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Investigating the Practicality of Implementing Structural Functionalism Theory in the Teaching Practices of Basic Education Teachers in Tashkent, Uzbekistan

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Abstract

This research aimed to examine the extent to which teachers at the basic education level employ the Structural Functionalism Theory in their teaching practices. A three-dimensional observation card was developed and subjected to statistical analysis to determine its psychometric properties through validity and reliability testing. The instrument was administered to a sample of 67 basic education teachers. The results indicated that 42% of the teachers had a moderate level of use of the Structural Functionalism Theory in their teaching practices. The teachers reported that they partially incorporate the principles of the theory, particularly in promoting students' independent learning. The findings revealed that there were statistically significant differences ($p = 0.05$) in the implementation of the Structural Functionalism Theory based on the teachers' areas of specialization, with those in education showing higher levels of use. However, no significant differences were found between gender, academic qualifications, or years of experience and the teachers' practices of the principles supporting the Structural Functionalism Theory in learning.

Keywords

Structural Functionalism, Basic Education, Higher Education, Learning Methods, Teaching

1. Introduction

The Structural Functionalism theory is a sociological concept that seeks to explain the functioning of society by examining the relationships between its various social institutions, such as government, law, education, and religion (Glen-

da, 1996). This theory was influenced by the works of English philosopher and biologist Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) (Bray & Thomas, 1995).

According to the Structural-Functional perspective, society is seen as a complex system made up of interrelated parts, working together to maintain solidarity and stability (Eckstein, 1983; Dedea & Baskanb, 2011). The theory of functionalism was used to examine the extent to which teachers at the basic education level employ in their teaching practices the theory posits that our lives are structured by social structures, which are recurring patterns of social behavior. These structures, such as families and religious organizations, give shape to our lives and perform important functions for society as a whole, such as socialization and learning (Cowen, 2000). Education must, however, perform another function. As various jobs become vacant, they must be filled with the appropriate people. Therefore, the other purpose of education is to sort and rank individuals for placement in the labour market. Those who achieve the least, will be given the least demanding (intellectually at any rate, if not physically) jobs, and hence the least income.

The Structural Functionalism theory emphasizes that society is composed of various groups or institutions, each of which is cohesive, shares common norms, and has its own unique culture. According to Robert K. Merton, functionalism focuses on the more stable and concrete aspects of society, such as government or religion. However, any group that is large enough to be considered a social institution falls under the purview of Structural Functionalism, from religious denominations to sports clubs and beyond.

This theory posits that the way society is organized is the most natural and efficient way for it to be structured (Hartley, 2003). A general conceptual diagram of Structural functionalism shows that all of the different organizations and institutions in society are interdependent. If one institution changes, other institutions will adapt to this change, which ultimately slows down overall change in society (Parkyn, 1977).

Figure 1 of general diagram of structural functionalism is a visual representation that depicts the interrelated components of society and how they work together to maintain social stability and order. It shows how the different parts of society, such as institutions, norms, and values, are connected and contribute to the functioning of society as a whole. The diagram can be seen as a representation of the structural functionalist perspective, which views society as a complex system made up of interconnected parts that work together to meet the needs of individuals and maintain social stability. The diagram highlights the interdependence of these components and how changes in one area can impact the entire system. It is a useful tool for understanding the structural functionalist approach and the role of different aspects of society in maintaining social order.

Furthermore, functionalism developed slowly over time with the help of many sociologists in different parts of the world. Perhaps the most significant contributors to the initial development of this theory are Herbert Spencer, Émile

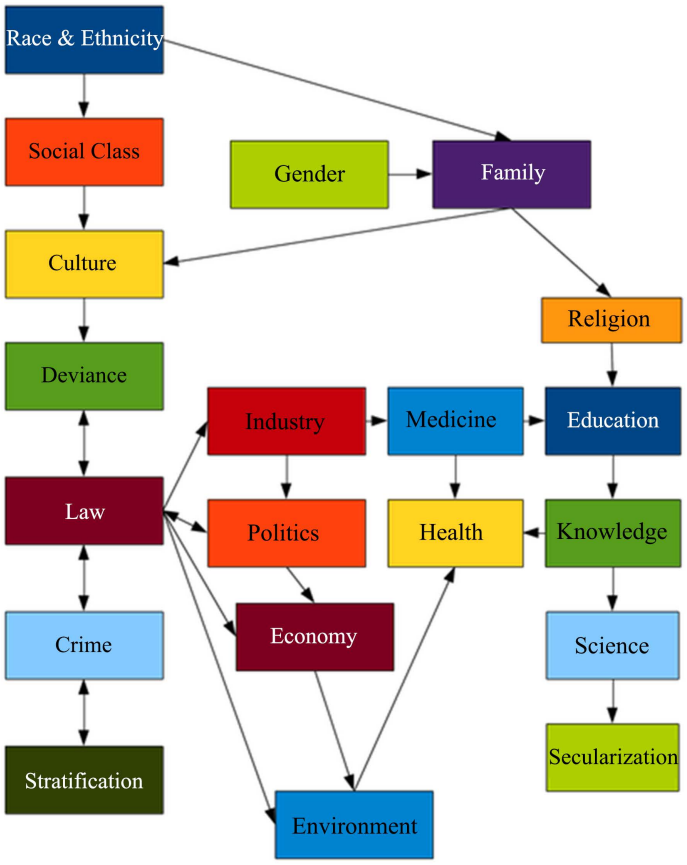

Figure 1. General diagram of structural functionalism.

Durkheim and A.R. Radcliffe-Brown (Bredefur & Frykholm, 2000; Almon, 2011).

Herbert Spencer, an English sociologist, was a forerunner of formalized Structural Functioanlism. He is best known for coining the phrase "survival of the fittest" in his book *Principles of Sociology* (1896). Spencer's intention was to support a societal form of natural selection. One of the primary focii in Spencer's work was societal equilibrium. Spencer argued that there is a natural tendency in society towards equilibrium. Thus, even when the conditions of the society are altered, the resulting changes to the social structure will balance out, returning the society to equilibrium

In the late 19th century French Sociologist Émile Durkheim laid the primary foundations of Structural Functionalism. Durkheim's theory was, at least in part, a response to evolutionary speculations of theorists such as E. B. Taylor. Durkheim originally wanted to explain social institutions as a shared way for individuals in society to meet their own biological needs. He wanted to understand the value of cultural and social traits by explaining them in regards to their contribution to the operation of the overall system of society and life. Later the focus for structural functionalism changed to be more about the ways that social institutions in society meet the social needs of individuals within that society (Brook & Brooks, 1999; Burry-Stock, 1993; Gupta, 2008).

Strength:

1) The functionalist perspective highlights how social institutions can serve both individual needs and the needs of society as a whole.

2) It demonstrates the interrelated nature of the different parts of society and how they work together for the benefit of the whole.

3) This approach presents a harmonious view of society and the family.

4) The functionalist approach places significant emphasis on the family, viewing it as a fundamental building block of society.

5) The family is considered crucial in transmitting shared norms and values that are widespread throughout society.

Weakness:

The functionalist approach tends to overlook the conflict and oppression emphasized by Marxist theorists.

The implementation of the Structural Functionalism approach in education is a modern teaching method due to its positive impact on the educational process. This approach can enhance student achievement in technology-related curriculum. The study found that science and mathematics teachers have a moderate level of knowledge and practice in using Structural Functionalism in the classroom.

To improve the effectiveness of education, there is a need to provide training and professional development for science teachers to align their teaching practices with the Structural Functionalism model (Cesar, 2006; Simon & Shiffer, 1993; Stein, Grover, & Henningsen, 1996). Additionally, teachers of mathematics should be trained in using the Structural Functionalism approach and given support, guidance, and assistance to enhance their teaching effectiveness.

Problem of the study:

The traditional role of teachers has shifted and they are no longer solely responsible for imparting knowledge and concepts to students. Instead, they act as guides and facilitators, encouraging students to think critically and independently. In light of this change, it is imperative that teachers are familiar with modern theories of education and apply them in their teaching practices.

The study aimed to assess the extent to which Structural Functionalism theory was being used in learning practices among basic education teachers in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The researcher sought to gather information through observations made by school advisers and managers.

Aims of the Study:

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which Structural Functionalism theory was being implemented in the learning practices of basic education teachers in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Additionally, the study aimed to test the significance of differences in the mean level of implementation based on factors such as specialization, gender, years of experience, academic qualification, and functional expertise.

Research Question:

Is the Structural Functionalism theory being utilized in the learning practices

of basic education teachers in Tashkent, Uzbekistan?

Hypothesis:

The results indicated that there were statistically significant differences in the usage of the Structural Functionalism theory in learning practices by teachers based on factors such as specialization, gender, years of experience, and academic qualification.

2. Methodology

Research Design:

This research adopted the analytic descriptive approach for answering the questions of the current study.

Participants:

The research study was conducted among 67 basic school teachers in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, with an equal representation of 33 male and 34 female teachers. The sample selection was carried out using a random sampling technique, which is a method of selecting a representative sample of individuals from a larger population. This technique helps to ensure that the sample is representative of the population, reducing the risk of selection bias and increasing the reliability and validity of the study results. By randomly selecting 67 teachers from the population of basic school teachers in Tashkent, the study aimed to gather a representative sample of data that would accurately reflect the reality of using the Structural Functionalism theory in learning practices among basic education teachers in the city.

Research Tools:

The instrument used in the study was based on previous research and was designed to assess the reality of using the Structural Functionalism theory in learning practices among basic education teachers in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The psychometric properties of the observation card, including its validity and reliability, were explored through a pilot study with 30 teachers.

To further validate the instrument, it was reviewed by a panel of experts in the field. After incorporating the suggested modifications from the panel, the instrument consisted of 30 items, each rated on a five-point Likert scale (Always applicable, almost applicable, sometimes applicable, seldom applicable, and not applicable at all). The teachers were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each item on the instrument. This helped to gather valuable information about the extent to which the Structural Functionalism theory was being used in learning practices among basic education teachers in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

Table 1 represents the validity of an observation card used in research. It provides information on the validity and reliability of the observation card across three dimensions, as well as for the observation card as a whole. The validity coefficient, represented by the square root of the reliability coefficient, is a measure of the accuracy of the results obtained from the observation card. The validity coefficients for dimensions 1, 2, and 3 are 0.97, 0.98, and 0.97, respectively, indicating that the results obtained from these dimensions are highly accurate.

Table 1. Validity of the observation card.

Dimensions	Validity Coefficient = √(Reliability)	Reliability Coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha)
1	0.97	0.94
2	0.98	0.95
3	0.97	0.94
The observation card as a whole	0.97	0.97

The reliability coefficient, represented by Cronbach's Alpha, is a measure of the consistency and stability of the results obtained from the observation card. The reliability coefficients for dimensions 1, 2, and 3 are 0.94, 0.95, and 0.94, respectively, indicating that the results obtained from these dimensions are consistent and stable.

Finally, the validity coefficient and reliability coefficient for the observation card as a whole are 0.98 and 0.97, respectively, indicating that the results obtained from the entire observation card are highly accurate and consistent. These results suggest that the observation card is a valid and reliable tool for collecting data in research.

3. Results

The level of reality of using structural functionalism theory in learning practices among teachers of basic education has been determined by calculating the range.

$$\text{Range} = \text{maximum (xi)} - \text{minimum (xi)}$$

where (xi) represents the set of values 133 − 88 = 45. It is worth mentioning that the observation card contains five options. The range has been divided into five categories to determine the length of the category:

$$(L) = 45/5 = 9$$

As presented in Table 2, 28 (42%) teachers out of 67 teachers have a moderate level in the reality of using structural functionalism theory in learning practices following with 24 teachers 36% have a very low level, 7 teachers 10% have a low level, 4 teachers 6% with very high level and also 4 teachers 6% with high level in the reality of using structural functionalism theory in learning practices (Figure 2).

The results showed variations in the extent of using the Structural Functionalism theory, as presented in Table 3. The scores for the first dimension, "Dialogue and social negotiation," were (M = 33.591, SD = 4.831, percentage = 66%). The scores for the second dimension, "Facilitate learning experience and learning process," were (M = 35.501, SD = 4.405, percentage = 71%). The scores for the third dimension, "To strengthen students' independent learning," were (M = 36.771, SD = 5.059, percentage = 74%). The overall score was (M = 107.013, SD = 11.845, percentage = 72%).

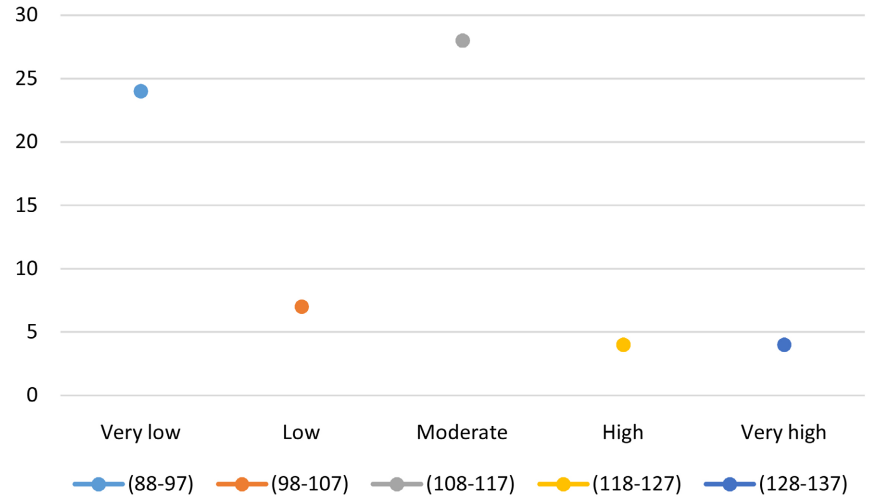

Figure 2. Levels of using structural functionalism theory.

Table 2. The levels of the reality in using structural functionalism theory in learning practices.

Level	The category	No. of teachers	%
Very High	(128 - 137)	4	6
High	(118 - 127)	4	6
Moderate	(108 - 117)	28	42
Low	(98 - 107)	7	10
Very Low	(88 - 97)	24	36
Total		67	100%

Table 3. Descriptive analysis of the observation card's dimensions.

Dimension	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	%
Dialogue and social negotiation	2254.00	33.6418	4.93811	67
Facilitate learning experience and learning process	2392.00	35.7015	4.60571	71
To strengthen students' independent learning	2457.00	36.6716	5.05841	73
Overall	7103.00	106.015	11.84047	71

Table 4 displays the mean and standard deviation for the specialization variable, with participants divided into two groups: Educational and Non-educational. An independent t-test was used to compare the means of these two groups. The results showed that there were statistically significant differences (at $p = 0.05$) in the extent of using the Structural Functionalism theory in learning practices among basic education teachers based on their specialization. The educational majors had a higher mean score (M = 108.2308, SD = 12.359), indicating that a background in education enhances their teaching skills and provides them with effective teaching strategies.

Table 5 presents the mean, standard deviation, degree of freedom, t-test, and significance of the participants based on gender. The results showed that female participants had a higher mean score (M = 107.6765, SD = 11.66118) compared to males (M = 104.3030, SD = 11.95691). However, the table also reveals that there were no statistically significant differences between the scores of male and female participants.

Table 6 shows the difference in the arithmetic mean on the years of experience in which the third dimension scored the highest arithmetic mean (M = 36.67, SD = 5.058).

Reverting to the analysis of ANOVA in Table 7 reveals that there were no statistically significant differences in using structural functionalism theory in learning practices among teachers of basic education according to the years of experience.

Table 8 displays the differences in the mean and standard deviation of the teachers based on their academic qualification. However, the analysis of ANOVA in Table 9 showed that there were no statistically significant differences related to the teachers' academic qualification due to the limited sample size.

Table 4. The arithmetic means, standard deviations, degree of freedom, t-test and significant of the items.

Dimension	Specialization	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t-test	Sig. (2-tailed)
1	Educational	39	34.7692	5.20355	65	2.274	0.026
	Not Educational	28	32.0714	4.13592			
2	Educational	39	35.7692	4.34960	65	2.241	0.037
	Not Educational	28	35.6071	5.02099			
3	Educational	39	37.6923	4.95322	65	1.993	0.050
	Not Educational	28	35.2500	4.94132			
Overall	Educational	39	108.2308	12.35966	65	1.999	0.051
	Not Educational	28	102.9286	10.52309			

Table 5. Independent samples test.

Dimension	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t-test	Sig. (2-tailed)
1	Male	33	33.0606	5.14137	65	−0.948	0.346
	Female	34	34.2059	4.74041			
2	Male	33	35.4545	4.75717	65	−0.430	0.669
	Female	34	35.9412	4.51221			
3	Male	33	35.7879	5.08526	65	−1.420	0.160
	Female	34	37.5294	4.95578			
Overall	Male	33	104.3030	11.95691	65	−1.169	0.247
	Female	34	107.6765	11.66118			

Table 6. The arithmetic means and standard deviations of the items with years of experience variable.

Dimension	Years of Experience	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Less than 5 years	19	33.5789	4.77628
	Between 5 and 10 years	8	34.6111	2.85201
	Between 10 and 15 years	16	34.4375	6.75247
	15 years and more	14	31.5714	4.71845
	Total	67	33.6418	4.93811
2	Less than 5 years	19	34.2105	5.76945
	Between 5 and 10 years	18	36.4444	2.66176
	Between 10 and 15 years	16	35.1250	3.73943
	15 years and more	14	37.4286	5.34522
	Total	67	35.7015	4.60571
3	Less than 5 years	19	35.6842	5.76438
	Between 5 and 10 years	18	37.2222	4.20861
	Between 10 and 15 years	16	37.1250	5.79511
	15 years and more	14	36.7857	4.45798
	Total	67	36.6716	5.05841
Overall	Less than 5 years	19	103.4737	14.58450
	Between 5 and 10 years	18	108.2778	7.50534
	Between 10 and 15 years	16	106.6875	14.74548
	15 years and more	14	105.7857	8.69287
	Total	67	106.0149	11.84047

Table 7. Analysis of variance of the difference of years of experience.

Dimension		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (2-tailed)
1	Between Groups	87.128	3	29.043	1.202	0.316
	Within Groups	1522.275	63	24.163		
	Total	1609.403	66			
2	Between Groups	99.249	3	33.083	1.602	0.198
	Within Groups	1300.781	63	20.647		
	Total	1400.030	66			
3	Between Groups	27.453	3	9.151	0.347	0.791
	Within Groups	1661.324	63	26.370		
	Total	1688.776	66			
Overall	Between Groups	222.842	3	74.281	0.518	0.671
	Within Groups	9030.143	63	143.336		
	Total	9252.985	66			

Table 8. The arithmetic means and standard deviations of the items with academic qualification variable.

Dimension	Qualification	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Diploma	28	33.82	5.01888
	Bachelor	31	33.42	4.54440
	Master	8	33.88	6.62112
	Total	67	33.64	4.93811
2	Diploma	28	36.82	4.57897
	Bachelor	31	34.52	4.80882
	Master	8	36.38	2.87539
	Total	67	35.70	4.60571
3	Diploma	28	37.04	4.82649
	Bachelor	31	35.55	5.41503
	Master	8	39.75	2.96407
	Total	67	36.67	5.05841
Overall	Diploma	28	107.6786	10.94787
	Bachelor	31	103.4839	12.83451
	Master	8	110.0000	9.79796
	Total	67	106.0149	11.84047

Table 9. Analysis of variance of the difference of academic qualification.

Dimension		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (2-tailed)
1	Between Groups	2.872	2	1.436	0.057	0.944
	Within Groups	1606.531	64	25.102		
	Total	1609.403	66			
2	Between Groups	82.306	2	41.153	1.999	0.144
	Within Groups	1317.724	64	20.589		
	Total	1400.030	66			
3	Between Groups	118.634	2	59.317	2.418	0.097
	Within Groups	1570.142	64	24.533		
	Total	1688.776	66			
Overall	Between Groups	403.136	2	201.568	1.458	0.240
	Within Groups	8849.849	64	138.279		
	Total	9252.985	66			

4. Discussion

The present study aimed to investigate the extent of the use of Structural Functionalism theory in learning practices among basic education teachers in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. This study was conducted to understand the extent to which the Structural Functionalism theory is integrated into the teaching practices of these teachers and to identify any areas where improvements can be made.

The results of the study indicated that only 42% of the 67 teachers surveyed had a moderate level of using the Structural Functionalism theory in their learning practices. This was a concerning finding, as it suggests that a significant portion of the teachers surveyed were not using this theory to its full potential in their teaching. On the other hand, 36% of the teachers surveyed had a very low level of using the theory, 10% had a low level, 6% had a very high level, and 6% had a high level.

The results also showed that the teachers surveyed demonstrated a moderate level of interest in promoting students' independent learning. This was compared to other aspects of teaching such as dialogue and social negotiation and facilitating the learning experience. This finding highlights the importance of promoting independent learning as a crucial aspect of teaching and suggests that more effort should be made to integrate this aspect into the teaching practices of these teachers.

The use of the Structural Functionalism theory was found to vary based on the specialization variable, with educational majors demonstrating a higher level of utilization. This suggests that teachers with educational backgrounds may have a better understanding of the theory and its implementation in the classroom. However, no significant differences were found based on the variables of gender, academic qualifications, and years of experience.

In conclusion, the results of this study indicate a need for incorporating the Structural Functionalism theory into the learning practices of basic education teachers in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Based on these findings, recommendations have been proposed for future consideration to improve the use of this theory in the teaching practices of these teachers. Further research should be conducted to fully understand the impact of the Structural Functionalism theory on learning practices and to identify any additional areas for improvement.

5. Conclusion

Updating Pre-Service Teacher Training Programs: Pre-service teacher training programs play a crucial role in preparing future teachers for the challenges they will face in the classroom. To ensure that these programs provide teachers with the latest and most effective teaching methods and strategies, they should be updated on a regular basis. This can be achieved through the integration of current research on teaching and learning, as well as feedback from practicing teachers.

Offering In-Service Teacher Training Workshops: In-service teacher training

workshops are opportunities for teachers to further develop their skills and knowledge. These workshops should be designed to familiarize teachers with modern teaching theories and techniques, and to provide them with hands-on experience in applying these theories in the classroom. By offering these workshops, teachers will have the opportunity to enhance their teaching practices and improve the learning outcomes of their students.

Revising Textbooks: Textbooks are an important resource for teachers, and they should reflect the latest developments in teaching methods and theories. By revising textbooks to incorporate modern teaching theories and strategies, teachers will have access to the latest information and be better equipped to apply these theories in the classroom.

Evaluating Class Size and Classroom Resources: In order to support the implementation of modern teaching methods, it is important to evaluate class size and ensure that classrooms are equipped with the necessary resources. Class size can have a significant impact on the effectiveness of teaching, and it is important to consider this factor when making decisions about class size and resource allocation. By providing teachers with the resources they need to effectively implement modern teaching methods, they will be better able to improve the learning outcomes of their students.

In conclusion, these four recommendations can help to improve the implementation of modern teaching methods and strategies in the classroom. By providing pre-service teacher training programs with updated teaching methods, offering in-service teacher training workshops, revising textbooks, and evaluating class size and classroom resources, we can help to ensure that teachers are equipped with the knowledge and resources they need to effectively implement modern teaching theories and practices.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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