

# TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN ACTION RESEARCH AND SELF-EFFICACY

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## Abstract

*Researching issues related to current trends on research methodology in English language teaching is undeniably important, especially in welcoming global competition which encourage all the educational practitioner to develop their skills. This conceptual study is aimed to investigate the teachers' view on the relationship between participation in action research and teachers efficacy. This study will depict the way the English teachers view their participation in action research for their self-efficacy. In order to do so, this study will be developed in the framework of Descriptive Qualitative Research. The data collection tools will include semi-structured interview as the main tool, and research document analysis as the supporting tool. The findings of the study are expected to reveal whether or not teachers view their participation in action research helps them to raise the self-efficacy in English teaching. Therefore, the final conclusion of this study is expected to have theoretical contribution regarding teachers' perspective of action research in raising their self-efficacy after conducting or participating in it that can support, add, or reject the existing theories.*

**Key words:** Action research, teachers' perception, self-efficacy.

## I. Background

Educational research has long been focused on attempting to identify factors that affect teachers' development. One of the factors which is considered to have a great influence for teachers' professional development is teachers' beliefs about their teaching practices. Thus, it is not surprising that teachers' beliefs about their teaching practices have recently been an interesting issue to discuss on. Many researchers, in educational field, conduct studies regarding this issue. Wyatt (2011) investigated teachers' perspective of researching their classroom practices. The starting point of his study was that action research (AR) helps teachers to improve their professional development as they focus on their intellects, academic knowledge, and personal experience while conducting the classroom-based research. The results of his study show that teachers highlight various benefits of engaging in action research, particularly on their professional development including raising their awareness in helping fellow teachers as well as overcoming their students' problems. These results are also supported in Kang (2007) study. The results of his study show that elementary school teachers view action research as a valuable vehicle for them to improve their professional development in terms of conceptual understanding about the materials.

Over the last few years, researches have shown that teachers view action research as a tool for improving their professional development. Piggot-Irvine (2006) further

supported this idea through a review of the literature of effective professional development that pointed directly to action research. What is missing from the researches on action research as a form of professional development is the effect it has on the teachers themselves and their sense of efficacy.

Efficacy is a construct that quantifies one's belief about how well he or she is able to do the things one must do. This construct is first defined by Albert Bandura (1994). Self-efficacy beliefs influence thought patterns and emotions, which in turn enable or inhibit actions. According to Bandura's (1997) theory, self-efficacy has two components namely efficacy expectations and outcome expectancy. The former is the conviction that one has the ability, knowledge, and skills to successfully execute the behaviour or actions required to produce desired outcome(s).

Teacher-efficacy is an important factor that could directly affect students' achievement. This idea is well-supported by the results of some studies conducted by Chan (2007), Ross & Bruce (2007), and Wolters & Daugherty (2007). The results of their studies show that teacher-efficacy has direct impact on student achievement, student motivation, and student efficacy to be significant. Pajares (2002) summarizes the importance of teacher-efficacy by stating:

“How people behave can often be better predicted by the beliefs they hold about their capabilities than by what they are actually capable of accomplishing, for these self-efficacy perceptions help determine what individuals do with the knowledge and skills they have (p. 4).”

Although results from various studies on action research have shown that action research in its many different forms is considered as a form of professional development, literary account on its effect on teacher-efficacy is still limited. Whereas, Ross & Bruce (2007) consider the effect of professional development as an intervention to improve teacher efficacy, as professional development is the main avenue for teacher training. Wyatt (2011) states in his discussion of the results that action research, indeed has certain effect on teachers' self-efficacy and emotions. However, further explanation about how they view action research by means of raising their self-efficacy was not available. One must wonder, however, about how do teachers feel their participation in action research impacts themselves? How do they view action research functions as a form of professional development for the purpose of raising their efficacy? These questions need to be answered to more completely address the value of action research.

The plan of the study is to explore the overarching question of how teachers perceive action research benefits them in terms of raising their self-efficacy. Specifically, the **research question** of the study will be “What is the relationship between participation in action research and teachers efficacy?”

## **II. Research Method**

### **2.1 The Research Design**

In order to answer the research question, the study will be developed in the framework of Descriptive Qualitative Research. Descriptive Qualitative research design is chosen in order to get in-depth analysis of the data collected. In order to get the authentic

data, the researcher took the data from the subjects directly without manipulating the condition. It is also stated by Latief (2010:77, translated version) that in order to get the authenticity of the data, the researcher must take the data from the data sources exactly as it is. In collecting the data, the researcher emphasized on its process of describing the feeling of the teacher after they conduct and/or participate in action research and then relate it with the teacher's sense of efficacy.

The main data of the study will be in the form of qualitative data obtained from the semi-instructed interview. The goal is to provide a description of teachers' perspective of action research in raising their self-efficacy after conducting or participating in it.

## 2.2 The Subjects of the Research

The subjects of the study will be secondary school English teachers who have had experience in either conducting or participating in action research and have written research report(s).

## 2.3 The Data Collection

In line with the research question, the main data of the study will be teachers' feeling on how they view action research benefits them by means of raising their efficacy. The research data will be collected through semi-structured interview. This kind of interviews is used because the researcher wants to delve deeply into the topic and to understand thoroughly the answers provided. The participating teacher(s) will be asked questions about their experiences in conducting and/or participating in action research and their opinion on how they view action research relates to their efficacy.

Since this study was a descriptive study, the main instrument of the study is the researcher herself. The researcher will act as the one who interview, collect, analyse, and interpret the data. The secondary instruments will be an interview guide and an analysis of research report which is written by the participating teacher(s). The detailed information on the instruments will be discussed as follows.

### ▪ Interview guide

In semi-structured interviewing, a guide is used, with questions and topics that must be covered. The interviewer has some discretion about the order in which questions are asked, but the questions are standardized, and probes may be provided to ensure that the researcher covers the correct material. The interview guide used in this study contains questions which are adapted from Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy scale.

**Table 2.1 Interview Guide**

Categories	Questions	Expected Answers
Teaching and researching experiments	1. How many years have you been a teacher? 2. During your period of teaching, how many times have you conducted or participated in action research?	Teacher(s) should at least have experience in teaching for 5 years and have had experience in conducting or participating in action research once.

Perspective on action research	3. How do you feel after conducting or participating in action research? 4. Do you find your participation in action research helps you in raising your self-efficacy?	Teacher(s) gain benefits from conducting or participating in action research and AR helps them to be more encouraged and confident in teaching.
Efficacy influence decision making	5. After participating in action research, how much can you express your views freely on important school matters?	AR gives teacher(s) at least quite a bit influence on their confidence in expressing their views freely on important school matters.
Efficacy influence school resources	6. After participating in action research, how much can you do to get the instructional materials and equipment you need?	AR gives teacher(s) at least quite a bit influence on their courage to get the instructional materials and equipment they need.
Instructional self-efficacy	7. After participating in action research: - how much can you do to get through the most difficult students? - how much can you do to keep students on task on difficult assignments? - how much can you do to increase students' memory of what they have been taught in previous lessons? - how much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in schoolwork? - how much can you do to get students to work together?	AR gives teacher(s) at least quite a bit influence on their courage and confidence in dealing with students' problems.
Disciplinary self-efficacy	8. After participating in action research: - how much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules? - how much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?	AR gives teacher(s) at least quite a bit influence on their courage and confidence in controlling and managing the class.

### ▪ Research Report Analysis Guide

Research report analysis in this study is used to see whether the participating teacher(s) has provided logical and coherent rationales for conducting the study, concrete descriptions of methods, procedures, design, and analyses, accurate and clear reports of the findings, and plausible interpretations and conclusions based on the findings in his/her research report, so that he/she can really reflect from what they've done. The data obtained from this research report analysis will support the data obtained through the semi-structured interview.

**Table 2.2 Research Report Analysis Guide**

Points	Questions	Expected Results
Rationale for the Research Question	1. Did the author, in the initial portion of the article, provide an overview of the problem to be addressed in the study? 2. Did the author present evidence of knowledge of the topic of research through references to and descriptions	Research report provides a statement of the problem or research question following some introductory remarks and evidence in the form of summaries of major empirical findings and positions on

		of <i>relevant</i> and <i>current</i> research?	some issue. These summaries flow from one to the next as the author builds the case for the importance of the research question or problem.
Methods and design of the study used to answer the research question.	3.	Did the author provide a clear and concise description of how the study was conducted?	Research report provides a clear and concise description of how the study was conducted.
Results or Findings of the Study	4.	Did the author provide a complete report of the findings?	Research report presents an organized report of the findings around the research question, problem statement or statistical hypothesis.
Conclusions drawn based on research findings.	5.	What conclusions did the author draw?	Research report provides a clear conclusion that can answer the research problem posed in the chapter I. The conclusion should be based on the findings of the research.
	6.	Do these conclusions answer the original question posed?	
	7.	How did the author use the research findings to support the conclusions drawn?	

## 2.4 The Data Analysis

The data obtained will be analyzed and presented descriptively. It is in line with Bodgan and Biklen (1982) say about data analysis in qualitative research as follows:

“Data analysis is the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts and other materials that you accumulate to increase your own understanding of them and to enable you to present what you have discovered.” “Analysis involves working with data, organizing them, breaking them into manageable units, synthesizing the, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding papers, presentations, or plans for action.”

The technique of data analysis employed in this study is Interactive Model of Analysis. Miles and Huberman (1994) in this model suggest that minimally four procedures should take place interactively in data analysis. These procedures were data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

First, data collection refers to the process of data collection in the field. The data of this study will be collected through semi-structured interview. The next stage is data reduction. Data reduction involves the process of selecting the data obtained in the data collection. In selecting the data, the researcher will only pay attention to the data related to self-efficacy. Next is data display. Data display referred to the process of organizing and arranging the selected data. After that, the deeper analysis of the findings will appear in the discussion.

## 2.5 Conclusion

It is expected that the results of the study will have theoretical contribution regarding teachers’ perspective of action research in raising their self-efficacy after

conducting or participating in it that can support, add, or reject the existing theories. Besides, it is also expected that the results of the study will be able to encourage teachers—at least to some of whom—to conduct or participate in action research.

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