

TEACHER'S EMANCIPATION IN CLASSROOM TEACHING MANAGEMENT THROUGH TRANSFORMATION VIA ACTION RESEARCH PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT

This paper is concerned with teachers' emancipation through action research practices in transforming teachers' classroom management. Teacher's emancipation is teacher's freedom in making decision about the course of their teaching practice in school. Indeed, transformation of classroom management in school depends largely on teachers' readiness to effect change in their current practices. This posed a challenge to change their classroom norms. In this study, teachers' emancipation will be explored in three main domains of teaching professionalism development, namely; experiential skills, professional knowledge and practical skills. This interim study uses qualitative case study design. The data collected through interview method was carried out on two experienced teachers. These two teachers came from Kota Belud's district primary school. They was purposively sampled. The data was analysed using Thematic Analysis. The interim findings showed the existence of teachers' emancipation traits as the result of their involvement in action research practices in school in term of teachers' empowerment and participatory from various parties at school.

Keywords: Emancipation, transformation, action research practices, teaching practice

Introduction

Teachers' emancipation refers to a situation in school that give teachers empowerment along with the concept of participation from other interested community in school to voice out their own opinion in making and determining the decision regarding changes of practice in school through an action research practices. Emancipation means freedom of each individual to do something in their own way. Freedom refers to individual that capable of free themselves from any restriction, control or power of others to gain the equal rights and social justice in the ready social system. Emancipation was not only freeing oneself from domination but also transforming society and achieving a more equal distribution of power and control within society (Boog, 2003: 428). In this study, teachers' emancipation means the freedom of teachers in making decisions on their course of teaching practice in classroom results from their own practice reflective, sharing of experience and ideas from co-worker. Fellow teachers also have the ability to voice out their own opinion regarding current education issues after taking account all aspects contribute to the structure, process and practice in education and then applying it in school.

The role of a teacher is not just teaching but also to try to investigate and to carry out changes from time to time in order to improve their knowledge and self-skills based on experience, professional knowledge and practical skills. These are to optimize their learning outcome and pupils learning in classroom are suitable with current needs. Changes or transformation mean the need of teachers to be more open and ready to accept and apply each change regarding their practice in school. Teacher's emancipation will be acquired with sharing of experience, knowledge and skills of teachers involved through action study held in school. Research findings are not just to prepare an important document that can be a referral for teachers for teaching plan at school label but it can create a social justice in school especially in teachers teaching and pupils learning management aspects which can improve their professionalism development in school.

Teachers Emancipation in School

Fellow teachers always understand the role of social, economic and political milieu, that act as a core to socialization process in school. Each

individual lives are controlled by various possibilities in social system, however each individual have their own ability to learn and build up new action strategy based on the thought of making decision regarding their practice. In social aspect, it is a way of life that every individual always have to learn and interact to improve their ability so that they can make decision to full fill the social needs.

Emancipation means freedom of each individual to do something in their own way. Freedom refers to individual that capable of free themselves from any restriction, control or power of others to gain the equal rights and social justice in the existing social system. Emancipation was not only freeing oneself from domination but also transforming society and achieving a more equal distribution of power and control within society (Boog, 2003: 428). Teachers' emancipation means the freedom of teachers in making decisions on their course of teaching practice in classroom results from their own practice reflective, sharing of experience and ideas from co-worker. Fellow teachers also have the ability to voice out their own opinion regarding current education issues after taking account all aspects contributing to the structure, process and practice in education and then applying it in school.

Emancipation exists together with empowerment and participation. Emancipation will exist when the situation in school can provide the chances for teachers, administrator and other communities in school to share the power and authority. One of the ways is through leadership sharing and participation in making decision. This statement is strengthen by Lewin (1946), regarding the forming of dynamic working group. Every participant in the group collaborates on the democratic leadership that was intending to facilitate learning in every group members (Smith, 2001). This kind of situation can cultivate sharing of experience and exchanging of ideas and opinion openly, identifying and solving problems together, improve knowledge and skills and also forming a new more quality practice. Where Lewis emphasize on the need of having freedom of speech to study and respecting variety of cultures in a group (Bargal, 2006).

Research Purpose

This study intended to explore in depth the issues of teachers' emancipation in determining the classroom teaching practice in school through an action research practices. The main problem that leads to this study is the

apprehensive attitude of the teachers themselves towards their level of professional knowledge and skills to carry out the transformation in school. This problems supported by Lewin (1946), through the theory of social changes that stated each individual will face difficulty to change their norms when the changing process or transformation is a process of gaining new information, practice and social skills. Harvey (1990) have listed a number of factors that curb the readiness of teachers in carry out the transformation, one of it is lack of feeling of own capability and differences in the level of knowledge and skills in every teacher. This study will examine the effect of implementation of action study from the social criticism perspective in teachers' emancipation issue towards transformation of teaching management in school. Teachers' emancipation are identified through three main domains in professionalism development which are experiential skills aspect, professional knowledge and practical skills.

Research Questions

To achieve the purpose and objectives above, numbers of research questions will be address are as follows:

1. What is the effect of action study practice towards transformation of teachers' classroom management in the aspects of professionalism development, solidified theory in education and also leadership in teaching at the classroom?
2. How is the transformation of classroom management can contribute to the process of emancipation existence through teachers' decision in classroom?
3. How is the process of teachers decision making through empowerment and participatory can trigger teachers' emancipation at classroom level?
4. How is the practice of action research practices can contribute to teachers' emancipation in the aspects of experiential skills, professional knowledge and practical skills at school?

Teachers' Transformation at School Background

Teachers' transformation at school indeed depend a lot on the factor of teachers' readiness to change the current practice, whilst each individual will face difficulty to change their norms. Process of teachers' transformation at

school were espoused by the theory of social changes by Kurt Lewin (1946) that consist of three main phases which are unfreezing, change and refreezing. Lewin stated that behaviour are the main principle in the theory of social changes. According to him, every changes made have to take into account the existing social norms too.

Existing social norms in a society, classified by Lewin as an inner resistance and it is an inner hindrance or dissidence to every changes that they want to do. In order to overcome this obstacle, they need an extra force to change it or as it called unfreeze. Along the changing process in social life, individual involved will always experience emotional disturbance according to their own social level. Every individual take part in changing process will go through these three processes to enable each individual change the existing norms.

Transformation or changes in teachers' practice will bring new dimension in the culture of teaching and learning at school. This is to provide a chance of more dynamic learning, intriguing and improve knowledge relevant and useful to pupils. Transformation in teaching practice that have been implement can give challenges to the teaching profession that are still tied to the traditional method, rigid and with not much of modernization and scarce from innovations. This transformation will give a positive impact to pupils and can contribute to the improvement of professionalism development of teachers at school.

Although there are transformation efforts to change teachers' practice through professionalism development activities and often implemented but the result achieve are not satisfied or in other words there is no significant changes because the changes seek must be from self-awareness (Feldman & Weiss, 2010). However, Feldman (2002a) once stated transformation from existentialism perspective stress on transformation that can be understandable by each individual and it can be accomplished through action research practices.

Fullan and Miles (1992) added that one of the problem in implementing transformation is the existence of apprehensive, conflict, restlessness and difficulty of the teacher to change current practice to a new one or in other words difficulty to change their norms. This statements are supported by Habib (2005) that found out teachers try as hard as they can to avoid from actively participate in transformation implementation at school because they will have to learn new skills and knowledge, have to attend courses, seminars and briefings related from time to time. Wiles and Bondi

(1998), stated without adequate knowledge and skills, it will affect the teachers' level of readiness to implement transformation. Knowledge and skills that teachers' possessed become one of the factor in making justification about the ability and capability to implement the transformation for social changes at school.

Proposed Theoretical Framework

Conceptual frame in the diagram below was built by combining the transformation model by Kurt Lewin (1947) and Innovation Model by Huberman and Miles (1994). Model by Lewin (1947) consist of three main phases which are unfreezing, change and refreezing.

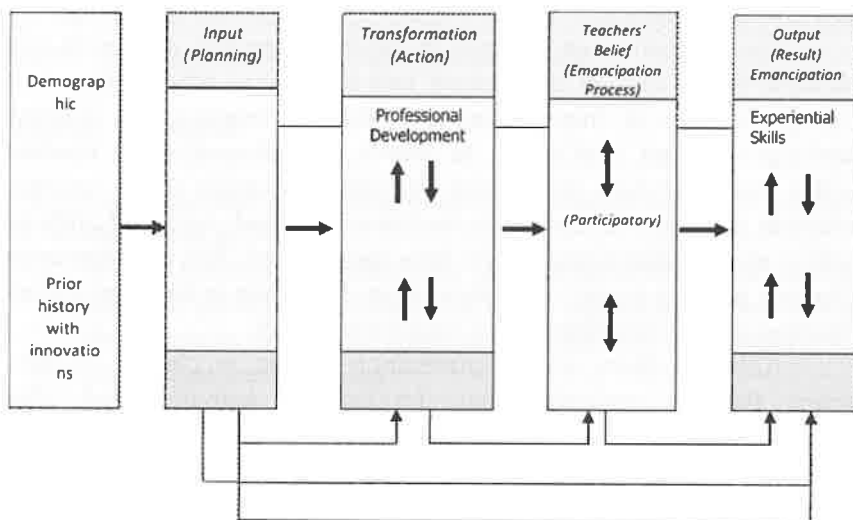


DIAGRAM 2.1: Proposed Theoretical Framework

Research Methodology

This study use qualitative case study method. Selection of the method is considered as appropriate for the researcher to appraise and understand something more in depth and broad regarding teachers' emancipation towards teachers' teaching management transformation at classroom through action research practices implemented in school. Other than that, selection of case study also can help researcher to understand and solidify situation or phenomena, program, proses or social group more (Merriam,

2002; Yin, 2003).

Determination of research sample using purposive sampling, by using checklist method onto teachers that have involved in action research practices in their schools. The checklist prepared consists criteria such as teacher who have been in service for 10 years or more, have done action research in school minimum three times regardless of the stages of implementation and teacher who voluntarily participate in this study. Interim study was conducted on two teachers in a primary school in Kota Belud district as an exploratory tool of this study focus.

Data collection was done using the method of interview and document analysis only and data will be analysed using Thematic Analysis. Thematic Analysis is a method to identify, analyse and reporting theme in the data (Stenner, 1993, Usher and Moony-Somers, 2000). Research findings are illustrated in a form of diagram (Diagram 1) to manifest the relationship between categories and themes exist in this study. So this study will give a deeper understanding about the process of existence of teachers' emancipation and changes that occur towards teachers' teaching management practice through action research practices at classroom.

Research Findings

What is the effect of action research practice towards transformation of teachers' classroom management at the classroom?

The nature of understanding

Throughout the interview session with research participant (PK1), he stated the impact of the action study practice that have been practiced in school have created a more critical thinking in him. He also able to develop new knowledge results from interaction or transaction between the ready meanings with new experiences. He stated the experience gained is the jump-off point for later study implementation in school and it has been done in more detailed. He also said that action study practice is capable to trigger a more open mind and broaden his view in managing strategies and techniques in his teaching. He also states that action study practice has made him to be a reflective practitioner towards his teaching practice in the classroom.

My experience in implementing action research as the first study I have made when I do my first degree, so it was the jump-off point for later study and there is a continuity from the beginning, meaning from the early stage maybe it is not too detail but when we make one study, our mind will be more open, broaden our view, so in that way we can do further study not only in the same school but in other schools...undeniably the first study give me lesson, knowledge and teach me how to do studies in more detail.

Based on the interview session conducted to second research participant (PK2), he gained freedom in determining what to practice in the classroom according to the evidence and data gathered from reflections that have been done. He stated that the decisions he took are after take into account surrounding factors such as background of the pupils, and situation in the classroom.

LINUS, our LINUS pupil a... their capability varies. So, this children we give one corner for example a play corner, they can play there using toys I have prepare for them including I have congkak, hopscotch and other traditional games, in each corner, my school used to be big, so there are a lot of place that I can use for these children to do their activity.

Increase participants PK2, he always monitor the progress and modify the teaching approach when the situation changes either in terms of technique, strategy and approach. He manages to develop professional skills to identify approach, method, technique in teaching practice in the classroom.

This way they learn while playing a...this can instils their interest, not to stress with one focus which is academic only. They can generate their brain through in play and they also gain knowledge.

Focus of Collaboration

Participant PK1 stated that through action study that has been implemented,

he understands and deepen into the theoretical concept in education. He is able to use or apply the theory according to the needs and its appropriateness to the classroom surroundings. He also said that indirectly, he can solidify his knowledge about theory, concept and principle in teaching. Besides, research participant stated through the action study practice it can give him the capability and freedom to build up hypothesis and theory in teaching through the actual experience he has been through.

There are a lot of theories...theories that we can use as our guideline. Although, I we have to look into the real thing, because theory were created by human, creation according to their study, but for me some of their surrounding are not the same with others, just like people used to say 'different strokes for different folks', so although the theory is good but we have to know how to adapt the theory according to the real situation.

Similarly, participants PK2, expressed through action research practices and the freedom it gave him the ability to build a hypothesis or theory in teaching through actual experience that has traveled.

A lot of theories used in that action, because it is as basic in our action, her lecturer wanted to see what the theory is... but really if you want to say reflection that result of what we do, we appeared lah.

How will the transformation of classroom management contribute to the process of emancipation existence through teachers' decision in classroom?

The nature of reality

According to the interview session, participant PK1 said that naturalistic observation in classroom had been done first to identify or investigate the teaching management practice. He recorded the data gathered for further action. The data were analyzed to plan the appropriate strategy and technique for improving the practice had been used before. He make his own decision based on the data he had gathered. This means research participant is able to make own decision for the purpose of transformation.

As his statement:

When I was offered to do the action study, I studied my school first to know more the condition of my school, so I look around, finally I saw that was the condition that I have to improve.. a... that was my own decision, I want to do it myself, I want to do research

Meanwhile, participant PK2 also stated that he got cooperation from other teachers in school, either in form of ideas or view. He said that the ideas about teaching were form together with the ideas from other teachers. Besides, he also got cooperation from the head master and members of Parent Teachers Association (PIBG) while decorating the class, cleaning up the school property, classroom and others. As his statement:

Overall, school members had played their roles, not only head master; senior assistant(guru penolong kanan), teachers and AKS staffs. Everyone has played their role including parents of the children

How did the process of doing action research trigger teachers' emancipation at classroom?

Relationship between the knower and known

Throughout the interview session with participant PKI, he said about the reflection that he had done whether through observation and record the data gathered or from own experience or even other teachers' opinion and feedback regarding their own teaching, in which he said:

That is the basis of why I did the research from what I choose, my idea and then gathered with other ideas and they agreed to help me finish up my research.

Participant PK2 also, stated that teachers in his school also collaboratively cooperate to improve the teaching in classroom. Teacher who teaches other subjects also contribute ideas and opinion to improve the level of skills in teaching. Besides, they also record the data or evidences needed for the purpose of teaching improvement in classroom. He also said

that other teachers help in giving ideas and opinion about teaching management strategy and activity need to be done in class room.

Undeniably I saw this study give me the opportunity to identify the problem and how to overcome it through the action study it can expand my idea.

How is the practice of action research can contribute to teachers' emancipation in the classroom?

Change duration

Based on participant PK1 statements, participant found out that he practiced openness results from his knowledge he has and experiences. He always gather new information so he can make the best decision for his teaching practice in classroom. This means that he can determine his own development based on the experience gained. Other than that, research participant also stated that the collaborative spirit he gained which serve chances for teachers to interact and share their ideas, opinion, knowledge and skills.

He added, that this practice could increase the performance of teachers in terms of knowledge and his skills to manage teaching in the classroom. He tried to practice the theory in education field that is suitable with the improvement they wanted. He also capable to make own decision based on the real condition of the school and background of the pupils in classroom.

Indeed, I see this action research has allowed me how to identify the problem and how do I overcome it through the earlier practice could develop my ideas

For participant PK2 stated that he had been more critical to his practice in classroom. Where he always try to change his teaching practice based on the evidence gathered whether it is the results of own reflection or feedback from other teacher. He also become capable of strengthening his skills, techniques and teaching strategies based on the results gained after improvement has been made, in which he said:

Just for me a.. when we talk about it, we have to look at

that....the school capacity, first on arrival... essays him. For example, school A school is not equal to B, and that kind of thing, so if the facility is simple enough we all go, take more action, but if the school is less than he had the facilities we have to take action to progress step by step. Still with the committee, that's why we want to see where the most fundamental problem, we need to put a priority we want to overcome. Our actions I took it, sort of in line with our catagan set your levels progress last we can see from month to month, we will eventually get results.

Undeniable that I saw this study have given me the opportunity to know how to identify problem and to overcome it through the research it can expand my idea. It is just for me a... when we talk about this matter, we have to look at the school's capacity, it varies. For example, school A is not the same with school B and that is how it is. So if the facilities are all adequate, we can do our job easily and can take further actions but if the school has lack of facility, then we have to take action one step at a time for improvement. Together with the committee, that is why we have to see where is the basic problem, we have to put it as our main priority to overcome. Our further action is to organize with the Gantt chart that we have planned so that our stages of our work improvement can be seen from month to month, at the end we get the result.

Discussion

Transformations in school depend a lot on the teachers' readiness to accept and implementing it with perseverance. Improvement in teaching and learning indeed depend a lot on the teacher himself. The purpose of action study is to modify and improve education through social change in school so that it can create teacher's emancipation, so they will be more alert and aware of their own practice and then ready for making improvement. Thus, every decision made have to take into account social factors, economy and politic in the education world scope especially in school.

In addition, the findings of the analysis can also clarify there are several important aspects that showed the existence of teacher's emancipation towards the practice in classroom such as there is improvement in teacher's professional development such as teaching and development based on experience has improve the research participant to

make reflection to build up new ideas. Other than that, research participant also have the initiative to advance himself with a more critical thoughts to improve the practice before. Elliot (1991) assert that action study insist on the individual development through the action and collaboration in building reservoir of knowledge and understandable theory through examination onto their practice.

Other than that, outcome gained from the interview session found out that research participant have been solidified the knowledge about theory, concept and principle in teaching suitably with the surroundings. This means, better in managing approach, strategy and teaching technique in classroom. This results supported by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988:25) stated that action study capable to expand the present scientific theory and practitioner will be able to make justification appropriate about the evidence gained through critical reflection and helping in forming tested rationale, examined and sifted in practitioner's practice.

Based on the results gained from the interview session found that research participant are capable to make own decision regarding the teaching practice in classroom for the purpose of improvement. Results took from evidence and data gathered through reflection and sharing of ideas and also experience from other colleagues. This outcome supported by Copper (1990) stated the role of teacher through action study to expand the role of a teacher as an investigator related to the teaching and learning through systematic classroom research.

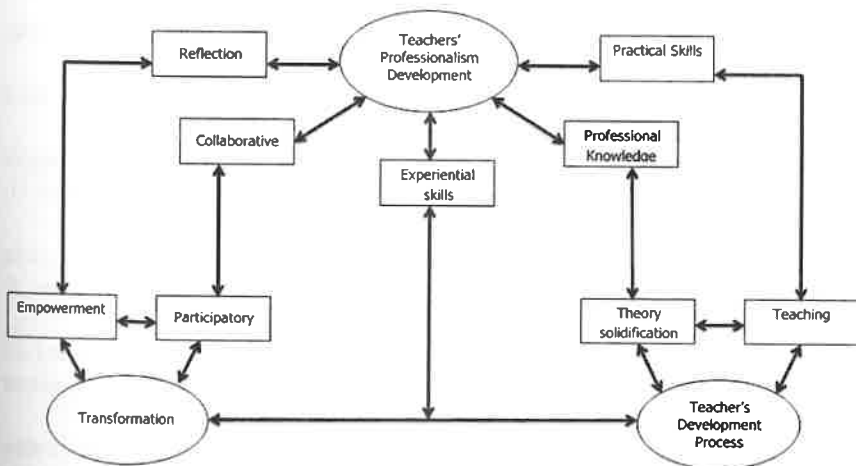


FIGURE 2: Teachers' Emancipation

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