Extended Summary

Action Research in Educational Organizations

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Introduction

One of research methods which education professionals (teacher, manager/administrator, specialist, etc.) can use to find solutions to unique problems for their own situations and provide professional development is action research. It is a type of research which participants try to define and solve their own problems and improve situation and is done with other employees together within scientific research processes. Action research is accepted as one of the qualitative research methods but it is possible to use both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques. It is a specific research method, with the reasons such as focusing on solving the problems encountered in everyday life, the implementation small groups and the one who suffers from the problem can be researcher. It also can be used by many education professionals, particularly teachers.

The purpose of this conceptual and theoretical study is to examine facilities, types, validity and reliability, historical developments and implementation in educational organizations of action research method depending on literature survey.

Action research is used as a tool for school based program developing, professional development, system planning, restructuring of a school and making an evaluation. The most important goal of this type of research in educational filed is to understand the emerging facts in educational world and to try to improve by changing them systematically. Role of the researcher is to determine or explain the problem as accurate as possible. Here the aim is not to create generalizable laws for multiple cases, conversely to improve and change the case affected by results or solutions.

Action research consists of six steps which are respectively stating problem, collecting data, analyzing data, action planning, evaluating results, next action planning. This type
research is generally applied on an accessible small population such as one of the subjects taught in a school. The results are mostly not generalized therefore it is not an obligatory to work on a large population and to determine a random sampling. In action researches, it is not easy to stand neutral to the problem so it is quite important to get help from experts during planning the research, getting data, defining work group and carrying out the research to conduct the survey in properly. In action researches, internal validity ensures when multiple viewpoints are provided and it is often has low external validity as it is mostly implemented on a small and an intentional group.

Researchers should pay attention to ethical guidelines when they do action research as it is carried out in real-life conditions, requires close and open relationship between participants. In action research, all ethical principles, seen in all other types of researches, such as honesty, privacy, responsibility and fair sharing should be considered too. It is extremely important that all participants know their rights in any research and the researcher always should be honest, realistic and fair.

Action research helps teachers to gain knowledge and skill on research methods and practices and also it ensures teachers to be more conscious on exchanging opportunities and options. Teachers who conduct an action research can be more critical and rigorous on their practices and also they can make better evaluations about their own methods, perceptions and understanding and all approaches to the teaching process.

Action research is crucial for all educational employees especially for teachers in terms of self-knowledge and self-improvement. Because, through action research, teachers can look at themselves critically, define their own situation, cooperate with others, develop new techniques and find solutions for their problems, set up a healthy dialogue with their students. Also they can help other teachers who have similar problems by sharing their experiences with other teachers.

Probably it can be said that action researches contribute especially students and society more than teachers. Because teaching methods and students of a teacher who follows improvements and renews himself will be totally different than those who use traditional methods. It is obvious that this positive difference will contribute to raise better generations and consequently to form more qualified society.