effects of accumulated dangers. While it is obvious that the government should play a crucial role in disaster management, it is all individuals who should have a role to play. Building awareness and essential survival skills, particularly among university students, is thus essential for mitigating disaster impacts.

However, little is known by university students of essential survival skills and so is their understanding of the significance of these hazardous impacts. With communities being profoundly affected by disasters, there is a growing impetus to take preventative action and foster a culture of preparedness. This requires a concerted effort at all levels of society, with individuals, supported by local and national administrations, taking the lead in relief and recovery efforts. Building awareness of the impacts of hazards like fire, water, and electricity is crucial in establishing a resilient society for the present and future.

The aims of this study are to explore (i) what perceptions and practices are held by EFL students at UD-UFLS towards essential survival skills during hazards; (ii) what challenges are encountered by these students when dealing with hazards in their regions; and (iii) how PBL can assist in enhancing the essential survival skills for EFL students at UD-UFLS to cope with hazardous situations. Hopefully, this study can provide better insight into the awareness of EFL students at UD-UFLS towards essential survival skills during hazards, shedding light on their enhanced perceptions and practices in emergency preparedness. The study can also reveal insightful implications for the use of PBL as an educational tool for efforts in raising the awareness and guiding informed behaviours amongst EFL students at UD-UFLS, and the all-encompassing communites in Danang and elsewhere in Vietnam.

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Literature Review

There has so far been quite a good body of literature with focus on perceptions and practices of essential survival skills around the world. Given the fact that the literature on essential survival skills has provided valuable insights, yet certain gaps persist. Bandecchi et al. (2019), for example, stress the importance of awareness in hazard mitigation, particularly among students, revealing a widespread lack of multi-hazard awareness and advocating for broader education on various risks. However, their report mainly focuses on geo-hydrological and seismic risk awareness and preparation of students and does not cover risks other than those of natural phenomena. Mubarak et al. (2019) highlight the effectiveness of disaster prevention training for students in hazard-prone areas. Yet, the research is targeted to elementary school students only with specific practices for this age group, and thus can be challenging when being applied to the general public. Santos-Reyes (2024) examines young adult students in Mexico City, citing their vulnerability to multi-hazard environments. Nonetheless, practical measures for disaster preparedness among students are not thoroughly explored.

In Vietnam, limited attention has been given to utilizing media for survival skill education, despite acknowledging the importance of such skills, as seen in Nguyen (2012) and Phi's (2020) research on life skills education, with a main focus on children in mountainous regions. Vu et al. (2023) underscore the significance of survival education, emphasizing the need for natural disaster prevention (NDP) literacy. However, they point out the inadequacy of NDP literacy instruction in Vietnam, particularly regarding technological hazards.

Overall, there seems to be insufficient attention paid to human-made hazards, and even less to specific risks incurred in Vietnam. Additionally, the use of student-produced media for survival skill education as part of PBL products has not received adequate efforts from educators given the importance emphasized of such education in natural disaster prevention. Consequently, this study aims to fill this gap by investigating how EFL students at UD-UFLS perceive and practice essential survival skills, employing a PBL approach to cultivate well-rounded citizens capable of navigating 21st century challenges.

Theoretical Background

An Overview Of Hazards

Hazards, as defined by Canuti et al. (2001), encompass the likelihood of catastrophic events leading to negative outcomes such as harm, property damage, and environmental degradation. In this study, hazards pertain to risks associated with natural disasters, including the potential for harm to individuals and damage to property and the environment. Burton (1993) and Pelling (2003) classify hazards into natural and technological/man-made categories. Natural hazards encompass extreme events like floods, landslides, and earthquakes, causing significant disruptions and loss of life. Technological hazards, on the other hand, involve anthropogenic risks such as pollution and accidents with hazardous products. The distinction between natural and technological hazards is crucial for understanding risk factors and developing survival skills. These specific survival skills are mainly related to fire, water, and electrical hazards.

As regards *fire hazards*, contributing factors contributing to urban fire disasters include the use of wood fuel, economic hardship, and inadequate firefighting infrastructure (Gernay et al., 2016; Ibrahim & Musa, 2011). In Vietnam, more than 1.900 fires claimed 144 lives between October 2022 and September 2023. Government data shows that there was an 11% annual

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increase in fires, resulting in VND 315 billion in property damage, highlighting the importance of preventive and evacuation skills in fire safety.

As for *water hazards*, Sindall et al. (2022) note that between 2000 and 2019, floods and tropical hurricanes accounted for 44% and 28% of all disasters, respectively, with drowning being the primary cause of death worldwide. Vietnam, facing escalating environmental pollution and climate change, ranks 5th in the Global Climate Risk Index in 2018 and 8th in the Long-Term Climate Risk Index (Nguyễn et al., 2022). Vietnam has experienced 140 heavy rains and local floods, claiming thousands of lives (Nguyễn et al., 2022). Raising awareness about these hazards is crucial to mitigate their impact. Additionally, drowning, as highlighted by Branche and Van Beeck (2006), is a serious public health issue globally, especially among children under 15 in Vietnam. Equipping students with essential water safety skills is imperative to enhance their awareness and ability to navigate hazardous situations involving water bodies.

Electrical hazards, also known as "silent killer", due to its invisible nature, pose serious risks to human health, including fractures, burns, and cardiac arrest from electrical shocks (Thaker et al., 2013). Between 2000 and 2002, 18 hospitals in the UK reported 430.603 accidents that required victims to visit Accident and Emergency. During this period, the UK experienced approximately eight million home accidents (Barrett et al., 2010). Similarly, in Vietnam, reports from Vietnam Electricity (2014) reveal that 450 to 500 electrocution deaths are recorded each year. This overview of hazards, especially three main hazard types related to fire, water, and electricity, now facilitates some discussion of essential survival skills.

Essential Survival Skills

Essential survival skills, as defined by Naithani et al. (2010) and Mubarak et al. (2019), encompass the abilities needed to endure and navigate challenging situations, whether in the wilderness or urban environments. These skills enable individuals to cope with deprivation, emotional shock, and emergencies for an indefinite period. They also include disaster prevention and mitigation training to foster safety and resilience in disaster management. Put it differently, essential survival skills are vital traits that equip individuals with the knowledge and capacity to solve problems and adapt to various life-threatening circumstances. The essential survival skills can be ascribed to three main aspects requiring specific sets of skills to overcome diverse challenging situations. These include fire-, water-, and electricity-related skills which will be discussed in turn.

Fire-related survival skills play a crucial role in developing effective emergency evacuation plans and mitigating the destructive impact of fires (Salami et al., 2023). By understanding the connection between firesetting behavior and underlying feelings of powerlessness, educators can design programs to transform firesetting conduct into fire safety behavior (Pinsonneault, 2002). Educators can also create engaging lessons and activities to teach children about fire safety, thereby preventing the need for inappropriate fires and fostering essential survival skills related to fire.

Water-related survival skills encompass two main categories: those for natural disasters like hurricanes and floods, and those for accidents such as drowning. For disasters, preparation is key, including assembling survival kits, storing food, creating evacuation plans, and securing homes against power outages and loss of services (Sunshine, 2023). On the other hand, drowning and beach-related accidents necessitate fundamental swimming and water safety

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skills, prioritizing breathing, floating, and basic movement in water, as highlighted by the World Health Organization (2017). Effective rescue and resuscitation by bystanders are critical in these situations, potentially determining the difference between life and death.

As for *electricity-related survival skills,* it is crucial to prioritize safety measures during electric vehicle use and maintenance procedures so as to mitigate the risks of electric shock accidents (Guo & Lingxiao, 2019). Incorporating survival skills and first aid practices into electricity-related accidents can effectively prevent detrimental consequences. Essential survival skills related to electricity involve preventing electric shock accidents in vehicle design and usage, as well as implementing correct rescue procedures for individuals who are electrocuted. To this stage, it is necessary to revisit the concepts and procedures as well as steps what are characteristic of Project-based learning (PBL) to be used in survival skills training initiatives targeting language students.

Project-Based Learning (PBL)

Defining PBL

PBL is a pedagogic approach characterized by Blumenfeld et al. (1991) as a holistic method centered on student inquiry. It entails students posing questions, debating ideas, making predictions, designing experiments, collecting data, and presenting their findings to address complex, real-world problems. Similarly, Krajcik and Blumenfeld (2006) describe PBL as students engaging in authentic, extended challenges. Kemp (2011) links PBL with constructivism, emphasizing active student involvement in constructing their understanding. Overall, PBL fosters immersive, collaborative experiences where students apply knowledge and skills to solve problems or explore questions, culminating in project-based outcomes.

Characteristics Of Pbl

PBL encompasses several key components outlined by Boss and Krauss (2007): (i) student-driven projects aligned with their interests and abilities; (ii) gathering and analysis of information; (iii) utilization of diverse information sources; (iv) interdisciplinary nature spanning multiple academic fields; (v) requirement of a broad spectrum of knowledge and skills; (vi) extended duration; (vii) creation of presentations or products for others; (viii) contextualization beyond immediate lessons; and (ix) alignment with various educational objectives. These characteristics make PBL a valuable approach in teaching and learning English, offering learners ample opportunities to enhance their communicative competence, content knowledge, cognitive abilities, and essential skills.

Seven Essentials For PBL

Building on the fundamentals above, Larmer and Mergendoller (2010) outline seven essentials for PBL, including:

1) *A need to know,* which can be seen as an inquiry into content knowledge and innovation.
2) *A driving question,* which can be argued as an identification of the problem that needs focused attention.
3) *Student voice and choice,* which represents the student's role in selecting, designing, and developing the project.
4) *21st century skills,* which can be said to describe how the students collaborate to finish the project, incorporating skills like time management, critical thinking, problem-solving, presentation, cooperation, and team building.

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5) *Inquiry and innovation,* which starts with a driving question, opens up horizons for research and learning, and makes connections with different fields of study.
6) *Feedback and revision,* which helps students understand how to track their development and enhance their product.
7) *A publicly presented product,* which enables students to demonstrate the effects of their learning via the application of language skills.

These essentials guide the implementation of PBL, emphasizing inquiry, student engagement, collaboration, critical thinking, and the application of language skills. Besides, understanding these principles sets the stage for exploring the various steps involved in the process of PBL implementation.

Steps For Implementing PBL

Successful project work involves various steps of development, whether incorporated within a content-based unit or as a separate sequence of activities in a regular classroom. The stages below provide a practical roadmap for structuring project activities to maximize the potential benefits of the PBL method. The Ministry of Education and Culture (2013) specifies the following stages for implementing the PBL approach in the language teaching and learning process:

Step 1: Start with the essential question.
Step 2: Design a plan for the project.
Step 3: Create a schedule.
Step 4: Monitor the students and the progress of the project.
Step 5: Assess.
Step 6: Evaluate the experience.

Procedure For Implementing PBL

From the six steps above, it is now essential to present an overview of the procedures needed to go through for implementing PBL. The implementation of PBL involves ten key procedures outlined by Nguyen (2011):

(1) Students and teacher decide on a theme for the project.
(2) The project's final outcome is decided by students and teacher.
(3) Students and teacher structure the project.
(4) Teacher readies students for the demands of data collection.
(5) Students gather information.
(6) Teacher prepares students to compile and analyze data.
(7) Students evaluate information.
(8) Teacher readies students for the language requirements of the last task.
(9) Students present the final product.
(10) Students evaluate the project.

Role-play Simulation

Simulation, as described by Clapper (2010), involves engaging in a lifelike learning experience closely resembling an actual setting. In the same vein, Ladousse (1987) perceives simulation as comparatively uncomplicated, brief, and adaptable. In this study, simulation is a learning method that is widely used in training and language classrooms, particularly in survival training for hazardous events associated with fire, water, and electricity.

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One major form of simulation that allows learners to become immersed in real-life experiences is role-play. Widely used in training programs and language classrooms, roleplay enhances students' interests, encourages their active involvement, and boosts their social experience through interaction with the real world (Le, 2013). Role-playing has emerged as a potent and effective tool for enhancing knowledge and hands-on experiences in the realm of survival during hazardous events. According to Tompkins (1998), role-play simulation is a valuable method for L2 learning, fostering critical thinking, creativity, and language and behavioral skills in a non-threatening environment.

Methodology

This research employed a mixed-method approach, combining PBL with both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. PBL was utilized to engage students in hands-on learning of essential survival skills, fostering critical thinking and practical application of theoretical knowledge to real-life situations. The quantitative aspect involved statistical analysis of data to depict prevalent hazards, students' perceptions and practices regarding survival skills, and challenges faced, while the qualitative component delved into detailed examination of students' practical application of survival skills, exploration of obstacles encountered, and the importance of PBL in bolstering survival skills.

The study centered on 140 EFL students, with 83 from the Faculty of Foreign Language Teacher Education and 57 from the Faculty of English at UD-UFLS. The research was carried out in ten-stage procedure, as established by Nguyen (2011):

(1) *Deciding on a theme for the project.* The team collaborated to choose a semi-structured project theme, allowing for open discussion and exploration while incorporating the teacher's feedback. With the driving question, "How can we assist EFL students at UD-UFLS in preventing and safely escaping emergency situations?" centering on survival skills during emergencies, our goal was to raise the awareness among EFL students through display of various media products.

(2) *Deciding on the project's final outcome.* The team crafted *The Lighthouse Project*, spanning Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok, symbolizing hope and guidance amidst emergencies. Through informative posts and original videos, we disseminated the message involving essential survival skills, complemented by respective warning signs. Additionally, *The Lighthouse Journal*, available in digital and print formats, served as a comprehensive survival guide, offering practical advice and interactive resources. Targeting EFL students who were familiar with social media platforms, the launch of *The Lighthouse Journal* ensured effective engagement and practical learning experiences amongst EFL students, aligning with their preferences for hands-on learning.

(3) *Structuring the project.* Once the project's theme and goal were agreed upon, the team collaborated to delineate project details, focusing on assigning work among members. Tasks were divided into two main categories: Content Creation and Artistic Representation. Three team members were assigned to handle content-related tasks, including knowledge acquisition on essential survival skills and drafting content for posts and videos. The remaining two members took on design-related responsibilities (i.e., creating videos, graphics, and writing captions). With timely assistance and feedback from the instructor, the team

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successfully established a project timeline to facilitate information gathering and sharing to ensure timely completion of the project **(Figure 1)**.

Figure 1: Suggested Timeline

(4) *Being prepared for the demands of data collection.* At this stage, team members underwent preparation encompassing linguistic command, skill development, and strategic planning to effectively gather data. This involved honing communication abilities, enhancing critical thinking skills, and fostering organizational strategies to navigate the challenges associated with data collection. The team designed a survey questionnaire as the primary tool for this research project, detailing question formulation, survey length, and content. Similarly, interview questions were meticulously planned, ensuring the effectiveness of data-gathering tasks.

(5) *Gathering information.* In this study, both survey questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were utilized to gather comprehensive and valid data. The questionnaire, adapted from Nara and Battugal (2019), encompassed six sections covering students' background information, perceptions, practices, challenges, and PBL's role regarding essential survival skills during hazards. On the other hand, semi-structured interviews, adapted from Kemp (2017), provided a deeper understanding of students' perceptions, practices, challenges, and the importance of PBL in enhancing EFL students' survival skills. A total of 140 EFL students participated in the survey, while ten participants were interviewed. Surveys were distributed via Google Forms, ensuring confidentiality, while interviews were conducted online in English, with each session lasting approximately twenty minutes. Participants were assigned numerical identifiers (e.g., *I-1* for Interviewee 1 to *I-10* for Interviewee 10) for anonymity.

(6) *Compiling and analyzing data.* Under the instructor's guidance, the team acquired vital vocabulary, skills, and methods necessary for gathering, examining, and synthesizing data from the questionnaires and interviews. Thematic analysis and coding were employed for information analysis, focusing on locating, scrutinizing, summarizing, and comparing data. These techniques facilitated the subsequent evaluation and analysis of information by the entire group.

(7) *Evaluating the information.* With guidance being given regarding how to evaluate the gathered information, the team meticulously organized and assessed data from questionnaires and recorded interviews, determining which parts to accept and

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reject to fulfill our assignment requirements. Quantitative data from 140 participants were analyzed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS 26.0, with tables and charts utilized for visual representation. Qualitative data from interviews underwent thematic analysis.

(8) *Preparing the language required for presentation*. With the worksheets given providing the language demands for presentation, all team members received language-improvement assignments to enhance their presentation skills for the project's final product. These exercises focused on practical skills such as crafting professional captions for posts and delivering oral presentations effectively.

(9) *Presenting the final product*. The project's output included multimodal content available across different platforms:

(i) *The Lighthouse Fanpage:* https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61551902935590

(ii) *The Lighthouse Channel on TikTok:* https://www.tiktok.com/@thelighthouseflte

(iii) *The Lighthouse Channel on YouTube:* https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCB55-hJkYANyDzpuNBMo_Zg

(iv) *The Lighthouse Journal:* https://heyzine.com/flip-book/1d98b8e9b8.html

Screenshots of these formats are now provided.

Figure 2: The Lighthouse Fanpape

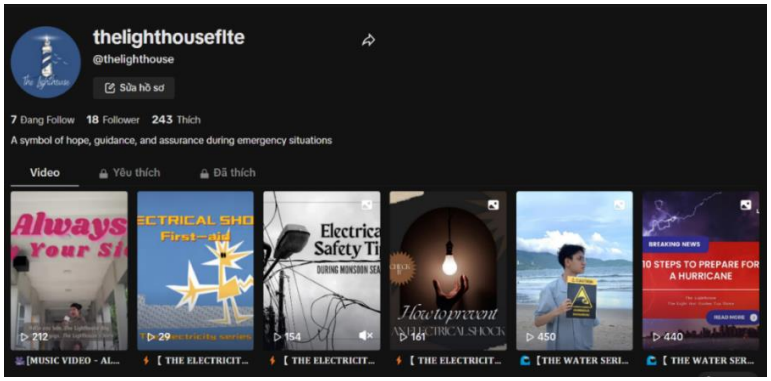

Figure 3: The Lighthouse Channel On Tiktok

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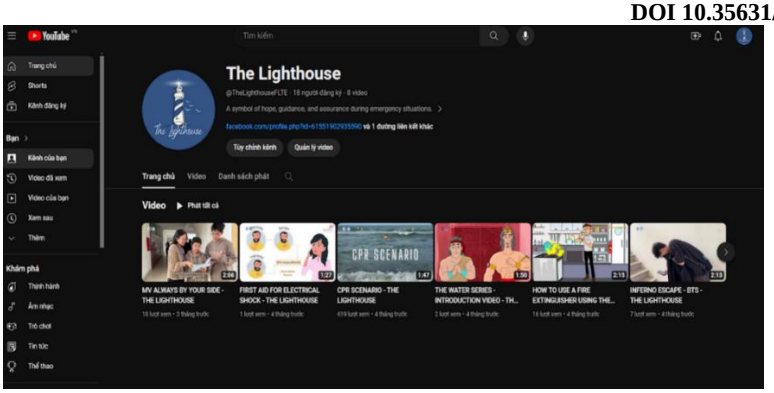

Figure 4: The Ligthhouse Channel On Youtube

Figure 5: The Lighthouse Journal

(10) *Evaluating the project.* In the final stage, each team member created a reflective journal to document their personal experiences, insights, and lessons learned during the project. Entries covered project milestones, collaborative efforts, challenges overcome, and personal growth. Members also reflected on the impact of their contributions, skill development, and key takeaways from the experience.

Discussion of Findings

Preamble Of Hazard-Related Information As Perceived By EFL Students

Common Types Of Hazards

Upon surveying the research participants, that is 140 EFL students at UD-UFLS on their perceptions of hazards and the extent to which they are aware of the essential survival skills during hazards, it is interesting to record the common types of hazards expereinced by these respondents in the areas where they live or are housed during college years.

As shown in **Table 1**, among the hazards considered, electrical shocks, fire outbreaks, drowning, floods, and hurricanes emerged as the most prominent concerns among EFL students. With electrical shocks being the most common hazard (84.3%), the data aligned with Thaker et al. (2013), who claimed that electricity is extremely dangerous due to its invisibility.

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Table 1: Types of Hazards

Types of Hazards	Frequency (=n)	Percentage (=%)
Hurricanes	65	46.4
Floods	98	70
Landslides	17	12.1
Droughts	10	7.1
Fire outbreaks	109	77.9
Electrical shocks	118	84.3
Drowning	99	70.7
Toxic waste	6	4.3

Regarding the interviewees' responses, a similar pattern was reported. Most interviewees claimed that their experience with hazards mostly revolved around electricity-related problems:

> *"I experienced an electricity accident maybe two years ago. This occurred when I charged my cell phone after a shower with wet hands and hair. And there was a sudden sizzle, followed by crackling sound. Instantly, I felt a tingling sensation in my fingertips." (I-1)*

> *"My family frequently faces electrical problems during the summer months because we often use too much electricity, you know, for air conditioning to deal with the hot and sunny weather. So, this results in the circuit breaker being overloaded and subsequently tripping." (I-2)*

The prevalence of narratives relating to electrical accidents aligned with the high frequency of electrical shocks identified in the questionnaire responses. For example, it is obvious with *I-1* that her personal experience underscored the impact of such incidents. In similar vein, *I-2* highlighted the seasonal nature of electrical problems, emphasizing the practical implications of electricity usage and its associated risks during hot weather conditions. The high prevalence of electrical shocks might reflect the students' recognition of these hazards' immediate and tangible risks in their daily lives, which could be possibly influenced by media coverage as well as personal experiences.

Fire outbreaks, drowning, and floods also received relatively high attention although they were still less popular than electrical shocks, at around 77.9%, 70.7%, and 70% respectively. Hurricanes, however, were perceived as significantly less well-known, at only 46.4%. These findings suggested a strong emphasis on hazards commonly associated with Vietnam's tropical climate. The prominence of hurricanes aligned with Vietnam's susceptibility to natural disasters, given its geographical location and exposure to cyclones and monsoonal rains in the report of Vietnam's Government and the work of Nguyễn et al. (2022). In contrast, hazards like landslides, droughts, and toxic waste incidents received relatively lower attention, with frequencies of 12.1%, 7.1%, and 4.3%, respectively. This gap in prioritization might stem from factors such as their relevance to the student's immediate environment and experiences. The diversity of hazards outlined in **Table 1** emphasize the broad spectrum of risks encountered by EFL students, with electrical shocks notably standing out. This prompts a deeper look into students' familiarity with essential survival skills during hazards.

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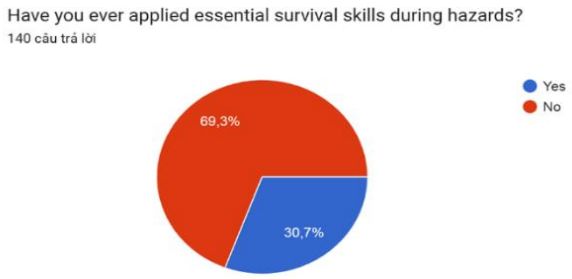

Figure 6: EFL Students' Familiarity With Essential Survival Skills During Hazards

As data from **Figure 6** show, 69.3% of respondents prompted a negative response, indicating that they had not previously applied essential survival skills during hazards. In contrast, 30.7% of participants affirmed their utilization of such skills in hazardous scenarios. The data revealed that most negative responses from the surveyed students highlighted potential inadequacies in their preparedness and actual knowledge of essential survival skills. This might indicate that a considerable number of students lack exposure to, or awareness of, fundamental survival practices, suggesting potential gaps in knowledge or readiness to navigate hazardous circumstances. The results were echoed by the work of Bandecchi et al. (2019), pointing out a problematic lack of hazard awareness amongst students. The data from **Figure 6** highlight students' familiarity with essential survival skills during hazards, setting the stage for a deeper examination of the reasons why students not applying these essential survival skills.

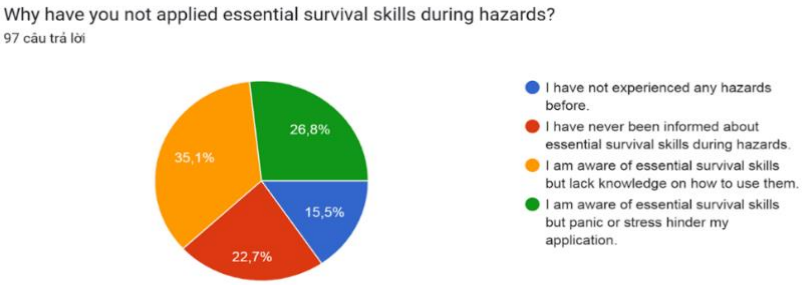

Figure 7: Reasons Why Not Applying Essential Survival Skills During Hazards

Considering **Figure 7**, a notable proportion of survey respondents indicated that their lack of exposure to hazardous situations accounted for their limited application of essential survival skills, at 15.5%. Nearly a quarter of the participants expressed that they had not been adequately informed about essential survival skills during hazards (22.7%). Stress-induced inhibition was viewed as a significant factor hindering the application of essential survival skills, with over a quarter of participants attributing their non-application to panic or stress during emergencies (26.8%). The largest proportion of respondents identified a lack of practical knowledge as a barrier to applying essential survival skills during hazards (35.1%). This highlights the importance of not only raising awareness but also providing comprehensive training and hands-on practice in utilizing these skills. Furthermore, because a substantial percentage was reported by students who indicated awareness of essential survival skills but lacked practical knowledge on how to use them, this finding underscored the critical gap in survival skills education and

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the importance of practical training and hands-on practice. In terms of the interview, the responses corroborated these findings, with participants expressing feelings of fear, lack of confidence, and concerns about insufficient formal training in hazard response:

> *"I think the biggest challenge for me is my fear. The panic and fear are really overwhelming, and I don't think I will be able to know what to do. Maybe I have learned something here and there but I think I will forget all of them when there is a big flame right in front of my face." (I-10)*

> *"The thing is I can never say I'm confident with my survival skills when it comes to different hazards…and I also lack formal training for hazards." (I-7)*

> *"I do not know much about hazards and things to do when one happens, actually." (I-4)*

As shown, *I-10* expressed the overwhelming nature of panic and fear in emergency situations, emphasizing the challenge of recalling learned survival techniques amidst the chaos of a hazardous event. Similarly, responses from *I-7* show a lack of confidence in their survival skills due to limited formal training while those shared by *I-4* underscored the recurrent knowledge gap among individuals regarding hazard preparedness, which further stresses the need for accessible and comprehensive education on hazard awareness and relevant coping skills. The identification of barriers to applying essential survival skills in **Figure 7** emphasized the challenges students faced in hazard response. However, for respondents who indicated having applied essential survival skills, the following figure explored the frequency of applying these skills during hazards.

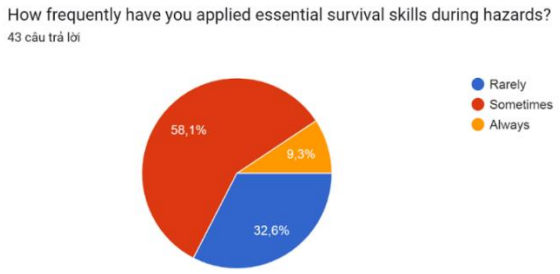

Figure 8: Frequency Of Applying Essential Survival Skills During Hazards

The questionnaire results of **Figure 8** revealed that a significant proportion of respondents (58.1%) reported applying essential survival skills sometimes, while a notable portion (32.6%) indicated rare application. Conversely, a smaller fraction (9.3%) reported always applying these skills during hazards. In terms of the interviewees' responses, most participants reported that they did not know much about how to apply essential survival skills during hazards. Some student respondents commented in this way:

> *"Sorry, but I have no strategy or solution to deal with this hazard." (I-1)*
> *"To overcome the challenges I encountered with hazards, I believe it is important to be aware of the importance of survival skills and formal education in emergencies." (I-2)*

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"I have no idea. Maybe I will seek help from people around me." (I-3)
"Strategy and solution? I have no clue." (I-4)

A stark contrast emerged regarding the awareness and preparedness of individuals towards hazards. The answer made by *I-1*, for instance, might reflect a potential gap in hazard preparedness and education. Likewise, *I-3* and *I-4* both expressed uncertainty and perhaps reliance on seeking help from others, highlighting a lack of personal preparedness and self-reliance. In contrast, *I-2* emphasized the importance of awareness and training in survival skills as a strategy to overcome challenges encountered during hazards.

These insights from both the survey and interviews resonated with the findings highlighted by Bandecchi et al. (2019) regarding a concerning lack of multi-hazard awareness and knowledge among students. This deficiency in hazard awareness and preparedness might significantly impede students' ability to cope with hazards, aligning with the arguments proposed by Mubarak et al. (2019) and Vu et al. (2023). Without adequate knowledge and skills to respond to hazards, it goes without doubt that individuals might face increased risks and vulnerabilities during emergencies. The findings from **Figure 8** provide insight into the frequency of applying essential survival skills during hazards, revealing varying levels of preparedness among respondents. This sets the stage for an examination of the primary sources of hazard-related information among EFL students.

Sources For Obtaining Accurate Information About Potential Hazards

Table 2: Sources For Obtaining Accurate Information About Potential Hazards

Sources	Frequency (=n)	Percentage (=%)
Official government websites	23	16.4
Local news outlets	17	12.1
Disaster management organizations	15	10.7
Social media	116	82.9
Educational institutions	124	88.6
Friends/family members/neighbors	27	19.3

The data presented in **Table 2** reveal that social media and educational institutions were the most used sources for obtaining accurate information about potential hazards among EFL students. Specifically, social media and educational institutions emerged as the predominant sources, with a striking 82.9% and 88.6% respectively of respondents, indicating their use for accessing hazard-related information. This high percentage suggested that these two sources played significant roles in disseminating hazard-related information to students, potentially influencing their perceptions and responses to hazards. Regarding the interview's respondents, two interviewees also claimed that social media and their educational institutions were of importance when it came to getting hazard-related information.

"I got some information about hazards or disasters on social media platforms but I haven't had the chance to dive deeper into hazards and how to deal with them. Mostly I watch them for fun". (I-1)

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"I hope my college will one day hold a fire drill for us since this is the place where I often see the signs and warnings about fire outbreaks most." (I-3)

Specifically, *I-1* acknowledged obtaining some information about hazards from social media but admitted not delving deeper into hazard preparedness while *I-3* expressed a desire for more proactive hazard measures in schools, such as fire drills. This asserted the importance of educational institutions in fostering hazard awareness and preparedness for students, as has been cited by most surveyed students. In this regard, applying PBL with multimodal products being produced by students can be deemed as important in efforts to boost their awareness, and thus their preparedness, as echoed in the sixth step of PBL implementation by Nguyen (2011).

Interestingly, while official government websites and disaster management organizations were often considered authoritative sources for hazard-related information, they received comparatively lower frequencies in the responses, 16.4% and 10.7% respectively. Similar proportions could be seen in local news outlets and from friends, family members or neighbors, at 12.1% and 19.3%. This might indicate a preference among students for more accessible and user-friendly sources like social media and educational institutions instead of other sources. The significant role of social media and educational institutions as major channels for hazard-related information, as indicated in **Table 2**, hinted at their considerable influence in molding students' perspectives and reactions toward hazards. This paved the way for an examination of participants' views regarding essential survival skills amid hazardous circumstances.

Perceptions Of Essential Survival Skills During Hazards

Table 3: Perceptions Of Essential Survival Skills During Hazards

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
I believe that understanding potential hazards in my region is crucial for community safety.	4.45	0.59
I am concerned about potential hazards occuring in my region.	2.46	0.91
I feel well-prepared for potential hazards in my region.	2.04	0.85
I am confident in my ability to handle emergency situations and ensure my safety.	2.06	0.82
I believe that formal training or education on emergency preparedness and survival skills is essential for everyone.	4.27	0.92
I am aware of the emergency evacuation routes and procedures in my local area.	2.26	0.98

Note. N = 140

Table 3 presents the mean and standard deviation of participant ratings concerning perceptions of essential survival skills during hazardous situations. The data reveal a notable mean score of 4.45 (SD = 0.59), indicating a high level of acknowledgment concerning the importance of understanding the potential hazards for community safety. There was also a widespread belief in the necessity of formal training or education on emergency preparedness and survival skills, as evidenced by a mean score of 4.27 (SD = 0.92). The interview data further underscore these

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findings, with emphasis laid on the significance of understanding local hazards and the imperative need for formal training in emergency situations:

> *"To overcome the challenges I encountered with hazards, I believe it is important to be aware of the importance of survival skills and formal education in emergencies." (I-2)*

> *"To overcome the difficulties I have in hazards, I think it's essential to be aware of how much survival skills and formal training hazards mean in emergencies. An appropriate awareness is the greatest motivation for people to keep themselves updated on information and evacuation plans." (I-8)*

Moreover, according to **Table 3**, participants demonstrated low confidence in their ability to handle emergency situations, with a mean score of 2.06 *(SD = 0.82).* Additionally, they expressed minimal concern about potential hazards occurring in their region *(M = 2.46, SD = 0.91),* limited awareness of emergency evacuation routes and procedures *(M = 2.26, SD = 0.98),* and inadequate preparedness for potential hazards in their regions *(M = 2.04, SD = 0.85).* These findings closely paralleled those of Bandecchi et al. (2019), indicating a common lack of multi-hazard awareness among students.

In summary, the perceptions of essential survival skills during hazardous situations among EFL students appeared limited. While most participants recognized the significance of survival skills and formal education in emergencies, there was a notable lack of confidence and experience in dealing with hazards among certain individuals. The findings extracted from **Table 3** regarding participants' perceptions of essential survival skills during hazardous situations underscored the significance attributed to formal training and education, alongside the worrisome lack of confidence and awareness in managing emergencies. These observations laid the groundwork for scrutinizing how these perceptions manifest in the practical actions of EFL students, as illustrated in **Table 4**.

Practices Of Essential Survival Skills During Hazards

Table 4: Practices Of Essential Survival Skills During Hazards

Items	Never	Sometimes	Always
I gather information on potential hazards from both national and local government sources.	36.4%	45.7%	17.9%
I keep in mind the lesson of hazards by listening to the experiences of individuals who have encountered them.	47.9%	35.7%	16.4%
I stay updated on how to deal with hazards by watching reports and reading books.	37.9%	40.7%	21.4%
I notice changes in nature, like the sky and wind.	38.6%	40.7%	20.7%
I get information about risks in my area, like past hazards and the chance of floods or fires.	36.4%	40%	23.6%
I decide how to contact family and relatives in an emergency.	35.7%	45%	19.3%

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I check out where to go and how to get there if I need to evacuate.	38.6%	40.7%	20.7%
I prepare stuff like food, water, flashlights, and medicine for emergencies.	38.6%	41.4%	20%
I talk with my family and neighbors about how to stay safe from dangers.	42.9%	37.1%	20%
I figure out with neighbors and community members what each person should do in an emergency.	36.4%	45.7%	17.9%
I join practice drills to leave quickly in case something bad happens	42.1%	37.1%	20.7%

Table 4 demonstrates the practices of essential survival skills during hazards by EFL students. The findings show that, of all the course of actions indicated in the survey, the "always" category was cited by the fewest EFL students at UD-UFLS. More specifically, up to 47.9% of the respondents claimed that they did not bother keeping in mind the lesson of hazards, 42.9% never talked about how to stay safe from dangers with their family and neighbors, and 42.1% never participated in drills to leave quickly in case something bad happens. These findings raised the question of whether EFL students fulfilled the requirement of survival skills as indicated in Sunshine's (2023) study stating that survival skills include preparing essential supplies and planning, such as 72-hour survival kits, food storage, creating a plan, and house preparations to help manage prolonged power outages and loss of access to central services, a variety of useful emergency and crisis skills, techniques, or emergency communications. The three categories that EFL students were mostly exposed to are gathering information on potential hazards from both national and local government sources, figuring out with neighbors and community members what each person should do in an emergency, and deciding how to contact family and relatives in an emergency (45.7%, 45.7%, and 45% respectively).

In other words, students' evaluations of their practices of essential skills during hazards could be categorized as neutral, as "sometimes" ranked first, followed by "never" with three statements as shown above. However, the "always" category did not rank at the top in any practices. In what follows, a discussion of the challenges encountered by students in dealing with hazards will be dealt with. The insights garnered from **Table 4** regarding the practices of essential survival skills among EFL students suggested varying levels of engagement, with significant proportions reporting infrequent participation in key safety measures.

EFL Students' Challenges In Dealing With Hazards

The not-so-positive findings presented above concerning the EFL students' practices of essential survival skills during hazards necessitate a closer examination of the challenges encountered by students in dealing with hazards. **Table 5** attaches these challenges with corresponding percentages as perceived by the research participants at UD-UFLS.

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Table 5: EFL Students' Challenges In Dealing With Hazards

Challenges	Frequency (=n)	Percentage (=%)
Lack of clear emergency communication	20	14.3
Insufficient access to emergency resources	19	13.6
Inadequate knowledge about evacuation procedures	37	26.4
Difficulty in coordinating with community members	36	25.7
Limited understanding of warning signs for different hazards	45	32.1
Challenges in obtaining accurate and timely information	54	38.6
Absence of proper emergency response training	104	74.3
Inability to recognize the severity of hazards	17	12.1

As can be seen, the challenges noted by the research students in dealing with hazards, highlight various dimensions of vulnerability within this demographic. Among the challenges, the absence of proper emergency response training emerged as the most prominent concern for EFL students, with the highest proportion at 74.3%. Similarly, most interviewees demonstrated a lack of training in both attitudes and actions when addressing dangerous hazards. Furthermore, the students often encountered challenges in obtaining accurate and timely information, limited understanding of warning signs for different hazards, not to mention inadequate knowledge about evacuation procedures and difficulty in coordinating with community members (38.6%, 32.1%, 26.4%, and 25.7% respectively). These challenges were viewed as part of the students' overall lack of disaster response skills. Now, the emphasis shifts to how PBL can aid EFL students in improving their essential survival skills.

The Role Of PBL In Enhancing EFL Students' Survival Skills

To lever the understanding of EFL students at UD-UFLS towards essential survival skills during hazards, as already mentioned, the study adopted the PBL approach with media content being created to enhance students' essential survival skills. Students' perceptions towards the role of PBL in this regard is now presented with some quantifiable information.

Table 6: The Role Of PBL In Enhancing EFL Students' Survival Skills

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
PBL has increased my understanding of various hazards and their potential impacts.	4.53	0.46
PBL has improved my ability to identify and assess risks in different environments.	4.64	0.74
PBL has equipped me with practical survival skills that I can apply during hazards.	4.21	0.73
PBL has enhanced my confidence in responding effectively to emergencies.	4.25	0.83
PBL has provided opportunities for hands-on practice and simulations related to hazard response.	4.77	0.73
PBL has encouraged collaboration and teamwork, which are essential in managing hazardous situations.	4.62	0.93

Note. N = 140

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Table 6 presents the mean and standard deviation of participant ratings regarding PBL's impact on enhancing EFL students' survival skills. The data revealed consistently high mean scores across various statements, indicating the significant role of PBL in improving students' hazard preparedness. Specifically, PBL was perceived to have heightened students' ability to identify and assess risks (*M = 4.64, SD = 0.74*), encouraged collaboration and teamwork (*M = 4.62, SD = 0.93*), and provided hands-on practice and simulations related to hazard response (*M = 4.77, SD = 0.73*). Furthermore, participants expressed strong agreement with the impact of PBL on levering the students' understanding of hazards (*M = 4.53, SD = 0.46*), enhancing confidence in emergency response (*M = 4.25, SD = 0.83*), and equipping students with practical survival skills (*M = 4.21, SD = 0.73*).

The implications of these findings extended beyond the immediate context of the study, highlighting the broader significance of PBL in educational settings. The consistently high mean scores underscored the efficacy of PBL in not only imparting theoretical knowledge but also fostering practical skills crucial for hazard preparedness. By engaging EFL students in hands-on activities and simulations, PBL created an immersive learning environment where EFL students can actively apply their knowledge and collaborate with peers, mirroring the dynamic nature of real-world emergency situations. Moreover, the strong agreement among participants regarding the impact of PBL on enhancing students' understanding of hazards and confidence in emergency response suggested that PBL cultivated a holistic approach to preparedness. Beyond the acquisition of specific survival skills, PBL instilled in students a deeper comprehension of the underlying principles governing hazard assessment and response, empowering them to adapt and respond effectively to a wide range of scenarios. Furthermore, the integration of PBL into educational initiatives such as *The Lighthouse Project* underscored a proactive approach to addressing the evolving needs of learners in an increasingly complex and unpredictable world. By prioritizing the development of practical survival skills alongside traditional academic knowledge, initiatives like *The Lighthouse Project* not only equipped students with the tools they need to thrive but also contributed to building resilient communities capable of navigating challenges with confidence and competence.

The findings as presented underscore the transformative potential of PBL in enhancing EFL students' survival skills and preparedness. By fostering collaboration, critical thinking, and hands-on learning, PBL empowered students to become proactive agents of change in their communities, equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate and mitigate hazards effectively. As educational stakeholders continue to recognize the value of PBL in preparing students for the challenges of the future, initiatives like *The Lighthouse Project* served as exemplars of innovative approaches to education that prioritized holistic preparedness and resilience, which is the focal point of presentation in the section that follows.

The Lighthouse Project

The Lighthouse Project was conceived with the aim of equipping EFL students and the broader civilian population with essential survival skills. Leveraging insights from student data collected via Google Forms, which highlights the role of social media and educational institutions as trusted information sources, the project adopted a multi-platform approach, spanning Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok. This strategy ensures broad visibility and engagement, catering to diverse audience demographics. The project was structured into three main hazard types: fire, water, and electricity, represented by the Fire, Water, and Electricity

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Series respectively. Besides, *The Lighthouse Journal* was created as a comprehensive resource, offering valuable multimodal content tailored to readers' needs across these three series.

Fire Series

This research introduces the Fire Series, a collection of educational media outputs designed to enhance students' awareness and readiness to timely and effectively respond to fire emergencies. The series comprises posts and videos disseminated through *The Lighthouse Fanpage*, *The Lighthouse Channel on TikTok*, and *The Lighthouse Channel on YouTube*. Starting with an overview of the six classes of fire and corresponding firefighting equipment, the series then delves into fire prevention strategies, providing practical tips to mitigate fire-related risks. Subsequent content focuses on essential fire commands and inferno escape techniques, offering viewers actionable steps to protect themselves during fire emergencies. The series concludes with a demonstration of interactive QR code technology for engaging participants in fire safety education, providing an immersive learning experience to reinforce critical knowledge and skills. Here are a few screenshots showcasing the Fire Series within *The Lighthouse Project* (**Figures 9-10**).

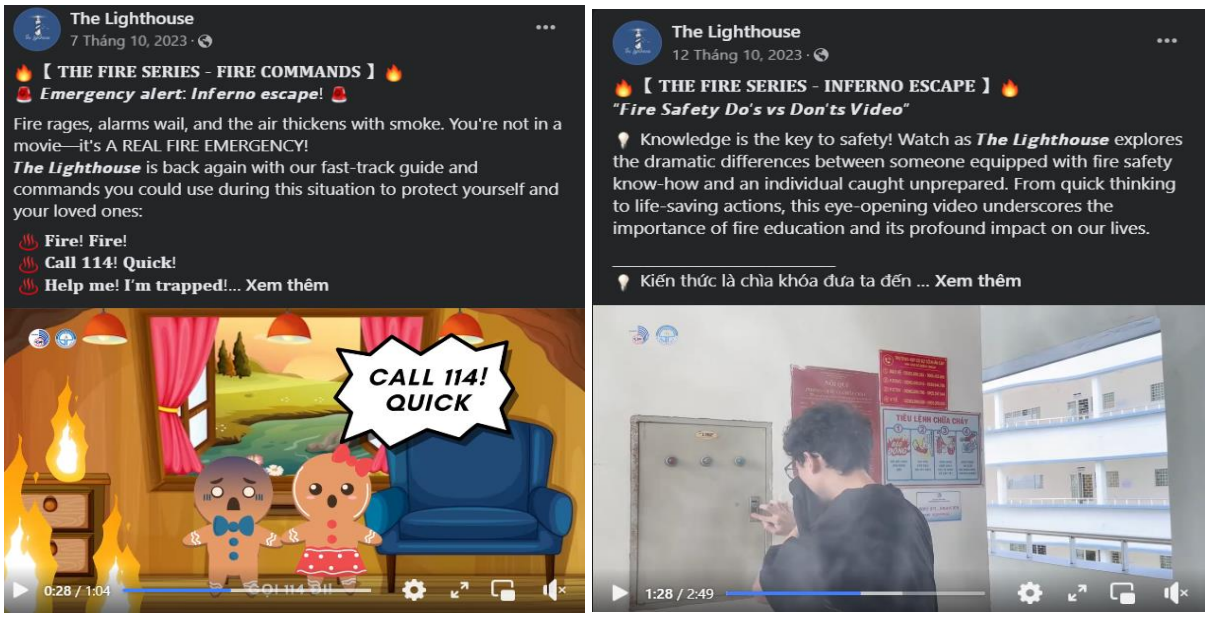

Figure 9: Fire Commands And Inferno Escape

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Figure 10: QR Scan For Fire Safety

Water Series

The Water Series presented in this project comprises six essential posts aimed at enhancing awareness and preparedness for water-related incidents. Starting with an introductory video, the series covers topics such as disaster distress hotlines, hurricane preparation, flooded roads in Danang, beach warning signs, and drowning emergencies. Each segment provides viewers with life-saving knowledge and practical steps to navigate potential hazards effectively. From understanding distress hotlines to learning CPR techniques, this series serves as a comprehensive guide to fostering water safety education and emergency preparedness. Here are a selection of screenshots featuring the Water Series from *The Lighthouse Project* (**Figures 11-12**)

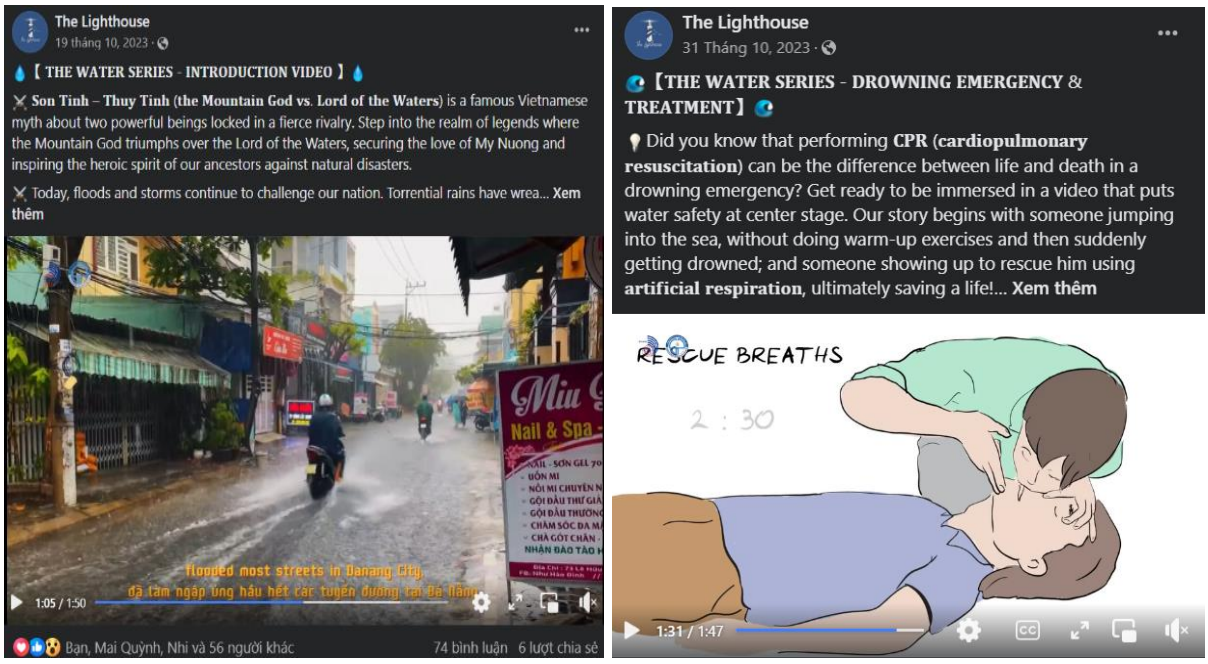

Figure 11: The Water Series Video And Drowning Emergency And Treatments

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Figure 12: Beach Warning Signs

Electricity Series

In the same vein, the Electricity Series was created with three informative posts aimed at promoting electrical safety awareness. It begins with a comprehensive guide on preventing electrical shocks **(Figure 15)**, followed by a post addressing safety measures tailored to the challenges of the monsoon season, and concludes with a video tutorial demonstrating crucial first aid techniques for responding to electrical shock incidents effectively. Each segment provides students with practical knowledge and actionable steps to mitigate the risk of electrical accidents and respond promptly in case of emergencies, thereby fostering a safer environment in both everyday situations and during the rainy season.

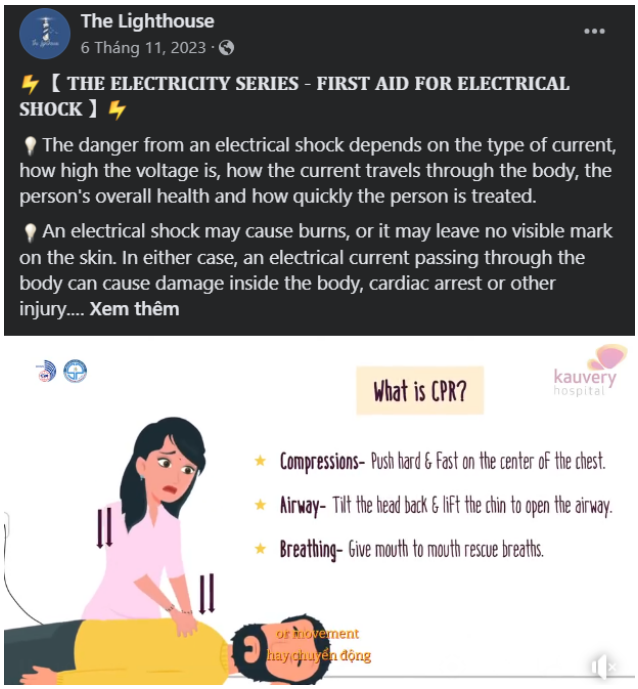

Figure 13: First Aid for Electrical Shock

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The Lighthouse Journal

The Lighthouse Journal, divided into three distinct series focusing on fire safety, water-related emergencies, and electrical safety, serves as a comprehensive resource for individuals and organizations seeking to mitigate risks and respond effectively to elemental threats. Each series is divided into multiple sections covering crucial aspects of safety and response strategies. The Fire Series addresses fire prevention, extinguishing methods, and important facts about fire, while the Water Series provides guidance on hurricane preparedness, drowning prevention, and CPR techniques. The Electricity Series explores electrical safety measures, including preventive tips and first aid for electrical shock incidents. Available in both soft and hard copy formats, the Journal ensures widespread accessibility and offers readers the flexibility to engage with its content according to their preferences and needs, whether through digital platforms or traditional print copies.

Conclusions

This study has delved into EFL students' perceptions and practices of essential survival skills during hazards at UD-UFLS, a language studies university in Vietnam. The research findings seem to have added to the increasingly worrying concern towards inadequate awareness among students regarding hazard preparedness as well as a deficiency in practical experience in handling hazardous emergencies. Addressing these findings, *The Lighthouse Project* was initiated to equip students with critical survival skills through a multimedia package covering various hazard types and *The Lighthouse Journal*, available in both digital and print formats, providing guidance on navigating hazardous scenarios.

The study has elucidated the role of PBL as an approach to boosting students' awareness and thus increasing their preparedness in response to hazards. The insights drawn from *The Lighthouse Project* help inform the possibility of implementing comprehensive hazard education programs by educational institutions, utilizing multimedia outlets to cover a wide range of potential hazards prevalent in the local context. The study with its various implications can be replicated in multiple educational settings, formal and informal, using various student-produced media contents initiated via the PBL approach to promote awareness and thus enhance preparedness of UFLS-UD students in particular, and of the larger community in Danang, Vietnam in general.

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