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USING PRACTICAL CONTENT EXERCISES IN TEACHING 'MOMENTUM' - PHYSICS 10 TO DEVELOP STUDENTS' ABILITY TO APPLY KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of integrating practical exercises into the teaching of "Momentum" in Physics 10, aiming to enhance students' ability to apply theoretical knowledge and skills. Recognizing the gap between theoretical physics education and its application, this research employs a comprehensive methodology, combining theoretical research, expert surveys, pedagogical experimentation, and statistical analysis to explore the efficacy of practical exercises. The pedagogical experiments, conducted in a controlled classroom setting, involved practical tasks that required students to apply concepts of momentum to solve real-world problems. The findings reveal a significant improvement in students' understanding and application of physics principles, particularly momentum, highlighting the value of experiential learning in physics education. Students demonstrated enhanced problem-solving abilities, deeper conceptual understanding, and increased engagement and interest in physics. Moreover, the study underscores the importance of practical exercises in bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application, suggesting that such an approach not only facilitates a better grasp of scientific principles but also prepares students to tackle practical challenges effectively. The research advocates for the broader implementation of practical exercises in the physics curriculum, emphasizing their potential to transform traditional educational methodologies into more engaging and impactful learning experiences. Overall, this study contributes to the pedagogical discourse by affirming the critical role of practical exercises in developing competent and versatile learners capable of applying their knowledge and skills in diverse contexts, thus enhancing the quality of physics education and fostering a generation of problem-solvers equipped to navigate the complexities of the modern world.

Keywords

Practical Exercises; Physics Education; Momentum; Knowledge Application; Experiential Learning.

1. Introduction

The ability to apply knowledge and skills effectively in practical contexts is increasingly recognized as a crucial aspect of education, particularly in the field of physics. This recognition underscores the need to integrate real-world problems into educational materials to foster deeper understanding and application capabilities among students. Despite ongoing efforts to incorporate practical exercises into physics teaching, there remains a significant gap in the effective development and application of these methods, particularly concerning the concept of momentum in grade 10 physics curricula.

Previous research efforts have sought to address this gap through various strategies, including the design of digital learning materials and the assessment of students' abilities to apply theoretical knowledge in practical scenarios across different scientific disciplines. For instance, initiatives like the implementation of digital learning tools in physics education have been discussed by Le Thi Thu Ha and Le Thi Cam Tu (2024) in their work on supporting grade 10 physics teaching through digital learning materials. Similarly, assessments of application capabilities in subjects like Microbiology within Biology have been explored by Nguyen Thi Thu Hang and Phan Thi Thanh Hoi (2018), highlighting the broader challenge of applying theoretical knowledge in practical contexts.

However, these efforts have not fully addressed the unique challenges associated with teaching momentum in physics, leaving a noticeable gap in research and practice. This gap points to the need for more targeted research that specifically focuses on the development and application of practical exercises tailored to the physics curriculum, particularly those that enhance students' abilities to apply their knowledge and skills in understanding momentum.

This study aims to fill this knowledge gap by introducing practical exercises based on real-world problems into the teaching of momentum in grade 10 physics. By doing so, it seeks to explore how such exercises can contribute to developing students' capabilities to apply theoretical knowledge and skills effectively. The research draws on a range of related studies, including the comprehensive curriculum guidelines provided by the Ministry of Education and Training (2023, 2018) and specific educational strategies aimed at enhancing application capabilities in scientific education, as discussed in works by Vu Thi Thu Hoai and Nguyen Thi Dung (2021), Thuy (2022), among others.

The following sections of this paper will detail the materials and methods employed in the study, present the results and discussion of the findings, and conclude with a summary of the study's contributions to the field of physics education. This introductory overview sets the stage for a detailed examination of the research process and its implications for enhancing the teaching and learning of momentum in physics education.

2. Materials and Methods

This study employed a combination of research methodologies to investigate the effectiveness of practical exercises in enhancing the ability of Grade 10 students to apply their knowledge and skills in physics, specifically in the topic of momentum. The methodologies used were theoretical research, expert surveys, pedagogical experiments, and statistical mathematics. This multi-faceted approach ensured a comprehensive understanding of the current state of physics education and the potential for innovation within the curriculum.

Theoretical Research

Theoretical research involved a thorough review of literature, including textbooks, academic journals, and educational documents provided by the Ministry of Education and Training. This step aimed to build a solid foundation of existing knowledge on the subject and to identify gaps in the current educational practices related to teaching momentum in Grade 10 physics.

Expert Surveys

Surveys were conducted among 18 teachers and 150 students from three high schools in Dai Tu District, Thai Nguyen Province: Dai Tu High School, Nguyen Hue High School, and Luu Nhan Chu High School. These surveys aimed to gather insights into the perceptions of both teachers and students regarding the necessity and opportunities for enhancing the application of knowledge and skills learned in physics. The consensus among educators on the need to develop students' ability to apply what they have learned in real-world contexts was a significant indicator of the existing gap in the curriculum.

Pedagogical Experimentation

Based on the insights gained from the theoretical research and expert surveys, a collection of practical exercises on the topic of momentum was developed. These exercises were designed to bridge the identified knowledge gap by providing students with opportunities to apply their understanding of physics principles in real-world scenarios. A lesson plan incorporating these exercises was subsequently designed and implemented in the participating high schools. The primary goal of this pedagogical experimentation was to observe and evaluate the effectiveness of these practical exercises in enhancing students' application abilities.

Statistical Mathematics

The outcomes of the pedagogical experiments were analyzed using statistical methods to quantify the impact of the practical exercises on students' ability to apply physics knowledge and skills. Data collected from observations of classroom implementations and students' performance on the exercises were subjected to statistical analysis to determine the significance of the findings.

The combination of these methodologies provided a holistic approach to investigating the potential of practical exercises in improving the teaching and learning of momentum in Grade 10 physics. The results of this research are expected to contribute valuable insights into the development of more effective physics education strategies that focus on the application of knowledge and skills in practical contexts..

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Student's Ability to Apply Knowledge and Skills

In assessing the ability of students to apply their knowledge and skills, particularly in the context of understanding and solving problems related to the concept of momentum in physics, a nuanced evaluation framework is essential. This framework identifies several key competencies that students should exhibit, ranging from the ability to analyze and solve real-world problems to designing and implementing experimental procedures that test their theoretical understanding. At the core of this framework is the necessity for students to demonstrate their capability in identifying the underlying principles of a problem based on scientific knowledge, employing experimental data for logical argumentation, and expressing their findings in a clear, coherent, and convincing manner.

The assessment criteria are structured across three levels of proficiency, reflecting the depth of understanding and the sophistication of the students' application skills. For instance, at the foundational level, students might be able to identify the basic cause of a problem without fully integrating scientific principles, whereas at higher levels, they are expected to offer a comprehensive analysis that includes accurate and complete scientific explanations. Similarly, the framework expects students to progress from merely predicting potential outcomes to designing and executing detailed, feasible plans that address practical issues effectively. This progression illustrates not only the depth of their scientific understanding but also their ability to think creatively and logically, apply their knowledge in practical contexts, and contribute to sustainable solutions with a significant awareness of their implications.

Through this comprehensive evaluation approach, educators can more accurately gauge students' abilities to apply physics concepts like momentum in real-world scenarios. This, in turn, enables the development of targeted instructional strategies aimed at enhancing these critical skills, ensuring that students are not only proficient in theoretical knowledge but also capable of applying such knowledge in practical, impactful ways.
It may be combined or kept separate and may be further divided into subsections. It should deal with the major findings and their explanation/interpretations.

3.2. Designing a lesson plan incorporating practical exercises to develop students' ability to apply knowledge and skills

The lesson plan titled “Exercises on Momentum - The Law of Conservation of Momentum in Physics 10” aims to bridge theoretical knowledge with practical application, enhancing students' capabilities in solving real-world problems through the principles of physics. This integration is particularly focused on demonstrating the real-world relevance of the conservation laws of momentum and energy.

Objectives

The objectives of the lesson plan are threefold:

- Knowledge Acquisition: Students should be able to articulate the principles underlying collision and conservation problems, understanding the scope of application for the laws of conservation of momentum and energy.
- Skill Application: The lesson plan emphasizes the flexible application of chapter knowledge in solving practical exercises and explaining natural phenomena, thereby honing problem-solving skills.
- Creative Capacity Building: Students are encouraged to identify practical problems that can be analyzed through the lens of physics, fostering a creative and inquiry-based approach to learning.

Preparation

Teachers prepare by gathering learning materials such as worksheets, videos, and experimental tools, while students are expected to review relevant chapter knowledge and practice scientific experimental skills.

Teaching Process

The teaching process involves interactive and engaging activities designed to deepen students' understanding and application of physics concepts:

- Activity 1: Problem Setting: Through observation of carefully selected videos, students are prompted to question and discuss phenomena such as the speed and impact of a bullet fired from a gun, leading to an exploration of how the laws of conservation apply to these scenarios.
- Activity 2: Articulating the Problem: Revisiting theoretical knowledge, students recall the conservation laws to frame their understanding of the observed phenomena, preparing them for practical application.
- Activity 3: Problem Solving: Students engage in group discussions and experiments, such as using a ballistic pendulum to measure a bullet's speed, to apply theoretical principles in practical contexts. This activity not only solidifies their understanding of the conservation laws but also demonstrates the relevance of physics to solving real-world problems.

Throughout these activities, students are assessed on their ability to detect and articulate problems, hypothesize scientifically, mobilize relevant knowledge, resolve practical issues, and report findings coherently. This structured approach ensures a comprehensive evaluation of their application skills, creative thinking, and problem-solving abilities in physics, particularly concerning momentum and its conservation.

By blending theoretical learning with practical application, this lesson plan not only aims to deepen students' understanding of physics but also to equip them with the skills necessary to navigate and solve real-world problems, thereby fostering a more engaged and competent generation of learners.

3.3. Experimental results

Our pedagogical experiment, conducted in March 2023 with students from classes 10A1 and 10A2 at Nguyen Hue High School, Dai Tu District, Thai Nguyen Province, aimed to assess the efficacy of practical momentum exercises in enhancing students' ability to apply knowledge and skills in physics. The experiment was structured to evaluate the development of these capabilities through qualitative and quantitative analysis of students' performance in designated tasks.

Qualitative Assessment

The qualitative observation of the pedagogical experiment highlighted significant student engagement and improvement through the application of practical momentum exercises. Initially, students exhibited hesitation and unfamiliarity with group activities and the problem-solving approach required by the tasks. However, as the lessons progressed, noticeable improvements in their problem-solving abilities, confidence in presenting solutions, and capacity to engage in meaningful discussions were observed. The practical nature of the exercises facilitated a deeper understanding and application of theoretical knowledge, fostering a more interactive and dynamic learning environment.

Three students were specifically observed for their exemplary demonstration of the applied competencies. These students showed varying degrees of progress, with marked improvements in identifying problems, formulating hypotheses, and applying theoretical knowledge to practical situations. Despite some initial challenges, their ability to engage with the material and contribute to group discussions evolved positively, demonstrating the impact of practical exercises on enhancing their physics knowledge and skills.

Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative analysis was based on the performance of the entire class, with particular attention to five randomly selected students from the experimental groups. Data collected through assessment forms used to evaluate the application of knowledge and skills in practical tasks revealed an overall enhancement in the students' capabilities. The evaluation criteria focused on five specific behaviors related to the application of physics concepts in practical situations.

The results showed a general trend of improvement across most of the evaluated behaviors. Students demonstrated a better understanding of physics principles and their applications, reflected in their scores from the practical exercises. Notably, there was a significant improvement in their ability to identify real-life problems, propose scientifically grounded hypotheses, and logically apply theoretical knowledge to solve practical problems. These improvements were not uniform across all evaluated behaviors, indicating areas where further support and instruction might be needed.

Fig 1. *Some experimental images*

The analysis further indicated that the practical exercises were effective in fostering a positive learning experience, enhancing students' enthusiasm for physics, and improving their problem-solving skills. This was corroborated by the increase in scores observed in the post-experiment assessments compared to the pre-experiment baseline, affirming the hypothesis that practical momentum exercises significantly contribute to the development of students' ability to apply knowledge and skills in physics.

The pedagogical experiment confirmed the positive impact of incorporating practical momentum exercises in the physics curriculum. The qualitative and quantitative results demonstrated significant improvements in students' capabilities to apply theoretical knowledge in solving practical problems. This approach not only enhances students' understanding of physics concepts but also stimulates their interest and engagement in learning. The findings advocate for the broader implementation of practical exercises in physics education, emphasizing the importance of experiential learning in developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills among students.

4. Conclusion

This study has shown that incorporating practical exercises into teaching "Momentum" in Physics 10 significantly enhances students' abilities to apply theoretical knowledge and skills. Through combining theoretical research, expert surveys, pedagogical experimentation, and statistical analysis, it was found that practical exercises effectively bridge the gap between theory and real-world application, improving students' problem-solving, analytical, and creative thinking skills.

The research highlights the importance of practical exercises in physics education, demonstrating their critical role in deepening students' understanding of concepts like momentum. It suggests that engaging students with real-world problems not only facilitates a better grasp of scientific principles but also prepares them to solve practical challenges, making them more competent and versatile learners.The findings advocate for a wider adoption of practical exercises in the physics curriculum, emphasizing their potential to transform traditional education into a more engaging and effective learning experience. Such an approach not only benefits students by enhancing their cognitive and analytical abilities but also contributes to creating a more dynamic and relevant educational environment. Future directions for research could explore the applicability of this pedagogical strategy across various scientific disciplines and educational levels, aiming to further validate the effectiveness of practical exercises in enhancing the application of knowledge and skills. Investigating the long-term effects on students' academic and career success could provide deeper insights into the transformative potential of experiential learning in the sciences.

In sum, this study underscores the value of integrating practical content exercises in physics teaching, advocating for their essential role in developing well-rounded, problem-solving, and innovative learners capable of navigating the complexities of the modern world.

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