

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: THE CHALLENGES OF ACTION RESEARCH IMPLEMENTATION IN KAZAKHSTAN

BY

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Purpose of the study

- to identify the challenges of action research implementation and the ways of solving them as part of teachers' professional development at one of the NIS schools.

Research questions

- What challenges are encountered that hinder, (if any) action research implementation in teachers' professional development in one of the NIS schools?
- What are the ways in which the practices of conducting action research can be improved?

Literature review

- Researchers agree that action research makes valuable contributions to teachers' professional development (*Zeichner & Klehr, 1999; Savoie-Zajc and Descamps-Bednarz, 2007; Jaipal & Figg, 2011; Keegan, 2016*).
- The literature indicate several action research implementation challenges which hinder the effective professional development of teachers (*Caro-Bruce & McCreadie, 1994; Zeichner & Klehr, 1999; Mingucci, 2001; Zhou, 2013*).
 - Academic challenges practitioners face when conducting action research associated with lack of teachers' knowledge and skills of conducting action research (*Caro-Bruce & McCreadie, 1994; Zeichner & Klehr, 1999; Mingucci, 2001; Zhou, 2013*).
 - Non-academic challenges are lack of time, support, funding, and resources provided for practitioners (*Caro-Bruce & McCreadie, 1994; Zeichner & Klehr, 1999; Mingucci, 2001; Zhou, 2013*).
- Action research was first introduced in Kazakhstan in 2012 (*McLaughlin & Ayubayeva, 2015*).

Methodology

- Research design: qualitative study
- Data collection tool: semi-structured interview
- Site: one of the NIS schools
- Participants: 10 teachers (5 experienced & 5 beginner action researchers).

Participants of the study

No.	Name (encoded)	Gender	Subject	Total year of experience with action research
Teachers, who involved in action research project within the school and did not participate in NIS workshops on action research				
1.	Teacher 1	female	Kazakh language and literature	1,5
2.	Teacher 2	female	Kazakh language and literature	1,5
3.	Teacher 3	female	Global perspectives and project work, English language	0,7
4.	Teacher 4	female	Biology	0,5
5.	Teacher 5	female	Mathematics	1,5
Teachers, who involved in action research project within the school and participated in NIS workshops on action research				
6.	Teacher 6	female	English language	4
7.	Teacher 7	male	Physical education	2
8.	Teacher 8	female	Kazakh language and literature	4
9.	Teacher 9	female	Russian language and literature	3
10.	Teacher 10	female	English language	3

Findings: Challenges of action research implementation

Academic challenges

Lack of teachers' theoretical knowledge about action research

- Misconceptions about action research
- Insufficient knowledge and practice of conducting action research
- Lack of motivation

Lack of skills for conducting action research

- Time-management skills
- ICT skills
- English language knowledge
- Reflection and research skills

Non-academic challenges

Lack of resources for conducting action research

- Resources about action research in Kazakh or Russian languages
- Literature and studies to use for action research
- Availability of action research projects in Kazakh and Russian languages

Findings: Recommendations to improve the practices of conducting action research

Developing a positive collaborative environment

Building a culture of research environment

Conducting collaborative action research

Emotional support and praise

Provision of resources

Resources on conducting action research

Individual support by TRCs

Workshops and trainings

Promotion of individual professional development

Improvement of knowledge about action research

Improvement of fundamental skills

Conclusion

- Teachers of one this NIS school encounter several academic and non-academic challenges when they conduct action research.
- Most of the challenges (lack of theoretical knowledge, lack of skills, lack of support and resources) are common in relation to the literature.
- Some other issues are unique for this NIS school context (lack of English language knowledge, lack of resources in Kazakh and Russian languages, lack of ICT skills).
- Findings also present solution for the issues. If most of them needed continuous support from experienced colleagues (workshops, resources, emotional support), the rest believed that they have to be self-organized (self-learning).

Limitations & implications

- Funding and working conditions at this NIS school are different from other secondary schools.
- Small size of participants.
- Insufficient data collection instruments.
- Findings of the study are valuable for teachers, TRCs, school administrators, and policy makers.