"The Reality of Following Contemporary Pragmatic Educational Philosophy on the Elementary Schools in Kuwait"

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Abstract:

With the massive developments in the educational reforms and the appearance of different learning channels, following new methods of teaching became an urgent call. In this study, the reality of following contemporary pragmatic educational philosophy methods on the elementary schools in Kuwait was discussed. For that reason, the researcher has developed a questionnaire that was distributed on a sample of (150) female elementary school teachers in Kuwait. The results showed that the contemporary pragmatic educational philosophy methods are followed in a high level on the elementary schools in Kuwait, except for the experimental method, which came in a medium level. Such results argue the need to conduct more studies on the contemporary learning methods and use their results in the upcoming educational plans.

Keywords: Pragmatic Philosophy, Education, Elementary Schools, Kuwait.

Introduction:

The world is experiencing in the last few decades a high storm of development that can be more than what human have done since existence. Such developments have a considerable effect on all the life aspects and fields including education (Abbas et al., 2021). Over time, the educational process has changed dramatically with the changes in the social, economic and political context (Morrow & Torres, 2013). At first, the student role was limited as a receiver for the information. By time, the student became an active player by allowing him to observe and ask (Carless, 2022). Now, the student can be a self-learner, who can choose the method of teaching and the teacher himself (McGhee & Kozma, 2007).

However, with all the changes occurred, the role of the teacher is still vital, especially with the elementary school where students do not have the ability to control the educational process (Newberry & Davis, 2008). In this manner, many scholars have worked on proposing new methods of teaching that are based on modern educational philosophies to be more suitable for the educational developments. One of the main contemporary educational philosophies is the pragmatic methods, which is based on dealing with the current problems rather than dealing with fixed theories (Adeleye, 2017).

The importance of pragmatic educational philosophy was discussed by many scholars. For instance, Hammond (2013) argued that pragmatism makes students more socially efficient and prepare them for life. Pragmatism respects differences in abilities and skills and give each student the opportunity to show his skills. Hammond also argued that education should provide life experience along with a social function. Garrison and Neiman (2003) stated that all experiences are educative and can be learnt from where they focused on the role of the experience. Moreover, Vanderstraeten and Biesta (2006) highlighted the democratic form of pragmatism and the role of student voice. Finally, the learning process should not be limited by tradition and bound by rules, especially for young learners (Pham, 2021). This study aims at exploring the level in which elementary schools in Kuwait are following the contemporary pragmatic educational methods.

Methodology

In this study, the descriptive approach was followed to study the reality of following the contemporary pragmatic educational philosophy on the elementary schools in Kuwait, where the main five methods of teaching that were developed by the pragmatic educational philosophy were examined from the elementary school teachers' point of view.

Population and sample

The study population consisted of all the working elementary school teachers in Kuwait; however, the study sample consisted of the elementary school teachers who are working in the public elementary schools for girls in Kuwait. The study sample was selected using the simple random method and calculated using the G power calculator to be (150) female teachers.

Study tool

As mentioned above, the study was based on following the elementary schools the pragmatic educational philosophy methods from the perspective of the elementary school teachers. For this reason, a questionnaire was developed based on reviewing the related study, where the questionnaire was developed by the researcher based on the studies of (Khasawneh, Miqdadi & Hijazi, 2014) and (Niiranen, 2021).

The tool was validated by applying it on a panel of attributers where they presented their comments and after the necessary modifications were done, the tool was distributed on a pilot sample consisted of (10) female elementary teachers in Kuwait. Cronbach alpha coefficient was calculated to be (0.91), which indicates a high stability.

The final version of the questionnaire consisted of two parts; the first part consisted of the demographics of the study sample, while the second part contained the main questions. The second part was divided into five sections; the experimental method, real-life situations method, learning by doing method, the project method and the integration method. The paragraphs of the questionnaire were evaluated using Likert 5-scale.

Statistical analysis

The statistical analysis included calculating the frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations and ranks for the variables and their items.

Results

The following are the results of the analysis, where they were arranged according to the five methods.

Experimental method

The following table include the results of the descriptive analysis for following the experimental method in the elementary schools in Kuwait. It can be noticed that the degree of following the experimental method in the elementary schools in Kuwait is medium with a mean of (3.4) and a standard deviation of (0.59). The paragraph "The students are encouraged to develop hypothesis regarding the answers to their questions" came in the first rank with a mean of (3.8) and a standard deviation of (0.62) with a high level. On the other hand, the paragraph "The students talk about their observations" came last with a mean of (3.0) and a standard deviation of (0.56) with a medium level.

Table (1): Ranks, means and standard deviations for the paragraphs of following the experimental method in the elementary schools in Kuwait

Rank	Paragraph	Mean	St. dev.	Degree
5	The students are encouraged to use their senses to observe the phenomenon	3.2	0.62	Medium
6	The students talk about their observations	3.0	0.56	Medium
2	The students are encouraged to ask questions regarding their observations	3.6	0.58	Medium
1	The students are encouraged to develop hypothesis regarding the answers to their questions	3.8	0.62	High
3	The students are helped to test their own hypotheses	3.5	0.59	Medium
4	The results of the experiment are recorded by the students	3.5	0.57	Medium
	Experimental method	**3.4**	**0.59**	**Medium**

Real-life situations method

The following table include the results of the descriptive analysis for following the Real-life situations method in the elementary schools in Kuwait. It can be noticed that the degree of following the Real-life situations method in the elementary schools in Kuwait is high with a mean of (3.8) and a standard deviation of (0.59). The paragraph "The students are involved in activities that took place outside the classroom" came in the first rank with a mean of (4.1) and a standard deviation of (0.56) with a high level. On the other hand, the paragraph "Field trips are part of the curriculum planning" came last with a mean of (3.2) and a standard deviation of (0.55) with a medium level.

Table (2): Ranks, means and standard deviations for the paragraphs of following the Real-life situations method in the elementary schools in Kuwait

Rank	Paragraph	Mean	St. dev.	Degree
3	The students are encouraged to bring items from their homes related to the subject of the class	3.8	0.66	High
1	The students are involved in activities that took place outside the classroom	4.1	0.56	High
2	The latest news are discussed in the classroom and students are encouraged to interact with them	3.9	0.54	High

4	Quest speakers are invited to talk in the classroom	3.8	0.61	High
5	The students are involved in the community work events	3.7	0.64	High
6	Field trips are part of the curriculum planning	3.2	0.55	Medium
Real-life situations method		**3.8**	**0.59**	**High**

Learning by doing method

The following table include the results of the descriptive analysis for following the learning by doing method in the elementary schools in Kuwait. It can be noticed that the degree of following the learning by doing method in the elementary schools in Kuwait is high with a mean of (3.8) and a standard deviation of (0.61). The paragraph "The students are encouraged to share their knowledge with their classmates" came in the first rank with a mean of (4.2) and a standard deviation of (0.63) with a high level. On the other hand, the paragraph "Different skills are toughed to the students by observing experts" came last with a mean of (3.2) and a standard deviation of (0.57) with a medium level.

Table (3): Ranks, means and standard deviations for the paragraphs of following the learning by doing situations method in the elementary schools in Kuwait

Rank	Paragraph	Mean	St. dev.	Degree
5	Different skills are toughed to the students by observing experts	3.2	0.57	Medium
3	The different activities are repeated for the students many times	4.0	0.58	High
2	The students are working in groups in solving the problems	4.1	0.63	High
1	The students are encouraged to share their knowledge with their classmates	4.2	0.63	High
4	The students are rewarded based on their level of skills	3.6	0.65	Medium
Learning by doing method		**3.8**	**0.61**	**High**

The project method

The following table include the results of the descriptive analysis for following the project method in the elementary schools in Kuwait. It can be noticed that the degree of following the project method in the elementary schools in Kuwait is high with a mean of (4.2) and a standard deviation of (0.61). The paragraph "The students are instructed to build, construct or form objects" came in the first rank with a mean of (4.5) and a standard deviation of (0.61) with a high level. On the other hand, the paragraph "The students are engaged in learning to play on musical instruments" came last with a mean of (3.8) and a standard deviation of (0.58) with a high level.

Table (4): Ranks, means and standard deviations for the paragraphs of following the project method in the elementary schools in Kuwait

Rank	Paragraph	Mean	St. dev.	Degree
1	The students are instructed to build, construct or form objects	4.5	0.61	High
4	The students are engaged in learning to play on musical instruments	3.8	0.58	High
3	The students are given specific tasks to be performed in the classroom	4.0	0.61	High
2	The students are working in groups to solve a problem as a contest	4.4	0.64	High
The project method		**4.2**	**0.61**	**High**

The integration method

The following table include the results of the descriptive analysis for following the integration method in the elementary schools in Kuwait. It can be noticed that the degree of following the integration method in the elementary schools in Kuwait is high with a mean of (3.9) and a standard deviation of (0.61). The paragraph "The students are involved in activities that contain using the latest technology" came in the first rank with a mean of (4.4) and a standard deviation of (0.63) with a high level. On the other hand, the paragraph "The students are involved in activities that contain interacting with the local community" came last with a mean of (3.5) and a standard deviation of (0.63) with a medium level.

Table (5): Ranks, means and standard deviations for the paragraphs of following the integration method in the elementary schools in Kuwait

Rank	Paragraph	Mean	St. dev.	Degree
1	The students are involved in activities that contain using the latest technology	4.4	0.63	High
3	The students are involved in activities that contain interacting with the local community	3.5	0.63	Medium
2	The students are involved in activities that contain using the latest trends	3.9	0.59	High
The integration method		**3.9**	**0.61**	**High**

Discussion

The results of the previous analysis show that there are differences in the level of adoption of the contemporary pragmatic educational philosophy methods on the elementary schools in Kuwait. This variation and the total level of adoption will be discussed here.

For all the methods, except for the experimental method, all the contemporary pragmatic educational philosophy methods are followed in the elementary schools in Kuwait in a high level. This result can be attributed to the fact that Kuwait is taking the development path where the recent government reforms initiated in the general education sector fall under Kuwait's Integrated Education Reform Programme 2011-19, which is focused on developing curricula, improving learning outcomes, encouraging efficient teaching and leadership, and refining the accountability and efficiency of the education system (Alhashem & Alhouti, 2021).

Moreover, pragmatic educational philosophy methods are more effective and suitable for the mega development that young generations are existed in (Taatila & Raij, 2012). With the social media opening and the raise of the distance learning, students are becoming more and more independent learners (Balakrishnan & Gan, 2016). The massive available channels of leaning have changed the roles of the educational process and made every additional effort a chance to grow and prepare the student for the real world, a world that is way different from the last decade (DeCesare, 2014). One of the other reasons is the raise of the pandemic and what it produced form changing in the learning process where the psychological distances between the learner and the teacher became narrower (Alqahtani & Rajkhan, 2020).

For the experimental method, the result for the lower adoption of this method can be attributed to the nature of the elementary school curriculum where experiments and laboratory is not dominated compared with the other levels (Sukma, Ramadhan & Indriyani, 2020). Usually, the experimental method is developed in the level where the scientific content is developed (Saputro, Rohaeti & Prodjosantoso, 2019).

The results showed also that teachers are focusing on real-life situations in the classroom and this result can be attributed to the fact that elementary school students gain most of their knowledge through their environment and their interaction with the people in it. Real-life situations are better for the memory and recall, where the student can relate through such type of learning by just remembering the same situation (Ali, 2019).

While the teachers claimed that they do not often ask experts to perform in front of students, they claimed that they encourage students to share their knowledge and repeat what they do. According to (Bedenlier et al., 2020), there is no better way of do things than do it by yourself. In this way, students are involved in all the problem solving stages, which in return will help in developing this skill (Sibuea, 2021).

The project method was the highest followed pragmatic methods, where the elementary classroom is based usually on groups and classroom activities. Following the rends and latest technologies is part of the nature of the elementary school students who, in this age, tend to transfer any information he/she receive.

This study was limited by the size of the sample where private schools where not involved. Involving private schools in future studies will contribute in forming a more comprehensive perspective. Other limitation is on the level of education, as including more than one level in the study will help in the comparison between the effectiveness of such method on each level.

Conclusion

This study aimed to discover the level of following the contemporary pragmatic educational philosophy methods in the elementary schools in Kuwait. By following the descriptive method, the results showed that the elementary schools in Kuwait are following the contemporary pragmatic educational philosophy methods in a high level. This study recommends conducting further studies that include more educational level and using mixed methods to attain a more precise results. This study recommends also to include the private schools in future studies. For the practical side, this study recommends to conduct training workshops for the elementary school teachers to enhance their abilities of following the pragmatic methods in teaching.

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