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Study of the Obstacles to Conducting the Action Research from the Primary School Teachers' Point of View in Bijar

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Abstract

Conducting the research by the teachers is one of the most basic ways of developing educational quality. The present study was carried out to identify the obstacles in the path to conducting the action research by the primary school teachers in Bijar, Iran. The research method was a survey method through which the attitudes of the primary school teachers regarding the obstacles to carrying out the action research were identified and prioritized. The population of the study consisted of 754 primary school teachers employed in the education department in Bijar in the academic year of 2013-2014. Based on Morgan's table (1970) the sample size of the study was determined as 250 teachers which was distributed among six grades of the primary education through quote sampling method. The required data was gathered by the researcher made instrument, the reliability of which was estimated as 93 by using cronbach's alpha. The data analysis was performed by using SPSS, the findings of the study indicated that the individual obstacles to conducting the action research based on priority included: educational, attitudinal and skill obstacles respectively. The priority in organizational and skill obstacles involved motivational and structural obstacles. In analyzing the environmental obstacles, only one factor called the lack of the resources and facilities was identified. In general the results from this study suggested that in the case of absence of obstacles, teachers attempt to conduct research, and in this respect there is no difference between men and women.

Keywords: Obstacles, Action Research, Primary School Teachers

Introduction

Action research is a cooperative regular search process to ((identify an unknown situation)) and an effort to decrease or resolve it. Like a systematic research it is an effort to improve the educational activities by a group of participants in this action through the practical activities and their thoughts about influences of this activity (Kelly, 1999, p 119). Researches by Adele²(1989) , Bourilly (1993), quoted from Rezaei Kamal Abadi and et al , 1384) indicate that the researches by the teachers can have so much positive influences on the education ; according to this studies the action research (research in practice) provides opportunities to the teachers so that they develop their knowledge and professional skills. As teacher's professional skills increase their status and position increase too. Teachers' research provides self-assessment for him/her, thereby he/she attains the deeper understanding of himself/herself and the teaching process eventually causes scientific and research climate among colleagues and students. With this approach, the teachers can be employed as a component element toward identifying problems and solving them in the educational environments. In the national document of the fundamental evolution it has been emphasized precisely on the necessity of planning and research based action. In this regard the research center of the educational studies as the most basic administrator organ of the research has had new and important results that continuously has been noticed by the policy makers of the education, managers and teachers. Rising trend of the teachers' participation in this program and their spread participation in the action research courses and followed by it increasing the plans quality and increasing approach to the importance of the thought and research based action in the education cadre is the witness of this claim. According to the effective position of this program and the research efficiency in the educational plannings, upgrading the quality of the education system, supporting the structural administrative , intellectual bases of the education administrators and equipping them by the scientific insight , producing the knowledge and also utilizing their experiences and thoughts toward the improvement of the classroom status and other sections, suitable perform of this research activity will be significant more than before. The approach of the action research must be introduced parallel to the teacher's professional structure and the component element of this structure. This approach among other skills and capabilities of the teaching profession finds its identity and along with them finds the basis of the plan and offer (Saki, 1383). In the light of what was quoted , the primary school teachers in Bijar didn't participate the researcher teacher program effectively and didn't have much willingness to formulate the action research so for this reason in the present research , the researcher intends to study the obstacles to conducting the action research by the teachers in Bijar from their point of//view and from the administrative, organizational, structural dimensions and so on and meanwhile introducing and prioritizing them submits the solutions to resolve the obstacles . Hence the main question of this Bijar research is: which are the obstacles of the action research from the teachers' point of view in Bijar?

Theoretical framework of the research:

In the literature of the action research, its precise historical origin is not definite, authors such as Kemmis⁵ and Mactaggert⁶ (1998) declare that action research has begun by Kurt Lewin who is an American psychologist. Mac Kenal says: ((action research as a research method has appeared since the late of twentieth century and the studies in the field of literature of this line show that origin of the action research has been derived from the scientific method which goes back to the

scientific movement in training which existed in the late of nineteenth century)) (Masters, 2000, P 1) in the continue of the subject, two philosophic schools are suggested which the action research is affected from them.

Philosophy of the progressists:

In progressism education method (especially John Dewey's method) the scientific method of problem solving has been used as a solution for solving the problems in the fields such as philosophy, psychology, education, and aesthetics (Mac Kenal, 1991, P 8). The progressism believe that change is the most important reality;

Experience and experiment are two key words in education and they must be the base of education (ghasemi poya, 1380, p32). John Dewey suggest two principles in order to submit a criterion under which the quality of experience could be judged: The principle of continuity and the principle of mutual effect. The principle of continuity says that an experience is related to other experiences and remains alive in the experiences behind itself. The principle of mutual effect says that an experience both affects and is affected, in other, words in an experience both internal factors and external factors and external factors interact (Naghibzadaeh, 1380, ps 187-188). So it can be concluded that training from the view of the progressists includes reorganizing the experience which adds the meaning to the experience and increases the required capability in order to conduct the next experience path, progressism in the field of education is a philosophy which knows the education based on the learner's action and the experimental usage of his/her physical and mental forces (Ebrahimzadeh, 1371, p 213).

Philosophy of the post modernism:

Post modernists believe that the teachers must be able to analyze the values, ideologies and subjects which form their role as a teacher. They also analyze the cultural policies which they promote in the classroom.

They must be able to analyze their relation to the greater society so that they include themselves as the important factors of the society who are able to know the pains of the important society and the people. They must be able to establish a possible relation among the realities as a reality of existence. Zhiro says that we must go further so that we train the teacher as efficient experts. We must have a new attitude to train the teachers (Zhiro, 2004, p2).

Among the research methods the action research method seems to have a specific importance from two dimensions for the post modernists.

First, that from the view of the some of the post modernists this method can have a clarifying role and to be a way to achieve the liberalizing aims and, second that this method has a further capability of usage at school level (Farmahini Farahani, 1383, p175).

Methodology

This research in the light of time studied is a type of the post event in the light of purpose is applicable and in the light of methodology is a type of the descriptive researches. The particular descriptive method in this research is a type of survey in which the primary school teacher's attitude in Bijar in respect of the researcher teacher program and the obstacles to conducting the action research according to the status quo are described. The population of this research includes all of the primary school teachers employed in the education department in Bijar who are serving in the academic year of 1392-1393 that according to the present statistics the number

of them were 754 persons. The sample studied in this research includes 250 persons to the primary school teacher employed in the education department in Bijar that based on Morgan table was estimated and then was distributed among six grades through quota sampling method. Its data gathering method was also performed by the researcher made instrument that its reliability was obtained as 0.93. The data analysis was performed by using SPSS.

Findings

Analysis of the first question:

1. Which are the individual obstacles existing in the path of the action research?

In order to examine the answer of the above question and analyzing the individual obstacles the factor analysis test has been used which its output is visible in the following table.

Table 1- setting priorities of the individual obstacles in path of conducting the action research from the teachers' view

Row	Sum	Variance Percent	Cumulative Percent of variance	Sum	Variance Percent	Cumulative Percent of variance
1	3.926	43.625	43.625	3.926	43.625	43.62
2	1.476	16.395	60.020	1.476	16.395	60.02
3	1.104	12.264	72.284	1.104	12.264	72.28

Table 2- setting priorities of the individual obstacles in path of conducting the action research from the teacher's view.

Row	Name of the factor	Amount of the variance stated
The first factor	Educational	43.62
The second factor	attitudinal	16.395
The third factor	Skill	12.264

The data of the factor analysis test of the individual obstacles related to conducting action research from the primary school teachers' view in Bijar indicates that the sum of the speeches have 72.28% factor loading over this variable and in better words these speeches totally cover 72.28% Conceptual place of the variable and since this amount of the factor loading is above 50% thus the variable studied is reliable. Meanwhile the factor analysis has identified 3 factors for this variable as the individual obstacles.

In path of conducting action research among the primary school teacher in Bijar which in the rotation table of the findings factors by the varimax rotation method the speeches related to each factor and the factor loading of each speech from the first priority through the third priority in the related columns of educational, attitudinal, and skill obstacles are visible respectively. This finding indicates that in the examines performed for the population, and the individual obstacle in path of conducting the action research, educational obstacle lies in the first priority, attitudinal in the second priority and skill obstacle lies in the third priority.

Analysis of the Second Question

2. Which are the organizational obstacles existing in the path of conducting the action research?

In order to examine the answer of the above question and analyzing the organizational obstacles the factor analysis test has been used which its output is visible in the following tables:

Table 3 – Setting priorities of the organizational obstacles in the path of conducting the action research from the teachers' view.

Row	Sum	Variance Percent	Cumulative Percent of variance	Sum	Variance Percent	Cumulative Percent of variance
1	5.225	52.248	52.248	5.225	52.248	52.248
2	1.416	14.162	66.410	1.416	14.162	66.410

Table 4- setting priorities of the organizational obstacles in the path of conducting action research from the teacher's view

Row	Name of the factor	Amount of the variance state
The first factor	Motivational	52.24
The second factor	Structural	14.16

The data of the factor analysis test of the organizational obstacles related to conducting the action research from the primary school teachers' view in Bijar indicates that the sum of the speeches have 66.41% factor loading over this variable and in better words these speeches totally cover 66.41% conceptual place of the variable and since this amount of the factor loading is above 50% thus The variable studied is reliable. Meanwhile the factor analysis has identified 2 factors for this variable as the organizational obstacles in path of conducting the action research among the primary school teachers in Bijar, which in the rotation table of the findings by varimax rotation method the speeches related to each factor and the factor loading of each speech from the first priority (motivational obstacles) through the second priority (structural obstacles) are visible in the related columns.

This finding indicates that in the examines performed for the population, regarding the organizational obstacles of conducting the action research, the motivation obstacle more than structural obstacle prevents from conducting the action research by the teachers.

Analysis of the third question:

3. Which are the environmental obstacles existing in the path of conducting the action research?

In order to examine the answer of the above question and the analysis of the environmental obstacles, the factor analysis test has been used which its output is visible in the following tables:

Table 5- setting priorities of the environmental obstacles of conducting action research from the teachers' view.

Row	Sum	Variance percent	Cumulative percent of variance	Sum	Variance percent	Cumulative percent of variance
1	5.27	65.963	65.963	5.27	65.963	65.963

Table 6- setting priorities of the environmental obstacles of conducting action research from the teachers' view.

Row	Name of the factor	Amount of the variance state
factor	Resources-facilities	65.96

The data of the factor analysis test of the environmental obstacles related to conducting action research from the primary school teachers' view in Bijar indicates that the sum of these speeches have 65.96% factor loading over this variable and in better words these speeches totally cover 65.96% conceptual place of the variable and since this amount of the factor loading is above 50% thus The variable studied is reliable. Meanwhile the factor analysis has identified 1 factor for this variable as the environmental obstacles called (resources-facilities) of conducting the action research among the primary school teachers in Bijar, which in the rotation table of the finding by varimax rotation method, the speeches related to the factor and its factor loading are visible in the related column.

Analysis of the Fourth Question

4. How is the ranking of each one of the obstacles based on affecting in the path of conducting the action research by the teachers?

In order to examine the answer of the above question and ranking above factors based on affecting rate from the teachers' view, Friedman ranking test has been used which its data is visible in the following tables:

Table 7- descriptive data of the identified factors

Factors	Number	Average	Standard deviation	Minimum observation	Maximum observation
Organizational	252	32-32	9-69	10.00	50.00
Individual	252	26-18	8-16	9.00	45.00
Environmental	252	25.54	8.061	8.00	40.00

Table 8- setting priorities of the identified factors based on affecting rate

Factors	Affecting rate
Organizational	2.63
Individual	1.82
Environmental	1.55

Table 9- the data of chi-square test for examining the difference among factors.

Number	252
Amount of chi-square	165.054
Freedom degree	2
Meaningfulness level	

As it is inferred from the data of the table, the average observed related to the organizational factors is more than individual and of the individual factors is more than environmental factors. Since the related test is significant at level under 0.01 thus it is inferred such that: first, there is difference among three groups of above factors from the primary school teachers' view studied in Bijar, second, affecting rate of the order of above factors of conducting the action research is as follows respectively: Organizational, individual; and environmental factors.

Discussion and Conclusion

In general, in the population studied, the results of this research showed that existing individual obstacles in the path of conducting the action research in order of priority include: educational, attitudinal, and skill obstacles. This finding means that in the examines performed of the population regarding the obstacles of conducting the action research, educational obstacle lies at the first priority, attitudinal obstacle at the second priority and skill obstacle lies at the third priority. In one hand this ranking means that the teachers believe that there are obstacles in the path of conducting their action research and by resolving these obstacles their attitude rate to conducting the action research will be much more. The organizational obstacles (motivational and structural) in the path of conducting the action research, in order of the priority include: motivational and structural obstacles. This finding means that in the examines performed of the population regarding the organizational obstacles of conducting the action research, the motivational obstacle more than the structural obstacle prevents from conducting the action research. On the other hand the teachers believe that there are such obstacles in the path of conducting their action research. In the environmental obstacles (resources and facilities) existing in the path of conducting the action research one factor as environmental obstacles called (resources and facilities) has been identified for this variable among the primary school teachers in Bijar.

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