



Relevance of Educational Thoughts of John Dewey to the Present Educational Context – Perception of Middle School Teachers in Sivagangai District

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ABSTRACT

In this study, an attempt was made to study the Relevance of Educational Thoughts of John Dewey to the Present Educational Context – Perception of Middle School Teachers in Sivagangai District. In the present study, random sampling technique was adopted to select a sample of 150 Middle School Teachers and self-made tool was used to collect data. The result revealed that there is significant difference between male and female middle school teachers with regard to perception on relevance of educational thoughts of John Dewey to the present educational context and its dimension – curriculum.

KEYWORDS

Educational Thoughts of John Dewey and Present Educational Context

Introduction

John Dewey was one of the greatest modern philosopher, thinker and educationists. He was born in October 1859 in Burlington in the state of Vermont. In 1879 he graduated from Vermont University and took up work of teaching. He was a seeker of philosophy.

Dewey's concept of education

Education is a social necessity. He defines education as the development of all those capacities in the individual which will enable him to control his environment and fulfils his responsibilities. This shows that education is progressive both for the individual and the society.

He has set the following four fundamentals of education:

Education as growth

Education as life

Education as social life and

Education as reconstruction of experience.

Dewey's Influence on Modern Education

Many of Dewey's ideas have had modern education. Some important facts in this connection are

Impact on the aim of education

Now-a-days, one of the important aims of education is the teaching of democratic values. Dewey insisted on developing social qualities in the child. In modern schools these aims of education have been accepted as valid.

Impact on educational methods

The greatest impact of Dewey's ideas is seen in the methods of education in more recent times. Dewey suggested that method of teaching should be based on the child's own experience, and that the method of teaching should vary according to the interest and inclination of each individual child. These ideas influenced modern teaching techniques and led to active teaching in school. The project method is also a result of Dewey's ideas.

Impact on curriculum

This impact of curriculum ideas on the subject of curriculum led to the introduction of manual skill subjects in to modern curricula. Special importance is now being attached to various kinds of games, objects, the use of certain tools and implements, etc. in selecting the subjects to be taught, attention is now paid to individual interest and abilities of the child.

Impact on Discipline

The educand is trained in self-control and democratic citizenship. Apart from this, once the education has to face responsibility, he is compelled to think scientifically and reason out things for himself.

Universal education

Dewey's thinking and ideal also led to faith in universal and compulsory education. Education aims at the development of personality. Hence every individual must be given the opportunity to develop his personality through education. The current stress on the scientific and social tendency owes much to Dewey's influence.

SIGNIFICANT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the relevance of educational thoughts of John Dewey to the present educational context - perception of middle school teachers.

Dewey has contributed to the construction of a progressive society in place of an orthodox society. Dewey believed that school is a socio-psychological necessity. He considered the ideal school as an enlarged home. Here, the child learns the habit of obedient, regularities, hard work, co-operation, sacrifice, fellow-feeling patience and discipline. In the ideal school teachers play the same part as parents at home. Thus if the present teachers follow the thoughts of John Dewey it will enlighten the present educational system. This study helps us to know how far John Dewey's educational contribution influences the present teaching - learning process.

STATEMENT OF A PROBLEM

"RELEVANCE OF EDUCATIONAL THOUGHTS OF JOHN DEWEY TO THE PRESENT EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT – PERCEPTION OF MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHERS IN SIVAGANGAI DISTRICT."

DEFINITIONS OF OPERATIONAL TERMS

RELEVANCE

Retrieve material that satisfies the needs of the user.

PERCEPTION

Perception is the process of getting to know objects and objectives facts by use of the senses - Woodworth.

EDUCATION

John Dewey defines education as the development of all those capacities in the individual which will enable him to control his environment and fulfils his responsibilities. This shows that education is progressive both for the individual and the society.

Thus according to John Dewey, education is a “bipolar process”. It has two sides, the psychological and the sociological.

MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHERS

Teachers who are teaching VI, VII, and VIII standard in schools are called middle school teachers.

OBJECTIVES

To find the significance of difference between male and female middle school teachers in their perception on relevance of educational thoughts of John Dewey to the present educational context.

To find the significance of difference between rural and urban middle school teachers in their perception on relevance of educational thoughts of John Dewey to the present educational context.

NULL HYPOTHESES

There is no significant difference between male and female middle school teachers in their perception on relevance of educational thoughts of John Dewey to the present educational context.

There is no significant difference between rural and urban middle school teachers in their perception on relevance of educational thoughts of John Dewey to the present educational context.

POPULATION

The population of the present study is middle school teachers in Sivagangai District.

SAMPLE

The investigator has selected a sample of 150 middle school teachers from various schools in Sivagangai District.

TOOLS USED

Perception Scale

The investigator ha used “self-constructed questionnaire” as a tool in the present study. Questionnaire is a form prepared and distributed to secure responses to certain questions. The questionnaire consists of 55 items, which provides for responses to be expressed in Strongly Agree, Agree and Disagree.

DATA ANALYSIS

Null Hypothesis - 1

There is no significant difference between male and female middle school teachers in their perception on relevance of educational thoughts of John Dewey to the present educational context.

Table 1

Difference between Male and Female Middle School Teachers in their Perception on relevance of Educational Thoughts of John Dewey to the Present Educational Context

Dimensions	Gender	N	Mean	SD	Calculated 't' Value	Table Value	Remarks
General Philosophy and Educational Definition	Male	60	13.28	1.98	0.62	1.96	NS
	Female	90	13.49	2.20			
Aims and Objectives	Male	60	10.28	1.40	0.24	1.96	NS
	Female	90	10.22	1.41			
Methods of Teaching	Male	60	16.08	2.44	1.47	1.96	NS
	Female	90	16.73	3.04			
Curriculum	Male	60	7.95	1.72	2.35	1.96	S
	Female	90	8.62	1.74			

Teachers' Role	Male	60	16.31	2.38	1.17	1.96	NS
	Female	90	16.81	2.85			
Total	Male	60	63.90	5.34	2.24	1.96	S
	Female	90	65.87	5.37			

From the above table, it is found that the calculated 't' values (2.24 and 2.35) are greater than the table value (1.96) for 148 degrees of freedom at 5% level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected with regard to perception on relevance of educational thoughts of John Dewey to the present educational context and its dimension – curriculum.

Null Hypothesis - 2

There is no significant difference between rural and urban middle school teachers in their perception on relevance of educational thoughts of John Dewey to the present educational context.

Table 2

Difference between Rural and Urban Middle School Teachers in their Perception on relevance of Educational Thoughts of John Dewey to the Present Educational Context

Dimensions	Local-ity	N	Mean	SD	Calculated 't' Value	Table Value	Re-mark
General Philosophy and Educational Definition	Urban	90	13.16	1.94	1.66	1.96	NS
	Rural	60	13.75	2.31			
Aims and Objectives	Urban	90	10.42	1.48	1.89	1.96	NS
	Rural	60	10.00	1.26			
Methods of Teaching	Urban	90	16.66	2.97	0.98	1.96	NS
	Rural	60	16.22	2.61			
Curriculum	Urban	90	8.57	1.85	1.90	1.96	NS
	Rural	60	8.05	1.58			
Teachers' Role	Urban	90	16.53	2.65	0.47	1.96	NS
	Rural	60	16.73	2.73			
Total	Urban	90	65.34	5.11	0.65	1.96	NS
	Rural	60	64.75	5.59			

From the above table, it is found that the calculated 't' values (0.65, 1.66, 1.89, 0.98, 1.90 and 0.47) are less than the table value (1.96) for 148 degrees of freedom at 5% level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted.

DISCUSSIONS RELATED TO FINDING - 1

There is significant difference between male and female middle school teachers in their perception on relevance of educational thoughts of John Dewey to the present educational context.

Female teachers guide the pupils not only in the habit of democratic co-operation but also towards the highest intellectual pursuits and the fullest aesthetic experience. So the female teachers have high level of perception than the male teachers on relevance of educational thoughts of John Dewey to the present educational context.

DISCUSSIONS RELATED TO FINDING- 2

There is no significant difference between rural and urban middle school teachers in their perception on relevance of educational thoughts of John Dewey to the present educational context.

School is a miniature society. Dewey said that education should proceed by the participation of the individual in the social relationship with other persons. Education is impossible without social medium. So a suitable social environment should be created in the school. There is a lot of social exposure in both rural and urban schools.

So the teachers in both rural and urban areas try their best to secure the best growth and development of the pupils in social atmosphere. Hence there is no significant difference between rural and urban middle school teachers in their perception on relevance of educational thoughts of John Dewey to the present educational context.

Recommendations related to Teachers

Teacher should take effort to accelerate the creative thinking of the students through experimental method.

The teacher should provide equal opportunity to all the pupils.

The teacher should develop a constructive approach in teaching profession and should welcome changes in teaching methods.

The teacher should realize that teaching is a service of satisfying the academic need of students.

Teacher must develop a favorable attitude towards new methods and feeling that they have undertaken a noble task.

Teacher should help the student to improve their all-round personality.

Teacher should have adequate social knowledge and create social awareness among the students.

The teacher should give freedom in formulating the aims of education, in choosing the subjects and in deriving the method of teaching.

The teacher should act not only as a great teacher and also a great thinker.

The teacher should be a friend, a guide and a planner of activities related to teaching-learning process.

The teacher should establish harmonious relationship among students.

The teacher should not impose his ideas on the child.

The teacher should give a project to their students and do their own.

Teacher should accommodate the flexible curriculum by updating their knowledge.

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