

Faculty Members Use Of Problem-Based Learning In Community Organization Education.

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Abstract:

Community organization within social work education. A descriptive analytical design was employed using a structured questionnaire administered to faculty members specializing in community organization. The instrument measured three dimensions: problem utilization, guidance of solution development, and student participation in evaluating solutions. Findings indicate that faculty members partially apply PBL practices, particularly in encouraging solution generation and critical thinking. However, several core components of PBL implementation remain weak, including structured student grouping, systematic guidance in data collection, and the use of realistic learning scenarios. The results suggest that PBL is practiced in an unsystematic manner that lacks full adherence to its methodological foundations. The study recommends structured faculty training, curriculum redesign based on problem-centered learning, and institutional adoption of PBL frameworks to enhance professional competence in community organization education..

Keywords: Problem-based learning; Practical skills; community organization; Social work.

INTRODUCTION

Social work is an essential profession based on knowledge, values, and skills [1], but this knowledge is not fixed. Society is constantly changing, and new knowledge is being developed continuously. The success of the practice is not just by providing knowledge or practice [2]. Al Rawashdeh et al. [3] conducted a descriptive cross-sectional study at Ajman University to identify the most critical problems facing social work and sociology students during practical field training. Drawing on a sample of 130 students enrolled in the 2019–2020 academic year, the study found that the majority of respondents were only moderately satisfied with the performance of supervising faculty members. Critical deficiencies were documented in the availability of qualified supervisors, adequacy of training resources, and the professional preparation of trainers at field institutions. The authors concluded that bridging the gap between academic content and real-world professional practice requires deliberate institutional design, including the selection of training sites with sufficient capacity and readiness to receive students, and that the success of practical education ultimately depends on the knowledge and competencies of those who supervise it. These findings underscore the structural limitations that constrain the professional formation of social work students when pedagogical approaches —such as PBL— are not systematically embedded in both classroom and field contexts. We need to instill the spirit of continuous development and sound professional practice as part of education [4].

Therefore, PBL is an essential addition expected for graduates of social work, and thus is a logical and essential reason for professional growth and in keeping with the requirements of the times. Moreover, when this problem is presented, the level of knowledge of the students must not be sufficient to solve the problem. The faculty members act as mentors or consultants who direct the problem-solving process, and they do not solve problems on behalf of the students. The students must collaborate in small groups to resolve a particular problem. Thus, faculty members must facilitate group progress, deliver sources, or identify assessment procedures and learning expectations [5]. Therefore, the issue itself serves as the medium via which students get the information required to answer the problem, which includes the progress of self-learning and critical thinking abilities [6].

PBL is an innovative educational strategy that goes beyond standard approaches and enhances the understanding of courses more efficiently [7]. Al Rawashdeh et al. [8] examined how innovative pedagogical delivery —specifically e-learning —shapes student engagement and outcomes within UAE university settings. Their study, conducted at Ajman University with students from the 2018–2019 academic year, found that 81% of students reported that e-learning presented course material in a more engaging and stimulating manner, and that 80% indicated it enhanced interaction between students and between students and faculty. The study documented that active, student-centered instructional methods promote greater engagement, deeper content comprehension, and stronger practical reasoning skills compared to conventional lecture-based delivery. However, the study also identified limitations: 73% of students noted increased social isolation as a side effect, and 70% highlighted electronic illiteracy among parents as a barrier to adequate student support. These findings highlight that innovative pedagogical strategies —whether digital or problem-based —are most effective when embedded in a coherent institutional framework, with sufficient faculty training and structured student support, a precondition that aligns directly with the present study's argument for systematic PBL adoption in community organization education. It is an innovative approach to acquiring knowledge [9]. PBL enhances the connection between effective practical reasoning and enhances student learning outcomes [10]; [11]; [12]. Online education not only improves knowledge, skills, ethics, and values more than conventional classrooms but also promotes students' practical experience in tackling new issues. Moreover, it is very effective in terms of teaching quality [13]; [14]; [15]; [16].

This technique is highly regarded as a crucial introduction to teaching and application since it involves real-life situations with actual customers. It is considered one of the most significant educational methods that effectively bridges the gap between theory and professional practice in the field of education [17]; [18]). It assists learners in concentrating on genuine challenges that both challenge and pertain to real-world issues [19]. It helps students master specialization and provides them with theory and practice in an attractive and exciting [20]. It also helps students learn skills, knowledge, and values and develop better and higher-quality professional practice skills. It also represents a turning point in education [21]. Preparing students for the real world through practice, developing students' skills to solve problems, and linking learning goals with community goals as the primary form of authentic learning [22], problem-based learning is a promising way to integrate academic learning and practice [23].

The technique of community organization as a method of social work tries hard to develop the educational process for its students to improve the quality of their knowledge and enhance their professional practice by research or by relying on educational strategies that increase their professional effectiveness in working with communities and organizations. PBL is one of the educational tactics that increases students' ability to better develop knowledge, skills, and professional values, improves professional practice for community organization by linking professional knowledge to societal problems, and increases students' contribution to problem-solving. Thus, PBL helps link theory and practice in the classroom, provides students with a theoretical framework for community organization, and improves their professional practice in working with communities and organizations quickly in an enjoyable and logical way.

In order of the above, the problem of the study can be identified as follows: What is the actual effectiveness of using problem-based learning in instructing community organization courses?

The Importance of the Study

Professional importance

The significance of staying up-to-date with contemporary trends in education lies in the emphasis on student engagement in the learning process and the enhancement of teaching methodologies used in instructional courses. There is a worldwide interest in problem-based learning in education as a means to equip social work students with the necessary information, skills, and values of social work in a practical manner that connects theory with real-life practice. Problem-based learning contributes to linking social work courses with real-time problems, which enhances the professional practice of social work.

Specialized importance

Problem-based learning helps teach community organization in a fun, easy, and hands-on way. The results of this research draw the attention of community organization faculty members to the importance of problem-based learning in improving the professional practice of community organization in working with organizations and communities. This research may help develop methods of teaching community organization, which contributes to the development of the educational process in the academic institutions' department of community organization. This research may contribute to adopting an educational strategy based on problem-based learning in the scientific departments of community organization because of its importance in linking scientific content to the professional context in the future and applying scientific knowledge to community organization to deal with complex problem cases that are usually in the real world.

Study Questions

The main question can be identified as follows: What is the actual application and effectiveness of problem-based learning in teaching community organization?

What is the reality of using the problem and dividing students in teaching community organizations?

What is the reality of using tasks (guiding students to suggest solutions) in teaching community organization?

What is the reality of students' participation in determining and evaluating the optimal solution to the problem in teaching community organization?

solution to the problem, and to reach the final conclusions of the problem.

METHODOLOGY

Method and Type of Study

This research is categorized as a descriptive-analytical study because to its alignment with the aims of descriptive studies. The study aims to assess the actual utilization of problem-based learning in teaching community organization in social work.

Study Community

The study community consists of all faculty members of the Department of Community Organization, Faculty of Social Work, Helwan University. There are (30) members who responded to the study tool (21) members only.

Table No. (1) Social characteristics of the study community

Variables	Age	Years of Education	Gender				Academic rank		
			Male	%	Female	%	professor	Associate professor	Assistant professor
	13.26	45.26	11	52.4	10	47.6	33.3	19.1	47.6

The previous table indicates that the vast majority of community organization faculty members are males, with a percentage of (52.4%), and the vast majority obtained assistant professor at a rate of (47.6%), and the average teaching years were (13.26%) years, which indicates their significant experience in teaching, The average age was (45.26%).

Tools

The data collecting instruments included a survey regarding the practicality of using problem-based learning in the instruction of community organization. The questionnaire' s item was built to cover three dimensions:

the problem, defining the tasks, dividing the students,

directing the students to propose solutions "Tasks,"

the participation of the students in determining the optimal solution and evaluating it "Participation."

Table No. (2) Dimensions and number of items of the questionnaire

Items	Using the problem – based on learning			Total
	The problem	Directing the students to suggest solutions and tasks	Directing the students to identify the practical solution and evaluate it	
Primary image	14	10	12	36

After interrater validity	12	9	10	31
After internal consistency	11	7	9	27

The questionnaire consists of (27) items, which in its entirety cover all aspects of the questionnaire in its three parts. In front of each item, there are three alternatives, and each member of the sample has to put a mark (√) in front of the alternative that he thinks applies to him so that the degree is given (3,2,1) if he was chosen on (always, sometimes, rarely) respectively.

Validity and Reliability

Interrater validity

A presentation of the tool was conducted for 9 faculty members at the Faculty of Social Work, Helwan University. An agreement threshold of at least 80% was established, and throughout the process, some terms were removed, new phrases were included, and others were rephrased. Consequently, the form was written in its ultimate version.

Internal consistency validity

The internal consistency validity was assessed by computing the correlation coefficients between the scores of each dimension in the total score for the questionnaire in its first and revised versions. Table 3 provides a visual representation of these calculations.

Table No. (3) The internal consistency validity coefficients of the questionnaire

Problem- Based on learning	Internal consistency validity
The problem, identifying the tasks and division of the students	0.870**
Directing the students to suggest solutions	0.701**
Directing the students to participate in identifying the practical solution and evaluating it.	0.782**
Total	0.81**

Reliability

The tool's reliability was assessed by calculating the alpha-Cronbach stability coefficient of the estimated reliability values of the questionnaire. This assessment was conducted on a sample of 20 participants from the study population.

Table No. (4) The results of the questionnaire' s stability using the alpha-Cronbach coefficient

Dimensions	Alpha-Cronbach
The problems and dividing the students	0.890
Tasks (directing students to suggest solutions)	0,884
Participation in directing students to find the practical solution and evaluate it	0.706

Participants

It is represented by the members of the community organization faculty, The spatial boundaries of the study are the Faculty of Social Work, Helwan University. The data were collected during the second semester of the academic year 2023-2024. The data was processed through the computer using the program (SPSS), and frequencies, Cronbach's alpha stability coefficient, standard deviation, arithmetic mean, percentages, t-test coefficient, and effect size (d) were used.

RESULTS

Results of the main question, which states, "What is the reality of problem-based learning in teaching community organization from the point of view of faculty members at the Faculty of Social Work, Helwan University?". In order to answer this central question, the researchers divided this question into sub-questions. The first sub-question is represented in "What is the reality of using the problem and dividing students in teaching community organization?" This question was answered by calculating the arithmetic mean for each item of the questionnaire and the two values (T, D) for each item of the questionnaire to measure the significance of the differences by comparing the mean of the sample with the hypothetical average (2) and the effect size (d) and the following tables (5) illustrate this:

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Table No. (5) Obtaining training courses in problem-based learning

Response	F	%
Yes	2	9.5
No	19	90.5
Total	21	100%

The previous table No. (5) indicates that the vast majority of community organization faculty members at the Faculty of Social Work, Helwan University, did not receive training courses in problem-based learning, with a large percentage of (95.5%).

Table No. (6) The problem and student division

SN	The statement	Mean	T	D
1	The problems are used in teaching the content of community organization	2.71	**7.071	1.54
2	It motivates the students to explore the current societal problems	2.76	**8	1.74
3	It directs the students to identify the problems in society and the surrounding local community.	2.71	**7.071	1.54
4	Helping the students to put the problem at specific theoretical standards	2.33	**3.162	0.69
5	Directing the students to gather data to solve the problem.	2.23	1.313	0.28
6	Motivating the students to make assumptions about the suggested problem	1.76	1.746	0.38
7	Introducing scenarios from the aspect of organizing the society to deal with the problem	2.23	1.420	0.30
8	Teaching the students the content of the curriculum through a problem or question or a societal issue	2.28	*2.828	0.61
9	Dividing the students into groups	2.19	1.706	0.37
10	Identifying the tasks of the groups to study the problem	2.28	1.671	0.36
11	Motivating the students to gather the scientific facts connected to community organization	2.66	**6.325	1.38

It is clear from the previous table (6) that all the values of statistical significance among faculty members of community organization at the Faculty of Social Work, Helwan University at the level of significance (0.05, 0.01) except for Items No. (5,6,7,9,10) for the use of faculty members to the problem and divide the students.

There is also a difference in the values of "d" between the strength of each item in its representation to determine the use of problem-based learning in teaching and learning community organization, where the word that states "motivates students to discover immediate societal problems" is considered the most practiced by members of the community organization faculty members. then came the item that states "problems are used in teaching students the content of community organization" and "guides students to identify societal problems in the surrounding community" and "motivates students to collect scientific facts related to community organization according to the nature of the problem at hand, such as (books, references, Web sites, research results), and finally the item "students learn the contents of the course through a problem, question or societal issue".

Table No. (7) Tasks (guiding students to suggest solutions)

SN	The statement	Mean	T	D
1	Motivating students to propose solutions according to the content of the community organization course	2.71	**7.071	1.54
2	Providing the opportunity for students to propose solutions to the problem according to the content of the course	2.61	**4.812	1.05
3	Helping students to develop new perceptions of the problem	2.47	**2.682	0.58
4	Allowing present solutions to the proposed problem	2.47	**3.627	0.79
5	Motivate students to use brainstorming to produce solutions	2.52	**4.690	1.02
6	Directing students to take advantage of professional intervention programs	2.33	**3.162	0.69
7	Listen carefully to all suggestions for groups of students divided in the classroom	2.71	**7.071	1.54

It is clear from the previous table (7) that all the values are statistically significant for the use of community organization faculty members for problem-based learning with regard to the second dimension related to guiding students to propose solutions to the problems presented as a source of community organization learning at a level of significance (0.01).

There is also a difference in the values of "d" between the strength of each item word in its representation of the faculty members' use of problem-based learning in teaching community organization, and with regard to the second dimension of guiding students to propose solutions to the problems raised in the classroom, where each of the item was Which states "Motivate students to propose solutions according to the content of the community organization course" and the word "listens carefully to all the suggestions of student groups divided in the classroom" are the most commonly used practices by faculty members of community organization solutions, then came in order the item that states It "provides the opportunity for students to propose solutions to the problem according to the content of the course" and the word "motivates students to use brainstorming to produce solutions according to the theoretical framework of the community organization course."

We also find that all values are statistically significant at the level of significance (0.01) for the practice of community organizing faculty members for the ability to direct students to propose solutions as a component of problem-based learning.

Table No. (8) Students' participation in determining and evaluating the optimal solution

SN	The statement	Mean	T	D
1	Motivate students to think critically about the problem	2.52	**4.690	1.02
2	Encourage students to work collaboratively in addressing the problem	2.61	**5.701	1.24
3	Discuss with students the ideal solutions to the problem	2.71	**7.071	1.54
4	Help students convert validated hypotheses into conclusions	2.33	**3.162	0.69
5	Allow students to study the justifications for all proposed solutions	2.28	**2.828	0.61
6	Help students come up with the most important conclusions and recommendations for the problem	2.71	**5.838	1.27
7	Helps students analyze the results of a problem	2.95	**20	4.36
8	Helps to develop a proposed scenario to face the problem	2.71	**7.071	1.54
9	Students learn the professional practice of community organization	2.47	**3.627	0.79

It is clear from the previous table (8) that all values of statistical significance for the use of community organization faculty members for problem-based learning in relation to the third dimension related to guiding students to determine the optimal solution to problems and evaluating it as a source of community organization learning at a level of significance.(0.01)

There is also a difference in the values of "d" between the strength of each item in its representation of the use of problem-based learning in teaching and teaching community organization in relation to the third dimension, which is related to guiding students to determine the optimal solution to the problem and evaluating it in the classroom. "Discuss with students the ideal solutions to the problem in the light of the theoretical framework of the course" and the statement "helps students develop a proposed scenario to confront the problem according to the theoretical content of community organization" is one of the most educational aspects to guide students towards the optimal solution to the problem and its evaluation.

DISCUSSION

The study's findings demonstrated the favorable efficacy of using problem-based learning in instructing community organizations, as well as the beneficial practice of problem-based learning by faculty members in teaching the scientific aspects of community organization courses. Identification of societal problems that can be studied in the classroom as a source for linking theory to practice and as a simulation of reality is explored. They also motivate students to collect scientific facts related to the organization of society according to the nature of the problem at hand (such as books, references, websites, and research results) (Krogh & Jensen, 2013). If it is a societal issue, it is consistent with several studies (Cindy & Hmelo, 2004; Debbie et al., 2006; Lam, 2009; Sullenberger & Chang, 2009; Lam et al., 2006).

This indicated the importance of using problems as an essential and necessary educational medium in teaching the content of the courses instead of the theoretical cognitive topics provided by the faculty member as a provider of knowledge only. The problem is considered an essential educational medium in the organization of society to link theory with practice (Debbie et al., 2006; Monrad & Molholt, 2017), and the practice of problem learning helps in mastering the specialization, and this is what Bate et al. (2014) indicated.

Although community organization faculty members use some aspects of problem-based learning, it is noticeable from the results of the paper that they use problem-based learning in an individual discretion that lacks in some aspects the scientific and methodological foundations of problem-based learning, as the results of the study (Hmelo-Silver, 2004) indicated. The faculty members' implementation of problem-based learning individually at random without taking into account the methodological foundations and its original conditions in teaching students the scientific content, as the majority of the faculty members may practice some shortcomings, such as Determining the tasks of groups to study the problem according to the theoretical framework of the course with a weak impact size It amounted to (0.36), dividing students into groups with a small effect size of (0.37), or presenting scenarios from the perspective of community organization to deal with problems according to the content of the course, with a small effect size of (0.30), and motivating students to develop hypotheses for the proposed problem with a size of impact Weak (0.38), and directing students to collect information about the problem, with a small effect size of (0.28). The use of these aspects by faculty members of the Department of Community Organization, especially at the Faculty of Social Work, Helwan University, is weak, which may reflect negatively on the efficacy of problem-based learning in teaching community organization, as these aspects come with a weak impact size. This might be attributed to the novelty of problem-based learning in the field of social work, particularly in the Arab world. This requires the necessity of adopting problem-based learning according to scientific and methodological foundations and training faculty members on its use, elements, and methodological foundations.

The outcomes of the study showed the keenness of community organization faculty members to guide students to propose solutions to the problems posed as an educational medium with a mean to large impact size ranging between (0.58-1.74), which reflected positively on motivating students to propose solutions according to the content of the community organization courses, giving students the opportunity to suggest solutions to the problem according to the content of the course, helping students to develop new perceptions of the problem according to the new knowledge of the course, allowing the presentation of solutions to the proposed problem in the theoretical content framework of community organization, motivating students to use brainstorming to produce solutions according to the theoretical framework of the community organization courses, directing students to benefit from professional intervention programs for community organization to deal with the problem, and listening carefully to all suggestions of student groups divided in the classroom. This lines up with the outcomes of the study of many other studies (Cindy & Hmelo, 2004; Debbie et al., 2006; Altshuler & Bosch, 2003; Wadani & Khan, 2014; Ceker & Ozdamli, 2016).

The study's findings also shown the favorable actuality of faculty members using problem-based learning in terms of guiding students to choose and assess the best solution to ultimately comprehend the challenge. The size of the effect ranged between (1.02 - 4.36), and these high elements motivated students to think critically about

the problem according to the topic of the course, encouraging students to work cooperatively in dealing with the problem, helping students to come up with the most important conclusions and recommendations of the problem according to the theoretical framework. For the course, discuss the ideal solutions to the problem with the students in the light of the theoretical framework of the course, and help the students to develop a proposed vision to confront the problem according to the theoretical content of the organization of society. The following elements came with a medium effect size: Students learned the professional practice of organizing society by simulating a real problem, with an average effect size of (0.79), and helping students to convert valid hypotheses into conclusions with an average effect size of (0.69), and allowing students to study their justifications with all the solutions presented in accordance with the theoretical framework of the course, with an average effect size of (0.61).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is preferable to practice problem-based learning starting from the second university year. Encourage community organization faculty to use the problem in teaching community organization content rather than topics. Training faculty members on PBL in teaching community organization. Developing the role of a community organization faculty member from a provider of knowledge to a facilitator, mentor, guide, and assistant for students in obtaining knowledge related to community organization. Focusing on the professional skills needed by the professional practice of community organization. Transforming the courses and curricula of community organizations into problems, not issues or subjects. Developing the role of the social work student from a recipient of knowledge to a seeker of knowledge through directing self-learning. Motivating students to participate and cooperate in solving the educational problems. Incorporating problem-based learning into course descriptions as an educational method. Designing a problem-based learning progression for undergraduate and graduate students that includes a set of problems that simulate the professional practice of community organization. The Community Organization Department adopts a problem-based learning project to contribute to identify local community problems and contribute to solving them by focusing on students. Establishing a problem-based learning laboratory at the Faculty of Social Work in general, PBLSW LAB, and the Department of Community Organization in particular, PBLCO, in which students spend at least 20% of the teaching hours..

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