

The Importance and Role of Students' Activities in the Educational Learning Process

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Abstract

The study aimed at clarifying the importance of students' activities and its role in the educational learning process through identifying the concept of students' activities and its functions and the basic standards for choosing such activities. It also aimed to explain the kinds of those activities and the difficulties that face it, in addition to the procedures taken to overcome such obstacles. The descriptive survey method was used and all what was written about such activities from the references, magazines, periodicals and internet. The findings of study showed the importance of students' activities and its role in forming a stable and perfect personality for the students' as such activities are a main part of the learning process that contributed effectively in revealing the students' abilities, tendencies and refining their hobbies. In addition, the students' activities contributed in achieving a group of functions psychological, educational, social and recreational. Moreover, the students' activities are varied cultural, social, sports, art, professional and scientific. The importance of the school activity is originated from its educational value which is clarified enough through the achieved objectives of the educational process. In the light of the findings of the study, the researches came up with some recommendations. They are as follows: Preparing guides for students' activities explaining its importance, kinds, standards, and how it is practiced. Including special topics in students' activities to be within the programs of preparing and training teachers. Directing towards the sources of different activities to give the students' a chance for suggesting activities as the philosophy of school activities is based on students. Finding suitable ways for taking into consideration the activities in the evaluation of the teacher and the student, as well.

Key Words : Students' Activities, Educational learning process, Functions of students' activities.

Introduction

Students' activities are considered as basic means for achieving lots of correct educational objectives if it is well-organized and well-supervised. It is a basic pillar in the modern education as all educators nowadays have agreed upon the importance of students' activity and its effective role in achieving the objectives of education by considering it as a mean of enriching the curriculum. The curriculum achieves the growth process for the students and the activity contributes greatly in such process by discovering the students' hobbies, abilities, tendencies and readiness. In addition, the activities refine and develop the students' personalities and enable them to face the learning situations, guide them scientifically and vocationally in the right way and also help them in having good social relations through practicing different real activities. It is important to assure that students' activities have to be characterized by team work to give students' a chance for social work, cooperating with each other to serve themselves and their communities within the available possibilities.

Problems and Questions of the Study

The problem of the study is identified through the following questions :

1. What is the concept of students' activity?
2. What is the importance of students' activities?
3. What are the objectives of students' activities?
4. What are the functions of students' activities?
5. What are the basic standards for choosing the students' activities?
6. What are the kinds of students' activities?
7. What are the difficulties that face the students' activities?
8. What are the procedures that should be taken to overcome the difficulties that face the students' activities?

Significance of the study

The significance of the study is in its objectives and subjects. In addition to the need for this research because of the lack of the studies in this domain to the mind of the researchers. In addition, the study is also significant because of the importance of the students' activities as being considered a real basic part of the school curriculum according to its modern concept. Such school activities are main important components in building up and refining the students' personalities. Lots of educational objectives are achieved through the activities that are practiced outside the classroom; in addition, the effectiveness of the teacher inside the classroom is greatly based on the practice of the students' activities at school. The students' maximum growth cannot be completed only inside the classrooms which are incapable of offering activities for the students'. Therefore, the complete education demands general educational atmosphere at school that could offer the students' good situation for practicing their school activities. Moreover, the study is also significant because the general objectives for the students' activities are originated from the general objectives of the education policy. The general students' activities objective is to build up a stabilized students' character socially, mentally, physically and emotionally to become a beneficial citizen serving his/her religion, country and nation.

Objectives of the study

The study seeks for achieving its main objective from

Which a number of objectives are originated. Those objectives also are to be achieved. These are as follows :

- Identifying the concept of students' activities.
- Investigating the importance of students' activities.
- Clarifying the objectives of students' activities.
- Identifying the functions of students' activities.
- Identifying the difficulties that face the students' activities.
- Clarifying the kinds of students' activities.
- Taking the right procedures to overcome the difficulties facing students' activities.

Terms of the study

Students' activities : all actions practiced by the students in different domains, culturally, socially, sports and artistic whether chosen according to their tendencies, hobbies or personal abilities or those outside academic studying inside school or outside school in order to enable them acquire skills, values, knowledge and experience in order to do their roles after school in their community.

Learning educational process : it is a group of methods, techniques, aids and activities that lead to enhancement of the learner's performance to get the different facts and knowledge.
The teacher and the student share this process together.

Review of Related Literature

The researchers have reviewed different related studies Arabic and Foreign. They are as follows arranged according to the date of edition.

The findings of the study conducted by Gullen (2000) indicated that the students who share in the school activities get more self-confidence and self-esteem and respect for others. The findings in the study of Brighthouse and Woods (2000) showed that the school activity students are distinguished academically and in their positive behaviors with their peers and instructors, in addition to having leadership, social reaction, seriousness, cleverness, effective participation, creativity and being willing to get into new experiments with full confidence. In addition, the findings of Andrews (2001) indicated that the schools activities helped the students to share effectively in the national communities and cooperate with them in different fields. Al Subeihi (2001) conducted a research paper about students' activities in the Saudi universities aiming to shed light on the real situations of such activities, its problem and the causes of weak points that could not push forward students to take part in. In addition, the study aimed at offering a mechanism to help students share effectively in school activities as a completion part of learning educational process. The researchers discussed the reasons for the weakness of students' activity plan connected with the curricula and the textbooks, the unsuitability of such activities with schooling time, weakness of awareness of the objectives of the activities and having no corporation with the scientific department to prepare an activity plan. Holloway (2002) conducted a study aimed to identify the reasons that motivate students to participate in the school activities voluntarily. The findings of the study showed that the spiritual encouragement for the students to take part in such activities and the good positive relation between students and those in charge of activities, in addition to loyalty to their colleges all those are the

main causes that push the students to share effectively in school activities. Khaled Anzy and Nael Akhras (2003) conducted a study about trainee college teachers, participation in the activities which was between acceptance and refusal. The study aimed to investigate the reasons for students' weak participation in the trainee college teachers activities in the kingdom and to offer some recommendations based on the findings of the study to increase the interaction of the students with the activities. The researchers designed a questionnaire for collecting data delivered to the sample of the study the trainee college teachers in the kingdom which consisted of 468. The findings showed the reasons for non-participating in the activities which were lots of different date exams, heavy student's time table, students' ignorance of the activity educational importance, and less motivations. The researchers recommended in light of the findings of the study to have a change in the attitudes towards the activities related to the scientific, artistic, social, cultural, sports and camping activities. Ahmad (2005) conducted another study aimed at identifying the concept of students' activities, its beginning, its development in the Egyptian community, in addition to defining the political awareness concept, its dimensions and the extent to which the students' activities contribute in developing the political awareness for the students. The study explained the importance of students' activities in the complete growth of students and the relation of awareness with a group of concepts related to political culture, political growing up, political education and political participation. Without political culture transferred to the individuals through the processes, of political growing up and education and through the different community establishment there will be no individuals political awareness. Hussein (2005) conducted a study aimed to identify the role of students activities in backing up the participation values for Al Azhar university students. The findings indicated that male students participated more effectively in the activities than females; in addition, the support of some values : voluntary work, cooperation, honesty, good work, modesty, equality, responsible freedom, obedience, achievements and community problem-solving, got from the activities. Hijazi (2006) conducted another study aimed at identifying the extant of students' awareness of activities, analyzing its role in developing the creativity through the teacher's performance of school activity, and putting forward a proposed perception for activating the role of school activities in developing creativity. The findings showed that new graduated private school teachers were more caring of creative activities than the public schools. In addition, the piling up of curricula is considered an obstacle in practicing the students' activity.

Reviewing the Related Studies

In the light of previous studies, it is clear that there were different objectives for students' activities. Some objectives shed light on the reality of students' activities, the reasons that could motivate students to take part in school activities voluntarily, the role of such activities in supporting participation values and the extent of the contribution of students' activities in developing the students' political awareness. Meanwhile, the current study aimed at identifying the students' activities and its position in the educational process. descriptive analytical survey method is used in this study; whereas the descriptive analytical method used in some related studies but in other studies the survey descriptive method was used. The current study benefited from the previous related studies in identifying the topics of the study.

Methodology of the Study

This study is theoretical and the survey analytical descriptive method is used depending on reviewing the related literature that is related to the topic of the study, of the students' activities and its position in the educational process. Then some such literature is interpreted and analyzed to answer the questions of the study.

Students' Activities: Concept, Importance, Objectives

Concept of Students' Activities

The students' activities are considered an important component in forming, refining and developing the students' personality physically, mentally, psychologically and socially. In addition, lots of educational targets are achieved through the self out-door activities. Therefore, it is necessary to afford all financial and human capabilities in order to provide a suitable educational atmosphere inside schools and outside its walls for practicing different activities (Al Khateeb, 2008). Al Dakheel (2001) identifies such activities as a group of experiences and practices the students acquire which is a parallel process for the learning process and really completes it. Al Harbi (2007) describes the students' activities as "those different educational programs and well-planned in-advanced, carried out inside and outside school whether those programs are directly related to the textbooks or independent aimed at developing the student's personality, mentally, psychologically, social and physically to prepare students well for all dimensions and challenging of life. In light of what has been previously explained about the identification of students' activities, it is clear that such activities are done by the

students according to their tendencies and desires under the supervision of specialists and well-planned and organized by the educational in-charge persons by providing all demands and needs for achieving specific educational objectives entitled as : cultural, social and sports activities.

The Importance of Students' Activities

The importance of the students' activities is due to its educational benefit as it has a direct impact on the students' performance and personality, as well because such activities respond to students' desires, needs and affect their attitudes. Most studies point out the great contribution of the students' activities to the educational process in general and to their tendencies and attitudes, in particular (Gullen, 2000). Such activities enhance students' academic achievement and meet their demands (Andrews, 2001). In addition, through activities the students acquire scientific, practical, moral and social experiences that back up their personalities, such as cooperation with others, holding responsibility, self-control, sharing in decision making and also planning. Such things cannot be acquired inside the classroom (Chang, 2002). Students' activities are also considered an effective fertile field for developing the relationships, social values and morals through practical experiences as in camping, drama, cantein, local environment service, and voluntary work. They get big organized and purposeful chances to develop and strengthen the human relations, acquiring new habits, skills, values, ways of thinking to go on in studying and achieve being good citizens (Al Fahed, 2001). Moreover, the activities develop the students' independence, leadership and self-confidence, in addition to over_estimating time and hard work (Al Dakheel, 2002). The students' activities contribute in the acquisition of good manners, and good treatment to others (Al Fahed, 2001), Al Dawood (2001) stated that such activities support the students' hobbies and discover it at an early age; whereas Al Sadhan (2001) pointed out that students' activities meet the emotional needs of the individual to be skillful in life and in school achievement (Al Sadhan, 2004), Shahatah (2004) assured in this domain that such activities enhance friendship values, practice, public services and democracy in addition to respecting the laws.

Furthermore, the students' activities reveal the students' abilities, tendencies and refine their hobbies to give them a good chance for creativity and being distinguished (Meena, 2004).

The Objectives of the Students' Activities

The general objectives of students' activities can be summarized as follows :

- planting the principles and values of Islamic religion and translating it into a real work to be planted in students' mind and soul.
- strengthening the social values, such as cooperation, good competition, structural dialogue and accepting the other.
- strengthening the patriot feeling, obedience for the leaders and respecting the scientists.
- strengthening the positive relation among school, family and community as being the effective environment in the students' behavior.
- discovering the students' skills and talents to be developed and well-guided for the sake of the individual and the community, as well.
- serving the scientific material to be easily comprehended through practice.
- directing the students to well_used of time.
- training the students of positive thinking for problem solving.
- caring and preserving the national capability (Abdel hameed, 2007, p.31-32).

Those objectives need cooperated efforts among all parts of educational process to achieve success.

Al Harbi (2007) stated the objectives of students' activities as follows :

1. building up the complete personality to give the student a chance to be a good citizen and serve his/her country.
2. practicing the good morals which is originated from the good Islamic education in an applied scientific way through purposeful programs and activities.
3. completing the role of textbooks in building up the good students' personality.
4. gearing the motivations and instincts correctly to benefit the individual and the group, as well.
5. giving the chance to the students to express themselves to reveal their hobbies, and capabilities.
6. encouraging the gifted students to be highly succeeded and progressed.

7. contributing in finding out a good a good relation between school and local community by increasing the role of school in serving the community through activating the role of the available institution in the community.

8. planting the cooperation, sacrifice, and giving in the students.

9 .treating some negative behaviors of the students, such as isolation, teamwork weakness, selfishness and the disability of facing people.

Functions of students' activities

Psychological function

Students' activities works on developing self-confidence and reducing anxiety and different kinds of psychological disorders which lead to good psychological health that helps students' hold responsibility, be forgiver and cooperative. Therefore, such activities become a successful work coming up from the students' motivations, tendencies and developing his/her hobbies leading students to be respectful to work and comprehend better the scientific materials by using different senses and being well-attached to the values and legacy of the nation (Alogoul & Al Maltah, 2004)

Function Educational and Learning

Students' activities provides a good opportunity for learning as it is a part of the learning program; it expands the students' perceptions, modifies their behaviors towards what is good. In addition, such activities help students get to know their abilities, tendencies, desires and develop it, such as achieving the concept of self-continous learning, providing direct physical experiences, developing a number of cognitive skills and creating awareness of the importance of leisure time (Al Nassar, 2006, p.12-14) Students' activities could be the best supportive pillars of school textbooks if it is well-planned and well-connected with the textbooks, which at the end contribute greatly in fixing the information in students' mind. The students need physical experiences while studying different topics and such activities help in providing such experiences (Daher, 2004).

Social Functions

This function includes preparing the student for life by establishing social relations, neglecting and fighting the thoughts of discrimination according to race, or religion and encouraging the social interaction among different people in order to get a healthy life within the frame of cooperative and democratic environment (Al Kharash, 2004).

Entertainment Function

Students' suffer from different problems, such as exam anxiety, financial and weak mingling with others in life; therefore, students' activities work on reducing psychological and social pressure and simplify positive social interaction with others, in addition to structural cooperation (Al Dayel, 2002).

Kinds of Students activites

Students' activities are varied to achieve its different function according to the students' interest, school atmosphere and the common philosophy in the community. It is better for such activities to be more varied in the secondary stage in order to meet the different needs of the students and to care about the individual differences among them. Such activities are practiced inside and outside the school individually or in groups. Those activities are five : cultural, social, sports, art and scientific and each includes a number of branch activities.

The following are the kinds of activities :

1.Cultural activities that contribute in providing the students with the suitable information and enhancing language and literature and having good speech with others through contests, drama and school radio that reinforce students' self-confidence (Al Qutaish, 2011, p.67).

2. Social activities that are concerned with building up responsible social personality through interacting with others in an exchangeable lovable atmosphere that increase students' social experiences. This can be done through group activities, visits and journeys in which students face the nature and get the direct experience (Abu Al Atta, 2006).

3.Different sport activities which are educational work on raising the youth stabilizing and perfectly in physical and mental domains through sport championships. Such activities focus on team work and cooperation among students for good competition and developing attitudes towards honesty (Saleem, 2006).

4. Art and vocational activities are a group of practical practices for students inside schools. The students benefit

from the environment through drawings and all kinds of artistic work (Abdel Hameed, 2005).

5. Scientific activities that enable students to practice their hobbies and develop the scientific research by training on the logic thinking skills. In addition, such activities help students express their abilities and their applied scientific common methods through experiments, visits and scientific programs (Al Dakheel, 2002, p.63).

Basic standards in choosing the students' activities and the difficulties that face the school activities and ways of overcoming it

1. Basic standards for choosing the students' activities

Students' activities have a prominent role in making the educational process successful; therefore, they should be highly-chosen to be effective in achieving the educational objectives. Structural activities should achieve the planned objectives and the following standards have to be into consideration (Al Omari, 2010, p.5-6).

1. It should suit the cognitive, emotional, physical, psychological and social growth that lead to the students' comprehensive growth.
2. It should have clear and specific objectives originated from the general education targets in order to achieve the learning objectives.
3. It should be varied to suit the students' different tendencies and attitudes to meet their desires and needs.
4. There should be continuous assessment for the students' activities in order to correct any mistakes.
5. There should be applicable and measurable planning for the students' activities.

Difficulties facing the students' activities

In spite of the importance of the students' activities, there are some difficulties. These are as follows:

- Non-convinced parents of the activities and being frightened of their children's loss of achievement and so they don't encourage such activities are not supported.
- Unavailability of essential capabilities (financial, material, human resources) for effective activities.
- Unavailability of specialized supervisors for the school activities, in case there is one the teaching burden cut him/her off from supervising the activities.
- Uneasiness of the teachers' tasks with the extra work of supervision.
- underestimating the students' activities by being considered by the teachers as extra burden.
- Unseriousness of the way the principals deal with the periods of students' activities.
- Unclear objectives of the activities to the students and teachers, as well.
- The activity period is not included in the teacher's timetable.
- The school activity is not included in the components of the teachers' and students assessment which underestimate the activities.
- Lack of specialized courses of the students' activities.
- Having no specific funding for students' activities.
- Having no rules controlling the students to be committed to the activities.
- weakness in preparing teachers (pre-service) to organize and increase the students' activities.
- Unavailability of extra time for practicing the students' activities.
- Crowded classes (Abdel Maksoud, 2008).

Overcoming the difficulties facing the students' activities

To overcome such difficulties the following should be taken into consideration :

- Having training courses for the teachers and the supervisors of students' activities.
- Providing the right capabilities to carry out the students' activities in order to achieve its educational objectives.
- Educating the students and the parents about the objectives and the importance of the activities.
- Assigning a specialized supervisor for the activities in each school by giving him/her low teaching burden.
- Good planning for the activities and leaving out randomly to have such activities as a part of the educational process.
- Having varied activities to meet the students' abilities and tendencies.
- Giving the students an opportunity to put forward a plan for the activity and a chance to carry it out.
- Connecting the activities with the educational programs and objectives to be practiced in a good atmosphere.
- Provoking the parents to encourage their children to participate in the activities by inviting those parents to

watch their children (Abdel Maksou,2008).

Findings and Recommendations

The researchers have come up with following findings :

- The importance and the role of the students' activities in giving the student a perfect stable personality as it is a main part of the educational process.
- The students' activities contribute effectively in revealing the students' abilities and tendencies, in addition to refining their talents.
- It shares in achieving a number of functions : psychological, educational, social and entertainment.
- Variations of the activities : cultural, social, sports, art, vocational and scientific.
- The importance of students' activities are originated from its educational value which is clearly clarified in the objectives of the educational process.

In the Light of the findings the researchers have the following recommendations :

- Preparing guides for the students' activities explaining its importance, kinds and its practice standards.
- Inserting special topics in the activities in the programs of teacher's preparation.
- Gearing the attention towards the different students' activities by giving better chance for the students to suggest some activities because the school activities are student-centered.
- Finding suitable ways to take the activities into consideration while assessing the teacher and the student, as well.

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