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Importance of blending approach on the selection of education philosophy: Empirical evidence in higher educational institutions in GCC

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Abstract:
Purpose: – This study aims to explore the teaching philosophies that educators implement in classroom settings and how these philosophies shape classroom dynamics, including authority distribution, curriculum roles, student-teacher responsibilities, and methods of assessment. It also investigates whether factors such as gender, academic qualifications, subject expertise, and teaching experience significantly affect educators' philosophical orientations.

Design/methodology/approach: – A quantitative research approach was adopted, utilizing survey data gathered from 196 teaching professional working in various higher educational institutes in GCC countries. Study employed descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations), along with inferential statistical tools such as t-tests and ANOVA to make effective data analysis and to , to analyze the data and to gauge on standard parameter to the hypothesis of the research.

Study findings: -The analysis revealed that the instructors tend to use a mixed instructional approach that combines contracts for both teacher centric and student centric teaching philosophies. Notably, aspects of the progressivism, the constructivism, re-constructivism and the perennialism were prominent through their teaching strategies. The findings also indicate that the gender concerns and the specialization areas along with the experience do not significantly affect teaching philosophy, whereas age appears to be a determining factor.

Research limitations/implications: – The scope of this study is confined to one public institution in Oman, focusing specifically on faculty from the Business Studies department. It limits its examination to teachers' educational philosophy without accounting for other variables that might influence student success and teaching effectiveness.

Practical implications – The findings offer valuable perspectives for educators, academic leaders, and policymakers. The research highlights the importance of integrating both teacher-directed and learner-centered philosophies to foster better engagement, learning outcomes, and retention among students.

Social implications – The outcome of the study strongly advocates the adoption of a balanced philosophical approach in higher education to promote active student involvement and improved academic outcomes. Policymakers must consider aligning teaching practices with the most effective educational philosophies to enhance the quality of instruction.

Originality/value – This research represents the first known study of its kind focusing on higher education faculty in Oman. It contributes to the understanding of how specific instructional strategies align with broader educational philosophies and can influence teaching effectiveness.

Keywords: Educational philosophy, Higher education, Teachers, Teacher-centered learning, Student-centered learning, blended learning, learning behavior, students learning behavior, teaching pedagogy

1. Introduction

Past research has consistently highlighted a strong link between student engagement, retention, and the learning environment (Adunola, 2011; Sabah & Du, 2018; Thygesen et al., 2020), as well as the content of the course and the teaching strategies employed (Robinson, Neergaard, Tanggaard, & Krueger, 2016; Claver, Martinez-Aranda, Conejero, & Gil-Arias, 2020). Motivation among students has been shown to play a crucial role in influencing both academic performance and retention (Lackeus, Lundqvist, & Middleton, 2016; Setiawan, Aprillia, & Magdalena, 2020). Among these contributing factors, the educator's role emerges as a key influence in shaping student learning and personal development (Siddi, 2018). A teacher's educational philosophy—how they perceive teaching and learning—greatly impacts their instructional decisions and behavior in the classroom. This philosophy affects how teachers structure their lessons, interact with students, design curricula, and foster engagement. Teachers typically align with one of three main philosophical approaches in the classroom: student-centered, teacher-centered, or a hybrid of both. The hybrid, or blended, philosophy combines aspects of both approaches to meet the diverse needs of learners. Educators' beliefs about students, learning, their subject matter, and their own teaching roles form the foundation of their educational philosophy (Uztosum, 2013; Thomas, 2013). These beliefs play a key role in shaping course objectives, lesson plans, and teaching practices (Ardalan, 2008). In essence, educational philosophy influences every aspect of teaching, from lesson planning to evaluation and classroom dynamics.

Teachers interact regularly with students inside and beyond the classroom, acting as guides and facilitators in the learning process. Therefore, choosing appropriate methods that foster long-term learning interest is essential. Additionally, education policymakers must understand which educational philosophies most effectively support learning (Lackeus, 2020). The ability of higher education institutions (HEIs) to retain students is also a critical factor in their success (Setiawan et al., 2020). A fundamental question arises: What core beliefs do teachers hold about their role, their students, and the learning environment? Numerous studies (Yamagata, 2016; Ismail, Sawang, & Zolin, 2018; Muganga & Ssenkusu, 2019) have explored the strong relationship between educators' teaching philosophies, institutional values, and student learning experiences. This study contributes to that conversation by exploring teachers' perspectives on the purpose of

education and their approaches to student engagement, with a particular focus on a public HEI in Oman.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought about a major shift in education, disrupting traditional classroom teaching and pushing institutions to adopt fully online or hybrid teaching models. Since then, a variety of synchronous and asynchronous learning methods have become integral to modern pedagogy. Unlike traditional teacher-led models—where the instructor directly delivers content—online courses often integrate learning materials such as videos, reading resources, and web links (Sanga, 2018; Leslie, 2020). To maintain student engagement in online and blended environments, educators have had to adopt new strategies, which present challenges not typically faced in in-person classes. In virtual learning settings, interaction can occur in three primary forms: between learners, between learners and content, and between learners and instructors (Moore, 1989). These shifts demand that educators rethink their teaching methods, beliefs about student engagement, and broader educational goals. The move to online formats has made it necessary to reassess what effective teaching looks like and how different pedagogical philosophies perform in these new environments.

This study narrows its focus to two core elements: the alignment between institutional philosophy and teachers' personal teaching philosophies, and the impact of these philosophies on student learning experiences. Drawing from social learning theories, the research emphasizes transformative learning as a tool for sustainable education and long-term development—an area that is gaining increasing scholarly attention. Transformative learning is rooted in educators' beliefs about the role and purpose of education (Aboytes, Gustavo, & Mattias, 2020), positioning teachers as central figures in facilitating meaningful learning experiences. The study specifically examines this within the context of management education, where active student engagement and high-quality learning experiences are essential for academic success and future employability.

2. Review of literature

The fundamental aim of teaching is to bring about meaningful transformation in learners (Tebabal & Kahssay, 2011). However, the approaches educators use to achieve this transformation vary significantly. Educational philosophy, often compared to an iceberg, represents a deeply embedded and complex framework that drives teaching behavior in classrooms. Different educational philosophies stem from differing interpretations of the purpose of education, addressing numerous theoretical and practical questions about teaching and learning (Sahan & Terzi, 2015). Teaching policies and practices are inherently rooted in philosophical beliefs, influencing decisions about methodology, curriculum design, institutional roles, and learner characteristics (Jumani, Malik, Warner, & Malik, 2020). Factors such as a teacher's professional experience, academic background, institutional vision, cultural context, and learner traits all contribute to shaping their educational philosophy. The effectiveness of different instructional methods has been widely studied, with evidence showing that the methods teachers use significantly impact students' academic outcomes, and ineffective strategies can lead to poor performance (Adunola, 2011).

Educational philosophies are generally categorized into two broad groups: **student-centered** and **teacher centered**. The student-centered (or learner-centered) approach involves instructional strategies that prioritize student engagement, active learning, and the broader educational context—including culture, content, community, and pedagogy (Hoidn, 2017; Hoidn & Reusser, 2021). This model encourages students to participate actively in the learning process by interacting with both the subject matter and their peers (Sabah & Du, 2018). Conversely, the teacher-centered philosophy positions the educator as the primary authority, focusing on direct knowledge transfer from instructor to student (Mascolo, 2009). In such settings, teachers control the learning environment and consider themselves the primary source of knowledge (Serin, 2018). Weimer (2002) outlined key differences between the two philosophies, including the distribution of authority, the function of content, roles of students and teachers, learning responsibility, and evaluation processes.

2.1 Beliefs Underpinning Teaching Philosophies

Understanding what brings about real change in learners is essential in evaluating teaching philosophies. One common belief is that **discipline and structure** foster academic achievement (Claver et al., 2020), often linked to achievement goals and intrinsic motivation (Jung, Zhou, & Lee, 2017). Educators aligned with this philosophy tend to adopt teacher-centered methods, emphasizing punctuality, discipline, and adherence to institutional norms. Their strategies are focused on pre-determined objectives. However, research has shown that strictly teacher-centered methods may hinder the development of higher-order thinking skills such as reasoning, collaboration, and problem-solving (Sabah & Du, 2018; Du, Su, & Liu, 2013).

Nevertheless, some scholars present opposing views. For instance, Ismail et al. (2018) found that teacher-centered approaches can produce better subjective and objective outcomes than student-centered ones. Similarly, Zohrabi, Torabi, and Baybourdiani (2012) found these methods effective in teaching English grammar. In contrast, student-centered methods view educators as facilitators. These approaches aim to enhance engagement, interaction, and the application of knowledge to real-world situations. Yamagata (2016) found that student-centered teaching improved retention and comprehension of new vocabulary. In the field of entrepreneurship education, Robinson et al. (2016) emphasized the necessity of student-centric approaches for lifelong, experiential learning.

Empirical literature supports both models, suggesting that their effectiveness may depend on variables such as subject matter, educational level, and program context. For instance, while teacher-centered strategies may work well in English grammar instruction, student-centered approaches may be better suited for entrepreneurship education.

Interestingly, a discrepancy often exists between teachers' stated beliefs and their actual classroom practices. Sabah and Du (2018) observed that educators who claim to employ student-centered methods may not truly implement them. This gap is a focal point of the present study, which seeks to identify the specific strategies that distinguish between the two approaches. Despite clear theoretical distinctions, real-world teaching often involves a hybrid of both philosophies. Ismail et al. (2018) suggest that this blended approach yields positive learning

outcomes. Many educators opt to "**blending approach,"** combining elements from both perspectives (Lackeus et al., 2016; Cuban, 2007).

Traditional teacher-centered pedagogy relies heavily on lectures, rote memorization, and standardized testing (Lackeus et al., 2016; Pring, 2010). In contrast, progressive student-centered pedagogy involves project-based learning, problem-solving, and collaborative, practice-based education (Labaree, 2012). Teaching philosophies can be analyzed across five key dimensions: power distribution, course content, teacher and student roles, responsibility for learning, and assessment methods (Muganga & Ssenkusu, 2019; Wright, 2011). While teacher-centered education emphasizes control and direction, student-centered models encourage learner autonomy, guided by the educator.

Prominent **teacher-centered philosophies** include:

- **Perennialism**: Advocates for teaching timeless truths and universal knowledge (Uyangör, Sahan, Atici, & Borekci, 2016).
- **Essentialism**: Emphasizes essential knowledge and moral values accumulated through time (Tan, 2006).

In contrast, **student-centered philosophies** include:

- **Constructivism**: Focuses on problem-solving in learner-designed environments (Rob & Rob, 2018).
- **Progressivism**: Aims to prepare learners for change through scientific and collaborative methods (Bolat & Bas, 2018).
- **Re-constructivism**: Seeks to reform society through critical thinking and scientific approaches.
- **Existentialism**: Values personal meaning-making and individual experiences in education.

Positivism emphasizes scientific methodology, data-driven learning, and objective analysis. Teachers who adopt this philosophy often account for multicultural classrooms and rely on experiments and empirical methods (Siraj et al., 2020). Hjorland (2005) argued that positivism excludes metaphysical thinking and instead values universally applicable scientific reasoning. In social sciences, it supports structured theories and quantitative approaches, promoting structured, rational learning (Comte, 2009).

On the other hand, **Humanistic educational philosophy** focuses on holistic development—addressing emotional, social, and cognitive needs (Duchesne & McMaugh, 2016; Drew, 2023). It promotes inclusivity, practical relevance, and human values (Aikenhead, 2014).

Comparative studies reveal diverging preferences as, Uyangör et al. (2016) noted that educators often prefer progressivism and re-constructivism over more traditional models like perennialism. English educators frequently favor teacher-centered approaches, while those teaching entrepreneurship lean toward student-centered methods (Lackeus et al., 2016; Robinson et al., 2016; Mavlutova et al., 2019; Ismail et al., 2018; Martin, 2020). This study, however, does not aim to identify a superior philosophy. Instead, it explores how teachers blend philosophies to foster a rich and effective learning environment.

Student engagement and retention are central to the student-centered model. This approach promotes active learning and autonomy, helping students take ownership of their education. The current research addresses two perspectives: (1) the key strategies and preferences in teaching and learning, and (2) the concept of a blended or hybrid philosophy. While limited research has explored this middle-ground approach, this study seeks to contribute new insights into the ongoing debate about educational philosophies.

3. Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis Development

Educational philosophies represent comprehensive ideologies that shape one's worldview, with education forming a crucial component of that perspective (Tan, 2006). From this standpoint, analyzing educational philosophy requires a focus on the teacher's lens—examining how educators perceive their roles, their students, the goals of education, and how instructional design should be approached. Importantly, educators rarely adhere strictly to either a student-centered or teacher-centered teaching paradigm. Instead, a more realistic perspective acknowledges that many adopt a **blended teaching model**—integrating elements from both philosophies to achieve optimal learning outcomes. This hybrid model leverages the strengths of each philosophy, aiming to balance instructional effectiveness with learner engagement.

Empirical literature suggests that a teacher's preference for a particular educational philosophy is often shaped by their academic discipline, teaching experience, and the type of courses they deliver (Zohrabi et al., 2012; Robinson et al., 2016; Yamagata, 2016; Ismail et al., 2018; Siraj et al., 2020). Based on this insight, the study proposes the following hypotheses:

- **H1**: Teachers' educational philosophies differ significantly according to their academic qualifications.
- **H2**: Teaching experience significantly affects teachers' educational philosophies.

Uyangör et al. (2016) identified gender-based differences in educational philosophy preferences, their findings suggest that female educators are more inclined toward progressive and re-constructivist ideologies, while male educators tend to prefer more traditional philosophies such as essentialism and perennialism. Considering this, the following gender-related hypothesis is proposed:

- **H3**: There is a significant difference in the educational philosophies adopted by male and female educators.

In addition, departmental specialization may influence educators' philosophical learnings, particularly within the context of business studies. Therefore, another hypothesis is suggested:

- **H4**: There is a significant variation in educational philosophy based on the teachers' area of specialization within business studies.

Both teacher-centered and student-centered philosophies prevalents in higher education instruction. Teacher-centered ideologies include behaviorism, essentialism, and perennialism, whereas student-centered approaches encompass progressivism, constructivism, re-constructivism, humanism, and positivism. As both types of philosophies are considered to shape educators' teaching frameworks, the study further proposes:

- **H5**: Teacher-centered philosophies have a significant influence on the educational philosophies adopted by faculty members in higher education institutions.

- **H6**: Student-centered philosophies significantly influence the educational philosophies adopted by faculty members in higher education institutions.

To empirically assess these hypotheses, a set of statements representing characteristics of both student-centered and teacher-centered philosophies was developed. Teachers were asked to rate these items using a five-point Likert scale. The responses would help determine to what extent educators blend or favor one philosophy over the other, with the assumption being that most follow a **mixed or blended approach**.

The study's **conceptual model** is designed to reflect this blended nature of educational philosophy, illustrating how various factors (e.g., gender, experience, qualification, specialization) interact with and shape an educator's philosophical orientation. This framework is presented in **Figure 1**.

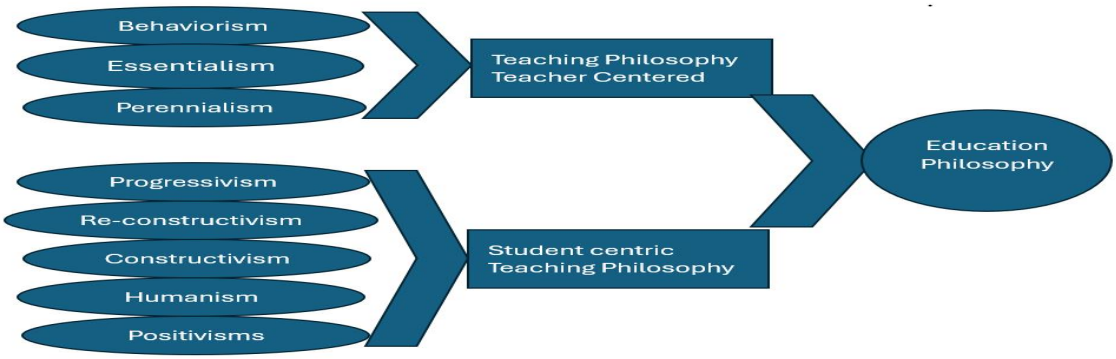

Figure 1, Source: Authors self-elaboration based on literature reviewed

4. Research Methodology: Data Collection and Instrumentation

To evaluate teachers' educational philosophies, researchers have traditionally employed several approaches including student feedback surveys, classroom observations, teacher interviews, and analysis of instructional techniques. In the present study, **a teacher survey** was adopted as the primary data collection tool to explore educators' philosophical orientations toward teaching. The research targeted faculty members within the business studies department in various colleges in GCC countries.

The survey instrument was designed to capture various dimensions of teaching philosophy, including instructional beliefs, student engagement practices, and overall pedagogical approach. Faculty members were asked to express their **level of agreement** with a series of statements reflecting these dimensions. In addition to pedagogical questions, the questionnaire gathered **demographic data**, including gender, academic specialization, age, and teaching experience. The survey was administered online via Google Forms, and distributed to participants through institutional email, accompanied by assurances regarding the **confidentiality and anonymity** of responses.

To ensure clarity and relevance, the survey instrument was preceded by an introductory section outlining the **objectives of the study** and a **consent statement** regarding voluntary participation

and data privacy. Only those who consented proceeded to complete the questionnaire. Prior to full-scale deployment, the instrument underwent **pilot testing** with a sample of 20 experienced faculty members from the various colleges in University of technology and applied sciences **Oman**. Based on their feedback, refinements were made to improve clarity—especially in the use of action verbs—and some questions were reworded. Additional statements were included in response to the feedback, enhancing the instrument's overall validity and comprehensiveness.

The final questionnaire consisted of **48 statements**, many of which began with prompts such as "*I allow my students to...*" or "*I believe that...*" to align with self-reflective teaching practices. A **five-point Likert scale** was employed to measure responses, ranging from **1 (Strongly Disagree)** to **5 (Strongly Agree)**. **Table 1** presents the scale interpretation.

The survey measured two overarching categories of educational philosophy:

- **Student-centered philosophy**: This was assessed using **29 items** across **five constructs**:
  - *Progressivism* (5 items; **α = 0.745**)
  - *Re-constructivism* (6 items; **α = 0.792**)
  - *Constructivism* (7 items; **α = 0.855**)
  - *Humanism* (8 items; **α = 0.879**)
  - *Positivism* (3 items; **α = 0.741**)
- **Teacher-centered philosophy**: Measured using **17 items** across **three constructs**:
  - *Behaviorism* (6 items; **α = 0.772**)
  - *Essentialism* (4 items; **α = 0.645**)
  - *Perennialism* (7 items; **α = 0.772**)

The internal consistency of each construct was evaluated using **Cronbach's alpha**, confirming acceptable to high levels of reliability for most scales.

Data interpretation and distribution of values for Liker scale			Based on the five-pint Likert scale: Rogers' innovation adoptions	
The Likert Scale	Description of views	Allocation of values	Allocation of Value Range	Status of adoption for rogers' innovation
1.000	Never ever true	1.000-1.490	0.100-1.000	[LEGGARD]
2.000	Somewhat true	1.500-2.490	1.100- 2.000	[LATE MAJORITY]
3.000	Almost True	2.500-3.490	2.100-3.000	[EARLY MAJORITY]
4.000	Highly true	3.500-4.49.	3.100-4.000	[EARLY ADOPTERS]
5.000	Extremely true	4.500-5.000	4.100-5.000	[INNOVATORS]

Table 1: Source(s): Author's self-elaborations; Alston and Miller (2002), Mohammad, Noor'Ayni, and Kamal (2014), Owusu-Manu, Torku, Parn, Addy, and Edwards (2017)

4. Data Analysis and Sample Characteristics

Data coding, editing, and summarization were performed using **SPSS software**. The study employed **descriptive statistics**, including **means**, **standard deviations**, and **correlation analysis** to explore relationships among variables. Additionally, the **Kolmogorov–Smirnov (K-S) test** was used to evaluate the **normality** of the distribution for both **student-centered** and **teacher-centered** educational philosophy constructs. If the **p-value** was **≤ 0.05**, the null hypothesis (that the data follows a normal distribution) was **not rejected**, indicating the data is not normally distributed.

4.1 Population and Sample Size

The target population consisted of **faculty members** in the business studies department across the **Colleges of Technology** in Oman. A total of **193 valid responses** were obtained. Referring to **Krejcie and Morgan's (1970)** sample size determination table, a minimum of **155 responses** is considered adequate for a population size of **260**. Therefore, this study's sample exceeds the recommended threshold and is considered **statistically representative** of the overall faculty population.

4.2 Demographic Profile of Respondents

- **Teaching Experience**:
  - 52.9% of respondents have **over 16 years** of teaching experience.
  - 31.6% have **10 to 16 years** of experience.
- **Qualification**:
  - 53.01% of faculty members hold a **Master's degree**.
  - 46.1% possess a **Ph.D.**
- **Gender**:
  - **63.3%** of the participants were **male**.
  - **36.7%** were **female**.
- **Age Distribution**:
  - 32.9% were aged **40–45 years**, while
  - 25.5% were within the **35–40-year** age bracket.
- **Academic Specialization**:
  - **45%** of respondents specialized in **Accounting and Finance**.
  - **24.6%** specialized in **Human Resource Management**.
  - **25.08% of respondents in Marketing management**

5. Results and Discussion

As shown in **Table 2**, the **mean scores** of the various educational philosophy constructs ranged between **3.97 and 4.57**, reflecting a generally high level of agreement with the philosophical beliefs presented. Among these, **progressivism** recorded the **highest mean score (4.57)**, suggesting a strong inclination toward student development and critical thinking. In contrast, **perennialism** had the **lowest mean score (3.97)**, indicating a relatively lower preference for traditional, classical teaching models.

	[Mean]	[SE]	[SD]	[PR]	[RE]	[CN]	[HN]	[PN]	[PO]	[BH]
[Progressivism]	04.57	00.033	00.46							
[Re-constructivism]	04.44	00.044	00.51	00.735**						
[Constructivism]	04.41	00.042	00.52	00.765**	00.766**					
[Humanism]	04.38	00.042	00.55	00.769**	00.757**	00.817**				
[Perennialism]	04.97	00.048	00.67	00.488**	00.559**	00.560**	00.620**			
[Positivism]	04.31	00.042	00.64	00.646**	00.623**	00.641**	00.722**	00.631**		
[Behaviorism]	04.19	00.044	00.59	00.612**	00.596**	00.628**	00.663**	00.649**	00.641**	
[Essentialism]	04.06	00.046	00.66	00.490**	00.523**	00.542**	00.554**	00.639**	00.571**	00.659**

Table 2: Highlights: [PR: Progressivism], [RE: Re-constructivism], [CN: Constructivism], [HN: Humanism], [PN: Perennialism], [PO: Positivism], [BH: Behaviorism], [EN: Essentialism], [SE: Standard Error], [SD: Standard Deviation] and **Describes a 5% of significance (Statistical)
Source: - Embellishment by author based on the data analysis.

#	"Teaching and Learning Practices criteria"	"Categories"	"Mean value"	Standard Deviation	Description: Likert	"Adoption status for Rogers' innovation"
1	"I encourage & permit students to ask questions and actively participate actively throughout lessons."	"Progressivism	04.83	0.49	Extremely true	"Innovators"
2	"I consider it for a teacher to be the role model for their students."	Behaviourism"	04.65	0.62	Extremely true	"Innovators"
3	"My instruction and teaching approach emphasizes helping students grasp current developments & anticipate the forthcoming tendencies."	"Progressivism"	04.64	0.62	Extremely true	"Innovators"
4	"I consistently assist the students in to deepening the comprehension of the material covered in class."	"Constructivism"	04.64	0.59	Extremely true	"Innovators"
5	"I create an environment where students feel free to be themselves and express their thoughts openly."	"Re-constructivism"	4.62	0.63	Extremely true	"Innovators"

6	"I consider that using case-studies, real-life scenarios & conditions, and extra practice tasks in class should help students tackle core societal challenges."	"Re-constructivism"	04.59	0.59	Extremely true	"Innovators"
7	"I recognize that students have different learning styles and, therefore, cannot all be taught in the same way."	"Progressivism"	04.61	0.70	Extremely true	"Innovators"
8	"My teaching aims to instill a sense of civic responsibility in students, encouraging them to contribute to a better world."	"Re-constructivism"	04.58	0.71	Extremely true	"Innovators"
9	'I guide the students to understand that, they are part of the constantly evolving domain, where both issues and solutions are in flux."	"Progressivism"	04.58	0.64	Extremely true	"Innovators"
10	I always support the students for gaining a comprehensive and holistic understanding of the concepts they learn.	"Perennialism"	04.54	0.71	Extremely true	"Innovators"

Table 3: Source: Authors own analysis based on the data interpretation and analysis
All constructs exhibited **significant positive correlations**, confirming the interrelated nature of different educational philosophy dimensions.

Further analysis of the **46 individual statements** related to teachers' beliefs, classroom practices, and perspectives on student engagement revealed insightful patterns. **Table 3** highlights the **top 10 statements** with the highest mean ratings on the **five-point Likert scale**.

- The highest-rated statement showed that **teachers actively encourage student questioning and interaction in class** (**Mean = 4.83**, **SD = 0.49**), a clear indicator of a **student-centered philosophy**, where the instructor's role is to **facilitate** rather than **dictate** the learning process.
- Another highly rated statement emphasized the **teacher's role in supporting student development**, further aligning with the values of **progressivism, constructivism, and humanism**.

5.1 Interpretation of Teachers' Educational Philosophies

The results indicate that teachers predominantly support **blended pedagogy**, characterized by a balance between **student-centered** and **teacher-centered** instructional methods. This blended or

"**blending approach** " approach reflects a nuanced understanding of modern educational needs, where instructors seek to strike a balance across various teaching dimensions—such as content delivery, power dynamics, learning responsibilities, and assessment strategies.

Teachers demonstrated a strong preference for engaging learners through **case studies**, **scenarios**, and **practical problem-solving**, fostering active participation and application of knowledge in real-life situations. This is supported by high mean scores on statements related to:

- Encouraging student questioning and interaction (**M = 4.82**),
- Providing motivational support (**M = 4.62**),
- Reconstructing and reiterating knowledge (**M = 4.61**),
- Helping students develop personal understanding (**M = 4.63**).

These statements highlight the facilitative role of teachers in nurturing student autonomy and deeper learning—key traits of student-centered philosophies.

At the same time, several **teacher-centered elements** received relatively high ratings, indicating their continued relevance. For instance:

- Modeling exemplary behavior (**M = 4.64**) and,
- Encouraging discipline and responsibility to shape students into responsible citizens (**M = 4.60**).

This suggests that while student-centered teaching is dominant, instructors also draw from traditional teacher-led practices where appropriate.

The overarching theme is a **strategic integration of both philosophies**, emphasizing engagement, differentiated instruction, and real-world applicability—critical in developing 21st-century graduate attributes like **critical thinking**, **problem-solving**, **leadership**, and **communication skills**.

5.2 Less Preferred Educational Philosophy Elements

Table 4 highlights aspects of educational philosophies that were rated lower in preference. It's important to clarify that a lower mean does not imply complete rejection, but rather a relative de-emphasis compared to other practices.

For instance:

- The belief that **teachers are the sole authority and custodians of knowledge** scored low (**M = 3.94**), indicating a shift away from didactic approaches.
- Similarly, **rote learning and memorization** are less emphasized in favor of constructivism, inquiry-based learning.
- **Maintaining rigid class discipline** also received a lower score (**M = 3.94**), as student freedom and open dialogue are increasingly valued.
- One particularly low-rated item was **discussing controversial topics** (**M = 3.77**), suggesting that many teachers may feel uncomfortable or constrained in addressing sensitive or complex issues with students.

While this may reflect caution or cultural considerations, it also highlights a potential **missed opportunity** for fostering critical discourse and developing holistic understanding among students.

5.3 Institutional Vision vs. Teacher Autonomy

The findings confirm that **student-centered pedagogy is dominant**, aligning with the HEI's (University of Technology and Applied Sciences) strategic vision, which emphasizes **high-quality, student-focused education**. The institution's mission and key performance indicators (KPIs) reflect this direction clearly.

However, the data suggests that **teachers' individual choices are not strictly dictated by institutional policy**. They incorporate teacher-centered methods when they believe this support or enhance student learning outcomes. For example:

- The item "I monitor students' behavior inside and outside the class and reward accordingly," although rooted in teacher-centered ideology, is partially practiced under **academic advising and mentoring duties**, supporting student achievement beyond the classroom.

5.4 Demographic Influences on Educational Philosophy

The study further analyzed whether teachers' pedagogical beliefs varied according to **age, gender, specialization, qualification**, and **teaching experience**. The key outcomes, summarized in **Table 5**, reveal that:

- **Significant differences** in educational philosophy were observed based on **gender**, **specialization**, **qualification**, and **experience**.
- However, **age** did not emerge as a statistically significant predictor of educational preference.

These results affirm that **personal and professional backgrounds** influence teaching philosophies, while also indicating that institutional directives alone do not fully shape pedagogical choices.

5.5 Key Insight

Overall, the data supports the conclusion that **blended teaching philosophies are widely adopted**, with a **leaning toward student-centered methods**. This reflects both institutional strategy and teachers' professional judgment. The integration of both philosophies enables a more **flexible, adaptive, and effective** teaching approach in response to the **changing landscape** of higher education and the **competitive global academic environment**.

#	"Teaching and Learning Practices criteria"	"Categories"	"Mean"	"Standard Deviation"	Description: Likert	"Adoption status for Rogers' innovation"
1	"As a lecturer, I take responsibility for selecting the study material and structuring the learning activities for my students."	Perennialism	4.10	0.89	Highly True	"Innovators"
2	"Classroom learning should emphasize experiments and statistical analysis to uncover the realities of how society functions."	Positivism	4.12	0.90	Highly True	"Innovators"

3	"I guide students in evaluating their own progress through agreed-upon benchmarks."	Humanism	3.96	0.93	Highly True	"Early-Adopters"
4	"I maintain classroom discipline by using both rewards and consequences based on students' behavior."	Behaviorism	3.96	0.97	Highly True	"Early-Adopters"
5	"I view the teacher as a key source of knowledge who facilitates discussion and steers the learning process."	Perennialism	3.84	1.12	Highly True	"Early-Adopters"
6	"Challenging and sensitive topics are explored and understood as part of the teaching and learning experience."	Re-constructivism	3.79	1.13	Highly True	"Early-Adopters"
7	"I observe students' conduct both inside and outside the classroom and offer rewards based on their behavior."	Behaviorism	3.47	1.15	Almost True	"Early-Adopters"
8	"I believe not all individuals are equally suited for learning; some students have the capacity, while others may not, and this distinction should be acknowledged."	Perennialism	3.38	1.38	Almost True	"Early-Adopters"
9	"I emphasize that success in learning requires effort and repetition, encouraging students to practice and memorize content."	Essentialism	3.35	1.32	Almost True	"Early-Adopters"
10	"I uphold that lecturers hold authoritative knowledge that should be respected and not questioned."	Perennialism.	3.06	1.47	Almost True	"Early-Adopters"

Table 4: Source: Author self-elaboration based on data finding and their analysis

5.1 Hypothesis Testing

Based on the analysis of the collected data and the results presented in the preceding tables, the following hypotheses were tested as per the conceptual framework derived from the literature review:

- **H1a**: *There is no significant difference in the educational philosophies of teachers based on their qualifications.*

The analysis confirms **no statistically significant difference** in teachers' educational philosophies when grouped by qualification level (Master's vs. PhD).

- **Result**: Hypothesis **accepted**.
- **H1b**: *There is no significant difference in the educational philosophies of teachers based on their experience.*

The data indicates **no significant variation** in educational philosophies across different teaching experience levels.

- **Result**: Hypothesis **accepted**.
- **H1c**: *There is no significant difference in the educational philosophies of teachers based on their gender.*
- The results reveal that **gender does not significantly influence** teachers' educational philosophy.

Result: Hypothesis **accepted**.

- **H1d**: *There is no significant positive relationship between educational philosophies and the specialization of teachers.*
- The statistical tests found **no significant association** between teachers' subject specialization (e.g., Accounting, HRM, Marketing) and their educational philosophy.
-
- **Result**: Hypothesis **accepted**.

Specialization	"F"	"Sig"	Qualification "F"	Sig"	Experience "F"	"Sig"	Age "F"	"Sig"	Gender "F"	"Sig"
"Progressivism"	00.160	00.960	00.001	00.972	00.299	00.822	45.991	00.000	00.057	00.831
"Re-constructivism"	00.678	00.607	04.169	00.043	01.509	00.213	34.461	00.000	01.602	00.224
"Constructivism"	00.558	00.690	00.976	00.324	00.508	00.670	35.338	00.000	01.164	00.268
"Humanism"	00.313	00.872	00.173	00.683	00.859	00.468	29.434	00.000	00.586	00.452
"Perennialism"	00.264	00.903	00.954	00.333	01.779	00.153	13.432	00.000	00.283	00.605
"Positivism"	00.251	00.913	00.418	00.521	01.367	00.252	23.456	00.000	00.004	00.949
"Behaviorism"	00.183	00.948	00.272	00.608	01.175	00.321	23.785	00.000	00.170	00.688
Essentialism	00.389	00.819	00.001	00.993	00.691	00.559	17.380	00.000	00.145	00.720
"TCL"	00.166	00.958	00.392	00.534	01.403	00.245	24.940	00.000	00.056	00.809
"SCL"	00.174	00.954	00.968	00.324	00.899	00.445	45.635	00.000	00.533	00.469
"Overall"	00.116	00.978	00.795	00.373	01.106	00.353	42.549	00.000	00.324	00.569
"Desc: T-Test"										

Table 5: Test of ANOVA, Authors own description from analysis

Interestingly, an exception to these non-significant findings was observed in the case of **age**:

- **Age** emerged as a **significant predictor** of educational philosophy.

This implies that **teachers' pedagogical preferences tend to vary with age**, possibly reflecting generational differences in instructional approaches, exposure to contemporary educational models, or evolving attitudes towards teaching and learning.

6. Discussion – The Hugging-the-Middle Approach

The findings of this study reveal a clear emphasis on "pedagogies of engagement" as central to effective teaching and learning. Faculty members demonstrated a preference for a **blended pedagogical strategy**, integrating both student-centered and teacher-centered philosophies. As supported by Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000), student engagement is maximized when learners are challenged with meaningful tasks. Teachers in this study also emphasized their role as facilitators and role models, highlighting their dual responsibility in guiding student learning while modeling professional behavior.

The dominant outcome of this analysis challenges the notion that one educational philosophy should be superior to others. Instead, it validates the **"hugging-the-middle" approach** (Lackeus et al., 2016), where educators strategically draw from both traditional and progressive pedagogies. This approach offers a pragmatic balance—addressing the rigid nature of traditionalism and the ambiguity of purely progressive models (Egan, 2008). Muganga and Ssenusu (2019) support this duality, emphasizing that elements of teacher-centered education remain relevant and should coexist with student-centered methods. Likewise, Garrett (2018) advocates for such a hybrid model in classroom management.

The research also identified **which student-centered strategies** are perceived as most effective by faculty. Philosophical orientations such as **progressivism, constructivism**, and **re-constructivism** emerged as engaging and beneficial. Nevertheless, certain teacher-centered practices, such as **acting as a role model** and ensuring a **comprehensive understanding of subject matter**, are still valued—specifically those rooted in **behaviorism** and **essentialism**.

While student-centered strategies were predominantly preferred, the **least preferred practices** were mostly teacher-centered, including elements of **perennialism**, **behaviorism**, and **essentialism**. However, these were not entirely dismissed; their presence in the mean scores suggests that they are still occasionally employed in practice.

Ardalan (2008) emphasized that teachers would design more coherent course content if they became aware of the philosophical foundation behind their methods. This study confirms that although the higher education institution (HEI) promotes a **student-centered educational philosophy**, faculty still selectively adopt teacher-centered strategies based on classroom realities. This divergence underlines the need to **align institutional and individual teaching philosophies**. Administrators may consider tools such as surveys, classroom observations, and student feedback to identify and support faculty alignment with institutional goals.

This research contributes significantly to a relatively underexplored area by **linking classroom strategies with philosophical underpinnings**. It highlights that in practice, teachers synthesize both educational paradigms, reflecting a practical, experience-driven response to student needs.

7. Theoretical and Practical Implications

This study advances both theoretical understanding and practical application of educational philosophy in higher education. The empirical evidence supports the **blended instructional approach**, combining characteristics of **progressivism, behaviorism, constructivism, re-constructivism**, and **perennialism**. However, faculty selectively adopt elements from these philosophies rather than applying them holistically.

The emerging paradigm from this research highlights a growing **emphasis on student responsibility**, supported by the teacher facilitation—a key hallmark of contemporary educational reforms. The findings are particularly relevant to the **discipline of business studies**, though they may hold implications for broader academic contexts.

Practically, the study informs institutional policy by identifying how teachers' philosophical preferences affect classroom practices. It suggests that strategic alignment between institutional goals and faculty behavior can be achieved through **faculty development programs**, awareness workshops, and **reflective teaching practices**.

Moreover, this research challenges the dichotomy of choosing between opposing philosophies. Instead, it encourages educators and administrators to consider a **more integrative, situational approach** to pedagogy—tailored to context, student profile, and learning outcomes.

8 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

Despite its contributions, the study has several limitations. First, it evaluates educational philosophy based **solely on teacher perception**, which may not always reflect actual classroom practice. Future studies should incorporate **multiple data collection methods** such as classroom observations and **student feedback surveys** to validate self-reported preferences.

Second, the research does not account for **external influences** on teaching philosophy—such as institutional culture, student characteristics, academic discipline, and regional or national educational trends. These contextual factors could significantly impact pedagogical choices and should be addressed in future studies.

Third, the research is limited to faculty members within the **business studies department** of a single institution. To improve generalizability, future research should be expanded to include **multiple disciplines and institutions**, allowing for a comparative analysis across educational settings.

Lastly, a **longitudinal study** may offer deeper insights into how teaching philosophies evolve over time and in response to institutional policies or pedagogical training.

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