

The Extent in Which Principles of Pragmatism Educational Philosophy Can Promote Curriculum Development

Kawthar A M N Q Jafar

Ministry of Education, Kuwait

kawtharjaffar@hotmail.com

Abstract

The aim of the current study is to examine first the level of applying principles of pragmatism educational philosophy in the Kuwaiti curriculum and the level of curriculum development. Moreover, this study aims to find the extent in which principles of pragmatism educational philosophy can promote curriculum development. By following the descriptive correctional methodology, the researcher distributed a questionnaire consisted of three parts (the demographic information, the pragmatic educational philosophy principles, and the curriculum development paragraphs) on the study sample that consisted of (123) teachers, (28) principals, and (16) supervisors from Kuwaiti schools. The results showed that the level of applying principles of pragmatism educational philosophy in the Kuwaiti curriculum was high, while the level of curriculum development was medium. The results showed also that there is a significant relationship between applying principles of pragmatism educational philosophy in the Kuwaiti curriculum and the level of curriculum development. Finally, it was found that all principles of pragmatic educational philosophy explain approximately (82%) of the variance of the total degree of estimating the level of curriculum development in Kuwait.

Keywords: Pragmatism, Educational Philosophy, Curriculum Development, Kuwait

Introduction

The humanities and social sciences vary greatly, whether with regard to their objectives, fields, or topics they study. Philosophy is one of the most important human sciences that have received wide attention throughout history (Biesta, 2014). It is one of the oldest sciences in the history of human thought. Therefore, it has occupied human thought throughout the ages and societies because of its tendency to investigate research and realize the causes and facts, as well as their interpretation (Trueit, 2012). Many philosophies have appeared throughout human history, affecting various aspects of life, intellectual, social, economic and educational (Pugh, 2011).

The pragmatic philosophy is one of the most famous contemporary philosophies and one of the most widespread. The pragmatic philosophy has come to carry with it a new thought that differs from the philosophical thought presented by the philosophies that preceded it, whether in its intellectual premises or in its multiple educational applications (Scott, 2016). Pragmatism has been called a group of names such as practical philosophy, for its emphasis on the necessity of choosing ideas in practice and to know their value and usefulness, and of empirical philosophy, for

its emphasis on the importance of the experimental method in gaining human knowledge, and of utilitarian philosophy, because it sees that the ideas and actions of the individual derive their value from the extent of its usefulness to him and society, as it was also called the performative philosophy and the instrumental philosophy (Garrison, 2019).

Pragmatism stresses the unity of the curriculum stemming from the unity of nature and life and attacks the traditional division of the curriculum into different subjects (Wiener, 2016). The curriculum must focus on the student's own activities and experiences, where this philosophy focused on organizing curriculum experiences and teaching them on the way of projects, and the project is an educational situation that proceeds on basic stages, which are choosing the initiation, defining the hypothesis from it, drawing up its plan and implementing it, so that it puts the students' tendencies in the first rank (Shusterman, 2016).

In this study, the pragmatism-related principles to the curriculum development will be taken on its basic form away from the pragmatism's extreme direction of removing the boundaries and eliminating the role of the traditional classroom.

Methodology

This part includes a presentation of the methodology that the researcher used to achieve the goal of the study, as well as an explanation of the study population and its sample, the steps for building the tool, ensuring its validity and reliability, and an explanation of the used statistical treatment to analyze the study data according to the study's objectives. In this study, the most appropriate to the purpose of the study, the questionnaire was used as a data collection tool.

Population and sample

The population in this study includes all the members included in the field of curriculum development in Kuwait. The study sample was selected by following the convenient representative sampling method. After sending the consent form for (200) members from the study population, (167) members agreed to participate in the study.

The members of the sample were distributed as follows; (123) teachers, (28) principals, and (16) supervisors. The characteristics of the study sample are presented in Table (1) below.

Table (1): The characteristics of the study sample

Variable		n (%)
Gender	Male	90 (53.9%)
	Female	77 (46.1%)
Job title	Teacher	123 (73.6%)
	Principle	28 (16.8%)
	Supervisor	16 (9.6%)
Educational level	Bachelor	112 (67%)
	Master	35 (21%)
	PhD	20 (12%)
Number of related training courses	No courses	3 (1.8%)
	1-5 courses	120 (71.9%)
	More than 5 courses	44 (26.3%)
Total		167 (100%)

The majority of the study sample has taken related training courses, and nearly one-third of them have completed post graduate studies.

Instrumentation

As mentioned earlier, the study has employed a questionnaire that was adapted from the previous studies namely; Rotthoff et al. (2012) and Sharma et al. (2018) studies. The questionnaire consisted of three parts; the first part included the demographic information including the gender, job title, educational level and number of related training courses. The second part consisted of the pragmatic educational philosophy principles, while the third part consisted of the curriculum development paragraphs.

The questionnaire was distributed online through emails and social media, the stability of the instrument was confirmed using the Cronbach-Alpha internal consistency method. The value of the stability coefficient was (0.93) for the first part, while the stability value was (0.91) for the second part. These values are acceptable for the purposes of applying the current study.

Data analysis

The statistical package program for social sciences (SPSS) was used to achieve the objectives of the study where the means and standard deviations were extracted, besides Pearson correlation coefficient to examine the relationship between the study variables. Moreover, One Way

Anova analysis and T-test for independent samples to find if there are statistical differences attributed to the demographics.

Results

In the following tables, the results of the study will be presented. At first, the level of pragmatic educational philosophy principles and the curriculum development aspects in Kuwait from the sample perspective.

Table (2) below presents the first principle of pragmatic educational philosophy (principle of utility), it can be seen that the total level of this principle is high with a mean of (3.75) and a standard deviation of (0.93).

Table (2): Means, standard deviation and ranks of the principle of utility paragraphs

No.	Paragraphs	Rank	Mean	SD	Level
1	There are activities in the curriculum including physical training	1	3.84	0.85	High
2	There are activities in the curriculum including mother language	3	3.73	0.95	High
3	There are activities in the curriculum including geography	5	3.71	0.89	High

4	There are activities in the curriculum including physical wellbeing	2	3.75	1.06	High
5	There are activities in the curriculum including crafts	4	3.72	0.91	High
Total			3.75	0.93	High

Table (3) below presents the first principle of pragmatic educational philosophy (principle of interest), it can be seen that the total level of this principle is high with a mean of (4.29) and a standard deviation of (0.87).

Table (3): Means, standard deviation and ranks of the principle of interest paragraphs

No.	Paragraphs	Rank	Mean	SD	Level
1	There are activities in the curriculum related to the students' Interest in conversation	4	4.11	0.89	High
2	There are activities in the curriculum related to the students' Interest in investigation	3	4.25	0.87	High
3	There are activities in the curriculum related to the students' Interest in construction	1	4.43	0.90	High

There are activities in the curriculum					
4	related to the students' Interest in expression	2	4.37	0.83	High
Total			4.29	0.87	High

Table (4) below presents the first principle of pragmatic educational philosophy (principle of experience), it can be seen that the total level of this principle is medium with a mean of (3.38) and a standard deviation of (0.98).

Table (4): Means, standard deviation and ranks of the principle of experience paragraphs

No.	Paragraphs	Rank	Mean	SD	Level
1	There are activities in the curriculum including schools trips	2	3.38	0.99	Medium
2	There are activities in the curriculum including workshops that the students attain	3	3.36	0.98	Medium
3	There are activities in the curriculum including plays and recreational	1	3.42	0.97	Medium
Total			3.38	0.98	Medium

Table (5) below presents the first principle of pragmatic educational philosophy (principle of integration), it can be seen that the total level of this principle is high with a mean of (4.22) and a standard deviation of (0.92).

Table (5): Means, standard deviation and ranks of the principle of integration paragraphs

No.	Paragraphs	Rank	Mean	SD	Level
	There are activities in the curriculum				
1	including involvement of the latest technology	1	4.41	0.93	High
	There are activities in the curriculum				
2	related to the student engagement in the social community	2	4.04	0.91	High
Total			4.22	0.92	High

Table (6) below presents the items of curriculum development, it can be seen that the total level of this principle is medium with a mean of (3.50) and a standard deviation of (0.97).

Table (6): Means, standard deviation and ranks of the Curriculum development paragraphs

No.	Paragraphs	Rank	Mean	SD	Level
1	The course promotes scientific thinking and working.	6	3.50	1.01	Medium
2	The course inspires the students for a self-directed learning.	5	3.52	0.92	Medium
3	The course encourages students on a professional level	13	3.42	0.66	Medium
4	The course is accompanied by educational research.	14	3.41	1.02	Medium
5	The course consists of a core curriculum and offers comprehensive electives.	7	3.48	1.08	Medium
6	The course is family-friendly	1	3.70	1.11	High
7	The course is designed and developed jointly by teachers and students	11	3.44	0.94	Medium
8	The course provides scope for academic qualification.	8	3.47	1.07	Medium
9	The course is patient-oriented	12	3.43	1.02	Medium
10	The course considers the equality of women and men.	10	3.44	1.07	Medium

11	The course supports the students on a personal level.	4	3.57	1.03	Medium
12	The course offers scope for stays abroad.	2	3.59	0.98	Medium
13	The course is interdisciplinary	3	3.58	0.87	Medium
14	The course is problem-oriented.	9	3.45	0.88	Medium
Total			3.50	0.97	Medium

In order to identify the significance of the correlation between the principles of pragmatic educational philosophy and curriculum development, the correlation coefficient was calculated between the two variables of the study, and Table (7) shows correlation coefficients.

Table (7): Pearson Correlation coefficients between the principles of pragmatic educational philosophy and curriculum development

Principles of pragmatic educational philosophy		Curriculum development
Principle of Utility	Pearson coefficient	0.712
	Significance level	0.00*
Principle of Interest	Pearson coefficient	0.837
	Significance level	0.00*
Principle of Experience	Pearson coefficient	0.779
	Significance level	0.00*

Principle of Integration	Pearson coefficient	0.816
	Significance level	0.00*

* Statistically significant at $\alpha \leq 0.01$

Table (7) shows that there is a statistically significant relationship at the level of significance (0.01) between the principles of pragmatic educational philosophy and curriculum development. A function at the significance level (0.01), which indicates the strength of the positive correlation between the variables.

In order to find the degree in which principles of pragmatism educational philosophy can promote curriculum development, regression analysis was used by comparing the explained variance ratio (Square-R) for the influence of the pragmatism educational philosophy in order to find out the effect of each of these principles in explaining the variance in the curriculum development in Kuwait, where the next table illustrates that.

Table (8): Multiple regression of the impact principles of pragmatic educational philosophy on curriculum development

Independent variable	Beta	t-test	Statistical significance	R ²
Principle of Utility	0.368	7.041	0.00*	0.82
Principle of Interest	0.552	11.40	0.00*	

Principle of Experience	0.012	0.235	0.08	
Principle of Integration	0.251	3.80	0.00*	

* Statistically significant at $\alpha \leq 0.05$

It can be seen from Table (8) that the percentage of the variance that explains (Square-R) for the influence of the principles of pragmatic educational philosophy combined amounted to (0.82), meaning that all principles of pragmatic educational philosophy explain approximately (82%) of the variance of the total degree of estimating the level of curriculum development in Kuwait. It is also noted that there is no effect of the principle of experience, on the total degree of curriculum development, where the value of (T) reached 0.235, which is not statistically significant value at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$).

In order to find if there are statistically significant differences in the extent in which principles of pragmatism educational philosophy can promote curriculum development attributed to the participants' demographics (gender, job title, educational level, number of related training courses), the independent sample T-test was used to test the difference between two samples and the One Way ANOVA test to test the difference between three or more samples, as shown in Table (9).

Table 9: Mean, standard deviation and tests (T, F) to test mean difference

Variable	Classification	Test	Statistical significance
Gender	Male	T= -.856	0.393
	Female		
Job title	Teacher	F= 3.405	0.010*
	Principle		
Educational level	Supervisor	F =2.165	0.092
	Bachelor		
	Master		
Number of related training courses	PhD	F=.559	0.642
	No courses		
	1-5 courses		
	More than 5 courses		

* Statistically significant at $\alpha \leq 0.05$

The results in Table (9) show the following results:

1. There is no statistically significant difference attributed to the gender, educational level and number of related training courses variables in total as the P-Values were more than 0.05.
2. There is a statistically significant difference attributed to the educational level variable as F-value = 3.405 and P-Value = 0.01 was less than 0.05.

Conclusion

This study showed that the principles of pragmatism educational philosophy can promote curriculum development in Kuwait in a high level. This result is associated with the level of applying the principles of pragmatism educational philosophy in the Kuwaiti curriculum, which was found to be in a high level, in contrast with the curriculum development, which came in a medium level. This result argues the need to conduct further studies to highlight the areas in which curriculum development is lacking.

In light of the results of this study, the study recommends linking education to the learner's reality, making it functional and practical, keeping it away from the verbal nature, and establishing it on the learner's life and future. Moreover, it recommends considering the student the main aspect of the educational process as a deed, not a word, by directing education in all its dimensions towards the learner, his goals, problems, tendencies, and needs, besides benefiting from the teaching methods called for by pragmatism, such as learning by doing, self-learning, experimentation, and others.

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