The effect of the active teaching method on the academic achievement in the Religious concepts

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of using the active teaching method in the religious concepts of the students in grade second in Zarrinshahr schools. 50 students were chosen by cluster random sampling and were divided in two groups of experimental and control randomly. First two groups tested by pre-test then, independent variable was applied for 8 sessions and then achievement tests (post-test). The difference t-test was used to test research hypotheses. The results of the test the hypothesis is that "academic achievement of students who learn with active method teaching than students who learn with non active teaching, is more

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1-Introduction

Comprehensive development and education of human beings are among the goals of education systems. Curriculum theorists believe that via applying teaching methods we can attempt to achieve these goals which are under direct or indirect influence of those methods (Motamedi, 2005). Active methods are those which stimulate a child’s activity in relation with his/her general needs; the techniques used in these methods follow the child’s mental development and the way he/she has been socialized (Fazli Khani, 2006). Using active methods requires personal attempts by the child. A child’s motor and sensory activities at childhood are embodied in activities such as combining the components, constructing some parts, and deductions (Shabani, 2001). John Dewey lays much emphasis on the learner’s experience during the learning; in his book titled Experience and Education, he says: “A student is an active being who interferes and interacts with their environment. A student learns through their activities and develops their own mind through the behavior they are participating in.” According to Dewey, a teacher’s duty is guidance of thought and he/she should routinely provoke thinking in the students (quoted in Soleimanpour, 2005). The Swiss scholar, Piaget, is among those who realized the importance of active methods more than others did and recommended using them (quoted in Abbasi, 1997). In order to solve the problem of

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students’ lack of curiosity and participation, one can use active, dynamic methods to prevent such superficial attitudes in students (Aghazadeh, 2005).

In the last several decades, various researches have been conducted in order to study the effects of teaching methods for different situations.

In a research on participatory learning, Ronald (1997) showed that the application of this approach in teaching was profoundly important; in fact, through discussion and consultation within groups, students could propose various solutions to related problems (quoted in Keramati, 2005).

Shabani (1995) showed that active teaching methods were more effective in enhancing the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral abilities of students within the new system of education in Iran. Also, Abbasian (1997) carried out a research and found that the students in the experimental group, who had been educated through active models and methods, were by far more successful than the students of the control group, who had been educated through traditional teaching methods.

Among different materials of the curriculum, ‘religion’ is an indispensable one. The findings of the researches done by great scholars such as Goldman, Harms, and Piaget on cognitive and religious development in students indicate that teaching methods and presented concepts should be compatible with their perception, limitations and needs. In his studies, Goldman found out that children’s ability to understand religious concepts increases step-by-step, and he identifies five steps in this regard:

1) Before religious thinking period (up to 7 years of age);
2) First incomplete religious thinking period (7–9);
3) Second incomplete religious thinking period (9–11);
4) First personal religious thinking period (11–13);
5) Second personal religious thinking period (beyond 13).

Despite the plethora of research in the fields of teaching methods, educational achievement, and teaching religious concepts, the scope and importance of this subject and lack of sufficient research on the effects of teaching methods on religious concepts encouraged the researcher to launch a study in this regard; therefore, this study is a comparison between active and inactive (traditional) teaching methods and their effect on students educational achievement in the ‘religious concepts’ course.

2-Research method:

In the present research, the researcher tries to identify principles and methods that enhance the learning of religious concepts, hence the experimental method with pre-test and post-test and control group was applied.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.1. Group</th>
<th>1.2. Random selection</th>
<th>1.3. Pre-test</th>
<th>1.4. Independent variable</th>
<th>1.5. Post-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.6. Experimental</td>
<td>1.7. R</td>
<td>1.8. T1</td>
<td>1.9. X</td>
<td>1.10. T2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Before applying the independent variable, both groups was administered a researcher-made pre-test. Then the independent variable (active teaching method) was applied for 15 sessions. After that, another researcher-made test was administered, and finally the difference between pre-test and post-test scores of each testee was calculated.

The statistical population comprised of all third grade elementary students in the academic year 2011–2012. The statistical sample comprised of 50 students who were selected through cluster sampling method: among schools in the town of Zarrin-Shahr, Iran, one school was randomly selected, and then two classes were randomly selected from among its classes. After that, one class (n=25) randomly underwent the independent variable (active teaching method) while the other went on with the traditional method of giving lectures.
2-1 Measurement instrument:

In this experimental study, a researcher-made test was used in order to measure the educational achievement of the students. Its reliability was calculated to be 85% with split-half method, and its validity was calculated to be 87% through content validity.

3-Findings

The research hypothesis was as follows: The educational achievement of the students who are taught with the active method is higher than that of the students who are taught with the traditional method. The results obtained after testing this hypothesis are presented in Table 2 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>df</th>
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<th>Si</th>
<th>MD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational achievement</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>2.43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 2 above, the value of t with the degree of freedom of 48 is 5.33 at the significance level of less than 0.001; therefore, it can be concluded that the null hypothesis is rejected and the research hypothesis is confirmed.

4-Discussion and Conclusion

In the current research, the effect of active teaching method on the learning of religious concepts was examined. The results confirmed the research hypothesis: “The educational achievement of the students who are taught with the active method is higher than that of the students who are taught with the traditional method”. These results are compatible with the findings of some other researches by Ronald (1997), Shabani (1995), and Abbasian (1995).

Active method is one of the modern methods of learning and teaching. It begins with forming groups, division of work, and active participation of students. With regard to the current research and by comparing it with other studies and by comparing the characteristics of the active method with how students learn, the positive effect of this method on students’ educational achievement was confirmed.

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