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PATHOLOGY THE CURRICULUM OF RESEARCH METHODS LESSON FROM POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS' VIEWPOINTS AT SHAHED UNIVERSITY

PATOLOGÍA EL PLAN DE ESTUDIOS DE LOS MÉTODOS DE INVESTIGACIÓN LECCIÓN DESDE LOS PUNTOS DE VISTA DE LOS ESTUDIANTES DE POSGRADO EN LA UNIVERSIDAD SHAHED

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ABSTRACT

The country's higher education faces with many challenges and issues such as the lack of applicability of university education, lack of a suitable relationship between universities and other social sectors, disregard for research applications and providing service in the universities and the curriculum of the academic system, which plays a key role. Meanwhile, considering the specialization of the content of the postgraduate curriculum and the initiation of applied research, the research methods lesson has special importance and has an effective role in future researches. The purpose of this study is to investigate the pathology of the research methods curriculum from the perspective of postgraduate students, which was specifically studied at Shahed University. The present study consists of ten questions about the pathology of the research methods curriculum with emphasis on the nine elements of Klein. The method of present study is a descriptive survey and a closed-answer questionnaire is the tool that used in this study. The questionnaire of Shahed University postgraduate students consists of 40 questions in 9 categories of element of goals, content, teaching-learning strategies, grouping, learning activities, educational materials and resources, educational space, educational time and evaluation, which are arranged based on a five-level Likert scale. The statistical population of the present study was 1652 postgraduate students of Shahed University. 310 postgraduate students were selected by simple random sampling and participated in the study. The results of data analysis showed that students have evaluated the components of goal, content, teaching-learning strategies, grouping, materials, resources and evaluation as relatively desirable components, and they have also evaluated group activities and time as undesirable components.

Keywords:

Pathology, Curriculum, Research Methods Lesson, Postgraduate Students, Higher Education.

RESUMEN

La educación superior del país enfrenta muchos desafíos y problemas, como la falta de aplicabilidad de la educación universitaria, la falta de una relación adecuada entre las universidades y otros sectores sociales, el desprecio por las aplicaciones de investigación y la prestación de servicios en las universidades y el plan de estudios del sistema académico, que juega un papel clave. Mientras tanto, considerando la especialización del contenido del plan de estudios de posgrado y el inicio de la investigación aplicada, la lección sobre los métodos de investigación tiene una importancia especial y tiene un papel efectivo en futuras investigaciones. El propósito de este estudio es investigar la patología del plan de estudios de métodos de investigación desde la perspectiva de los estudiantes de posgrado, que se estudió específicamente en la Universidad Shahed. El presente estudio consta de diez preguntas sobre la patología del plan de estudios de métodos de investigación con énfasis en los nueve elementos de Klein. El método del presente estudio es una encuesta descriptiva y un cuestionario de respuesta cerrada es la herramienta que se utilizó en este estudio. El cuestionario de los estudiantes de posgrado de la Universidad Shahed consta de 40 preguntas en 9 categorías de elementos de objetivos, contenido, estrategias de enseñanza-aprendizaje, agrupación, actividades de aprendizaje, materiales y recursos educativos, espacio educativo, tiempo educativo y evaluación, que se organizan en función de un escala Likert de cinco niveles. La población estadística del presente estudio fue de 1652 estudiantes de posgrado de la Universidad Shahed. 310 estudiantes de posgrado fueron seleccionados por muestreo aleatorio simple y participaron en el estudio. Los resultados del análisis de datos mostraron que los estudiantes han evaluado los componentes de meta, contenido, estrategias de enseñanza-aprendizaje, agrupación, materiales, recursos y evaluación como componentes relativamente deseables, y también han evaluado las actividades grupales y el tiempo como componentes indeseables.

Palabras clave:

Pathology, Curriculum, Research Methods Lesson, Postgraduate Students, Higher Education.

INTRODUCTION

Considering the global efforts and identifying the major contributions and trends of recent reforms of curriculum, indicate that all nations with any developing or developed in social and political system concluded that identifying the educational issues and then the solution to that problem should be the primary condition of any curriculum policy. Therefore, they emphasize to recognize educational bottlenecks before making any reforms of curriculum. Understanding issues and failures of research methods course has many benefits for designers and experts of curriculum (Aghazadeh, 2005). Since curricula are among the most important elements of higher education, they must have the necessary context to meet their goals, tasks, and changes in order to play an effective role. Higher education in the 21st century is facing new changes and conditions and society has reached the post-industrial age from the traditional and industrial stage (Tehrani, 1997). Therefore, higher education institutions cannot live by that elements, it means traditional and industrial curricula, should make changes in today's age.

With the significant advances, which have been made in all different fields, the value of the curriculum of research method lesson has especially become important in the fields of humanities. Developing scientific researches and training skilled experts, competent specialists in each field, creating scientific capability for research method lesson and application of theoretical and empirical methods in the field of science and technique, will gradually enable any country to exit from importer of science thought and achievements of others' science and technology. In nowadays' world, meeting these needs are responsibility of universities. Universities have been recognized as the main core of thinking about issues that society faces them (Entwistle, 2014). Any curriculum in higher education must be adapted to the realities, needs and changes, and must be comprehensible in order to develop the capabilities and skills of students that can be applied in nowadays' world both individual and social dimension as effective outputs of higher education. So that, it has the necessary skills and knowledge to play a role in today's complex world and be able to cope with its changing structures. Otherwise, from many people, parents, employers and students view, their investment will not yield well. To this reason, the curriculum design team must first identify factors that affecting curriculum at the general level, and then, at a specific technical level, investigate the effect of these factors on curriculum elements. The greater consistency of decisions between these two levels will be cause more effective and high quality curriculum design (Mehrmohammadi, 2009).

However, one of the most important topics in universities is the subject of research method curriculum, its pathology and its different perceptions of how it is implemented. In this regard, universities play an important role in the development of society by conducting fundamental and applied researches, an important part of which can be evaluated by reporting on research activities that published by universities. Research method lesson in universities, due to the existence of theses, articles and researches, appear more frequently in higher education levels. The importance of postgraduate education comes from the fact that it is an important source of knowledge production because of the combination of education and research. According to research conducted in 2015, postgraduate students accounted for about 55% of the total number of researchers in the country, which this percentage has been probably increased due to higher enrollment rates and higher postgraduate courses, up to now (Adak, 2015).

Now, considering the importance of the research method curriculum skills among the other skills, the specific position of the research method lesson, the important role of research in the educational system, and many disabilities and problems of research which exist among students, the necessity of recognition of this course disadvantages require in the higher educational system. It is also necessary to identify and strengthen the weaknesses of this lesson in order to be effective for students and the quality of learning. Therefore, considering the importance of this lesson in order to improve and enhance the educational quality of it in the humanities field and also development of students 'scientific level, it is necessary to become familiar with the students' perspective. So the research questions are as follows:

1. To what extent is the research method lesson in humanities fields meet the predetermined goals of this lesson from postgraduated student's perspective of Shahed University?
2. To what extent is the content of research method lesson in the humanities fields' desirable from postgraduated student's perspective of Shahed University?
3. To what extent do teaching-learning strategies in the humanities fields seem to be favorable from postgraduated student's perspective of Shahed University?
4. To what extent is it desirable to grouping in research method lesson in the humanities fields' desirable from postgraduated student's perspective of Shahed University?

5. To what extent is teaching resources of research method lesson in humanities fields' desirable from postgraduated student's perspective of Shahed University?
6. To what extent is learning activities of research method lesson in humanities fields' desirable from postgraduated student's perspective of Shahed University?
7. To what extent is atmosphere of research method lesson in humanities fields' desirable from postgraduated student's perspective of Shahed University?
8. To what extent is time of research method lesson in humanities fields' desirable from postgraduated student's perspective of Shahed University?
9. To what extent is it desirable to evaluate the research method lesson in humanities fields from postgraduated student's perspective of Shahed University?
10. To what extent is implementation of research method lesson in the humanities fields' desirable from postgraduated student's perspective of Shahed University?
11. What are some solutions offered by postgraduate students of Shahed University to improve the curriculum of research method lesson?

METHODOLOGY

This research is descriptive based on the purpose of the study, is a survey study based on data collection method, and quantitative study based on the governing framework.

The statistical population of this study includes all postgraduate students in the faculties of humanities, agriculture, engineering, basic sciences and nursing of Shahed University that their numbers is more than 310 students. Due to the importance of the thesis in postgraduate education level, 310 postgraduate students of Shahed University have been included in this study in the statistical sample. They were selected by simple random sampling based on sample size.

It should be noted that the most important method of data gathering in this study is field method and a researcher-made questionnaire is the tool for gathering data. The parametric T-Test of variance is as the data analysis method.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Attention to the individual differences of students in the desirable pattern of research methods curriculum at the non-prescription level is mainly raised within the classroom. In other words, in designing the research methods curriculum, the goals are generally set rather than specific and behavioral and represent the overall or national framework of the curriculum. Implementation or training

methods have not been defined and are flexible. In other words, the characteristics and features of a particular group or students (interests, needs, and talents) are determinative in shaping the teaching research method lesson. Also, in this type of curriculum, by accepting diversity in executive methods and also use of educational resources, atmosphere and floating grouping of students, can provide a suitable context for suitable use of individual differences in different dimensions of research activities. In other words, in this strategy, the program's goals and objectives must be operationalized and implemented in accordance with the student's needs and goals in a variety of ways (Shahbaz, 2014).

Findings from answers to first question showed that students believe that the achievement level to predetermined goals of research method lesson in the humanities fields is in average level to high. Educational goals are criteria for selecting lessons, content, setting teaching methods, preparing exams and evaluation tools. Therefore, to evaluate curricula, first of all, make sure about determination of educational goals. Based on the findings of this study, the book of research method lesson seems to have relatively high comprehensiveness. However, given the broad subject area of the research method, this comprehensiveness is with low naturally. It means, these books have a broad but shallow subject area, and the extent of dealing with the various issues raised in these books, rather than being profound and practical, is only relatively broad in scope. Also, the goals element has an effect on the academic decline of the students considering their proportion to the characteristics of the students including their interests, needs and abilities. The quality of the goals in assessing the needs of the students is also low and efforts should be made to better match with needs of the students.

Findings from answers to second question indicate that the quality of content element is far from desirable level. In explaining this finding, it may be argued that the content of lesson may not provide the students with the basic and specialized concepts that needed or content was not required diversity to meet the needs and interests of the students. It can also be noted that content of research method lesson does not adequately prepare student for required skills and competence in the field, or even this content may not be relevant to scientific theories and findings so is low the level of regular and logical communication of lesson content with each other. Given this explanation, changing and modification of this factor seems to be necessary to achieve the desired level. Content selection should be based on specific principles. Incorporating contents into the curriculum is important during planning a lesson, and how to select the material and adhere to

specific principles is one of the most important criteria to consider during selecting content. Students also believe that the content of the research method lesson in the fields of humanities is moderately high. The findings of the study about curriculum content element show that inadequate content matching of curriculum goals and student characteristics, lack of attention to vertical and horizontal organization of curriculum content, are the main factors related to curriculum content element which affect the academic failure of the research method lesson. Also the curriculum content of research methods is not commensurate with the scientific and technological advancements of the world community, the needs and interests of the students and their learning ability. Also there isn't logical relationship or convergence between the various concepts presented in lesson of research methods.

Findings from answers to three research questions indicate that students believe that desirability level of teaching-learning strategies of research method lesson in humanities is far from desirable. In explaining this finding, it can be pointed out that professor's use fixed and passive methods in teaching-learning process and they have rarely used new learning strategies such as problem solving, research method, participatory activities which emphasizes on student activity. However, the use of a particular method in teaching process may be suitable for transferring a certain amount of knowledge, while it may be unsuitable for transferring other types of knowledge. In this case, curriculum planners may consider one or more of methods for all curricula, but in classroom, professor should consider conditions and position of students and also type of course subject, select the suitable way to teach subject in order to make learning better and more effective. The results showed that teaching-learning strategy is far from the desired level and it is necessary to revise the teaching-learning strategies.

Findings from answers to fourth question of this research show that students believe that the desirability level of students grouping in research methods lesson in the humanities fields is in average level to low. The grouping element of students is effective because of usage level of students from discussions and activities by group to learn the research method lesson, and proper monitoring and guidance level of group activities in order to progress all group members. Grouping is another component, which facilitates students' learning process. Students of a training center are grouped in a special degrees and classrooms and within the classroom, based on their ability and interests, personal choice, belonging to social groups, and other criteria, which are set by professors and students. Creating a context for group collaboration among

students motivates their minds. In collaborative teaching, everyone strives to achieve results and help each other to learn. The grouping component, like other components, is far from the desired level and needs to be revised.

Findings from the answers to the fifth question of this study show that students believe that the desirability level of teaching resources of the research methods lesson in the humanities fields was in average to low. Also, the teaching materials used in classroom are not compatible with students' interests. Students believe that the use of individual and group teaching materials can facilitate learning concepts in research method lesson. Lack of basic facilities for educational aid and educational technology at some universities, and lack of knowledge of some professors in use of educational technology, are the main factors associated with the element of educational materials and resources. However, using educational resources and aids makes learning faster, more effective, and more sustainable for learners, and lack of adequate information resources such as the Internet and books at the university is perceptible to students. There may also be insufficient use of credible and up-to-date scientific resources. As a result, more attention is needed to improve the quality of this factor in the research method curriculum.

Findings from the answers of sixth question indicate that students believe that the desirability level of learning activities in research method courses in the humanities fields is in average level to low. Student activities include a wide range of activities, such as memorizing, listening, reading, simulating, etc. So, the professor's task is to involve students with the issues. The curriculum should also be such that it does not interfere with students' activities, because learning is done through what students do, not through what the professor says. Also, headings of research method lesson may not allow teachers to implement active teaching methods in the classroom and may not engage students with research and problem-solving activities in the teaching process and, more importantly, most likely individual or collective student learning activities are not in line with the goals of the research method lesson curriculum. Therefore, as students' activities lead to the development of their comprehension and thinking skills and abilities, the teaching activity of students should be given greater importance by professors so that they will have the opportunity to suitable practices with intended goals.

Findings from answers to seventh question of this study show that in the viewpoint of students, the desirability level of research method lesson in the humanities fields is in average to low. Universities' teaching space is not suitable for learning research method lesson in terms of quantity and quality, and students believe that educational spaces

outside universities can be very useful and effective for learning the concepts of this course. Therefore, the element of educational space, considering the proportion of students and the physical conditions of the educational environment, is effective in students' academic achievement in research method lesson.

Findings from answers to eighth question indicate that time is a fundamental component in the curriculum that professors at the educational level, and students at the empirical level, must decide about the time required for learning processes. Lack of attention to the component of time in the curriculum makes the teacher unable to convey the essential content of the lesson to student. Therefore, this affect the other steps of the lesson and ultimately, it causes ineffectiveness of the curriculum. Students also find the desirability level of research method lesson in the humanities fields in average to low. Students believe that the time of the sessions for teaching and learning any concepts of the research method lesson is not sufficient and it was not possible to teach quality concepts. The findings also showed that this element has an effect on the academic failure of students in the research method lesson due to the proportion of the content of the book with the time allocated to it and the timing the research method lesson.

Findings from answers to ninth question indicate that students consider the desirability level of evaluating the research method lesson in the humanities fields in average to low. They also believe that the evaluation of this course is not geared towards the ways in which teacher and student participation is required and in that classroom does not undergo a step-by-step evaluation of students' learning. Students also believe that self-evaluation can be useful in research method lesson. Evaluation element of students with regard to the validity and reliability of exam questions such as the appropriateness of questions with the goals, content and methods of teaching, the importance and accuracy of the professors in modifying their teaching methods based on the results of the evaluations, as well as the quality of the continuous evaluations has a greater effect on students' educational failure.

The findings from the answers to tenth question of study show that the desirability level of applying the research method lesson in the humanities fields is in average to high. Since curriculum is a complex system of elements and processes that are highly interdependent and interactive, all elements of the curriculum must be considered for effective teaching of the research method lesson. According to more detailed research results, the effect of some elements such as learning activities, teaching time, teaching-learning strategies and student evaluation is

more significant than other curriculum elements. Therefore, the curriculum of research method lesson should include more opportunities for meaningful learning activities alongside effective teaching and learning strategies and comprehensive and quality evaluation methods. At the same time, neglecting other elements of the curriculum and failing to address the problems and failures associated with it, will disrupt the balance of this complex system (curriculum) that will result in students' educational failure.

The findings from the answers to eleventh research question provide guidelines for improving the curriculum of research method lesson for graduate students at Shahed University, such as increasing the teaching hours of the research method course according to the volume of the book, teaching classroom research methods in practice, encouraging students to form research groups.

CONCLUSIONS

Relationship between the elements of curriculum and their interaction with each other demands a systematic education system, which guide the program both at the macro and micro levels properly by designing the appropriate model and predicting and applying the elements in the right place. In this study, the effectiveness of goals, content, teaching-learning strategies, grouping, learning materials and resources, atmosphere, evaluation, medium to high research method course and the effectiveness of the time and activities of the curriculum of this course, are in average to low. Goals, content, teaching-learning strategies and evaluation are the main elements of the curriculum. So that, experts of curriculum have identified these four elements as key elements of the curriculum.

The purpose of the present study was to measure the range of goals in all three domains of knowledge, attitude and skills that students have evaluated the desirability of goals in average to high. Lack of specific goals and programs, and lack of familiarity with the workgroup culture are the major obstacles of the research. Having good content, being up to date and learner-centered in addition to creating a productive classroom environment makes it less difficult for the teacher to use new teaching methods, new and active teaching activities and also appropriate grouping. The present study showed that students believe that the content of research method lesson is in average to high. Also, the lack of book and written content for the research method lesson are obstacles of this lesson for achieving to the goals of this lesson. Unsuitable content affects teaching methods, learning activities, evaluation and even learning time. Applying modern teaching methods, especially in the research method lesson, will improve and enhance students' learning. In the element

of grouping, students believe that the desirability of research method lesson has been realized in average to low level. On the other hand, learning activities are inextricably linked to content and teaching methods. The domain of student learning activities is restricted by these two elements. The practical nature of research method lesson requires more extensive student work than other courses. Students believe that learning activities of curriculum for research methods lesson are moderately low. Evaluation is one of the last stages of the curriculum, but it is important in terms of providing opportunities for program modification and identifying the shortcomings of future programs. Evaluation is a systematic process, which is applied at different levels of the program, before the formulation begins, the process and the end. In the present study, students believe that the desirability of curriculum evaluation of research methods has been realized in average to high level.

Students also considered the desirability of conducting research method lesson in average to low level. The learner is known as a key element of the teaching-learning process, and the educational system has always sought to facilitate the learning process. The use of educational materials and teaching aids, suitable content, new teaching methods, grouping, learning activities, teaching atmosphere and time; and evaluation methods have a great effect on facilitating the learning process. According to Klein's theory, the relationship of elements interacts with each other, and failure to conduct each element can affect the performance of all elements. Lack of educational resources and equipment, unsuitable content, teacher-centered classrooms, inadequate evaluation system are the main obstacles to achieving predetermined goals. Investigating the curriculum of research method lesson and identifying the shortcomings and causes of the failure of this lesson to gain comprehensive knowledge and resolve these problems will help to enhance students' learning. Research methods books are saturated with a theoretical approach, and future writers should focus more on the practical aspects and teaching the fundamental research skills.

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