

Research Title: The Current Status of Teachers Doing Classroom Action Research at Savannakhet Teacher Training College, Lao People Democratic Republic

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Abstract

This study aimed to 2 specific objectives: 1) to survey the current status, statement of the problem, and Self-Development Needs for Classroom Action Research of Teachers at Savannakhet Teacher Training College in Lao People's Democratic Republic, 2) to develop teachers' knowledge, understanding, and ability to do Classroom Action Research at STTC in Lao PDR. The samples of this study were from two groups: 153 teachers for quantitative data, and 4 administrators and 7 Key Trainers of CAR for qualitative data. The research instruments were a survey questionnaire and structure interview. The quantitative data were analyzed by mean and standard deviation while the qualitative data were analyzed by descriptive analysis. This findings revealed that 1) the STTC teachers 3 dimensional factors affecting to the capacity doing the Classroom Action Research. The firstly, the statistical analysis was at the average of 4.01, result and discussion writing was the average of 3.98, and data collecting was the average of 3.90 which were the factors which had an impact on the teachers' knowledge. Secondly, the budget was the average of 4.00, the stage of Classroom Action Research Report was the average of 3.84, the management support was the average of 3.79, and the policy was the average of 3.72 which were the factors regarding the process promotion of CAR. Thirdly, the STTC giving importance was the average of 4.05, the curriculum was the average of 3.97, the content was the average of 3.88, and the training was the average of 3.80 which were the factors of the CAR promotion.

1. The solution from the teachers, the administrators, and key trainers is developing the coaching and mentoring system for the teachers to do classroom action research.

Keywords: Development, Coaching and Mentoring System, Classroom Action Research, STTC Teachers

1. Introduction

Lao PDR is not only a land-locked country, but there are many problems-locked. One of many problems-locked is the low human resource development (Hans, R. Luther, 2009, p. 16). In the regime of globalization, each country has very high competition in every aspect, for example, socio-economy and culture to grow with rapid changing sciences. The most essential factor to bring a country civilization is to develop human resource effectively and capable to meet social needs and Lao government strategies. The major objective of Lao Socio-Economic Development Plan 2001-2020 is to have Lao PDR out of the least developed country list (Central Party. 1996). Therefore, the Ministry of Education and Sports has established Strategic Educational Plan by assigning reforming equivalent Quality of Education to the region and international to produce Qualified Education under the Vision of MoEs: Being a good citizen, Nation loyalty, science vision, having knowledge and skills, having moral and ethics, respect

regulation, respect, hardworking, being healthy, and life-long learning (Normal Education Department. 2007: 37).

The Educational Law 2015, Section 1 assigns the standard, quality, sustainability of human resource development by making people in the country have good ethic, high ability, knowledge, professional skill, promote culture and tradition of the country. Moreover, this law still promote the education to equivalent region and to the international level. By reaching this vision, it is required to *promote all teachers to do research in order to find out the new methods and innovations for improving learning and teaching at school* (MoEs. 2015. p. 1).

In addition, the Education Law, Section 29 has allowed all the colleges in Lao People's Democratic Republic to organize research at the college in all course (MoEs. 2015, p. 9). It is clear that the government has found that the importance of research in locality should be implemented and spread out to promote the college doing research. At the college level, particularly the Teacher Training Colleges classroom action research is raised as the first priority.

In Section 1 of the Education Law still assigns the Right Burden and Mission of Teachers as the following responsibilities: improving, compiling, the Lesson Plans, textbooks, teaching materials, and new innovations by using research-based of teachers (MoEs. 2015, p. 16). For classroom action research, not only the students at the college have to do a classroom research, but also the teachers must do a classroom action research for one term. So, the responsibility of Savannakhet Teacher Training College on promoting the students and the teachers to do a classroom action research is being challenging in a challenging society.

Savannakhet Teacher Training College is an educational center in the middle part of Lao PDR for the development of Qualified Human Resource by promoting teachers doing research and meet the government policy which can join the ASEAN countries and internationals, preserve and promote elegant culture, to promote human resource moral and ethical, deep knowledge and capabilities under 5 Pillar Principles of Education (Savannakhet Teacher Training College: 2014.p. 156).

Research is essential fundamental tool to create knowledge domain and development new technology to develop education, economy, society, politic and security of the country. It is also a process and techniques to overcome problems of a man by studying progressive method continuously. Another significant of a research is that to improve quality and standards of the practice effectively and efficiently to real life (MoEs. 2010).

The Ministry of Education and Sports of Lao PDR (2002.p. 36) has assigned on Lao Education Law in 2005 (Edited Version) that a teacher in both normal and professional institutes (teachers in both colleges and universities) have to do a research in each academic year. The Government of Lao PDR also believes that doing research can build up new knowledge and can also be a part of education development. Besides, research is very important to develop the whole country in general.

The Educational Development Plan 2015 (MoEs. TTD.2015.p. 89) has established Teacher Standard for Doing Research in 4 aspects such as 1) a teacher should have knowledge and understanding of definition and its important of research, 2) a teacher should apply those knowledge and understanding to improve learning and teaching effectively and efficiently, 3) a teacher can do and give a hand other colleagues or new teachers to do research to overcome their problems, 4) a senior teacher must coach and mentor young teachers or even colleagues to do research or develop innovations and new teaching techniques to produce quality of learning.

However, in previous years Teacher Training College is a famous and old educational institute in Lao PDR which made a survey of teachers who have done research and found that most TTC teachers had done few research. Over 70% of the TTC teachers did not bring new methods and teaching materials to utilize and overcome to their real teaching, but mentioned

only deep content of the lesson matters to finish the National Curriculum on time in each year. The reasons why those teacher had not brought or had not created new innovations because they thought doing a research it was a way of difficult thing, low knowledge and abilities of doing research, lack of research doing experience, no time to do research, and lack of management promotion. As a result, the quality of learning and teaching management at TTC learners had shortages of effective working systems, creative thinking skills, unsatisfied learning outcomes (STTC. 2017, p. 36-39).

Towards the current status and the problem state a researcher is an education management and plays a very important role to STTC educational management in Lao DPR, has aware of its importance of Classroom Action Research. I believe that classroom action research is a way to bring new method and develop attractive activities to learning and teaching of a teacher. Therefore, a teacher, guardians, and community should pay attention to the abilities of teacher's research at STTC by assigning principles of classroom action research to be a way for development concept, take the research result to improve, overcome and develop qualities of learners effectively and efficiently according to meet educational curriculum objectives.

2. Research Objectives

1.1 To survey the current status, statement of the problem, and Self-Development Needs for Classroom Action Research of Teachers at Savannakhet Teacher Training College in Lao People's Democratic Republic.

1.2 To find out knowledge, understanding, and ability to do classroom action research at Savannakhet Teacher Training College in Lao PDR.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Population and Samples

The population of this study included 4 administrators, 7 key trainers for classroom action research (CAR) and teachers from four offices including 1) Natural Science Office, 2) Social Science Office, 3) Foreign Language Office, and 4) Primary Teacher Training Office at Savannakhet Teacher Training College, Lao PDR in the second semester of academic year 2018.

The samples were from two groups. The former group consisted of 153 teachers for quantitative data were selected through the table of Krejcie and Morgan, stratified random sampling, and simple random sampling, respectively. The latter group comprised 4 administrators and 7 key trainers for classroom action research (CAR) for qualitative data. They were selected by purposive sampling technique.

3.2 Research Instruments

The research instruments used in this study were the questionnaire and structured interview. The details of each instrument were as follows:

3.2.1 The questionnaire included three parts: checklist, a 5-rating scale and open-ended form. Part 1 was about demographic information of the samples namely, sex, offices, qualification, and teaching experiences in doing CAR, and attending the CAR workshop. Part 2 was about the STTC Teachers' Perspectives toward the Current Status of Doing Classroom Action Research: it was about the current status, statement of the problem, and needs for development of teachers on CAR. Part 3 was the opinions toward the ability of doing CAR, the opinion on the process of CAR, and the opinion on the Management Promotion on CAR. Part 4 was in the form of open-ended questions concerning doing CAR. The questionnaire was written in Lao language in order to minimize problems of ambiguity and misinterpretation. To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, the draft questionnaire version constructed by the researchers were modified and revised based on the suggestions of five experts. After that, a pilot study was to test

the effectiveness of the questionnaire and to improve language correctness and appropriateness of the questionnaire. The 30 samples of the pilot study were requested to fill out the questionnaire, to comment on the content and wording, and to give suggestions on items that should be added or excluded. Finally, the final draft of the questionnaire was revised before administering with the target group. In terms of the reliability of the questionnaire, alpha coefficient of Cronbach was calculated. The result revealed that the alpha reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was **0.89**. Therefore, it could be justifiable to claim that this instrument had both validity and reliability.

3.2.2 The structured interview was used to obtain the in-depth information about the current status of teachers doing classroom action research, problems on doing CAR, ways to solve those problems, knowledge, understanding, and ability to do CAR of teachers at Savannakhet Teacher Training College in Lao PDR. The four interview questions written in Lao language were gradually formulated and submitted to the five experts to check for the correctness and appropriateness. Finally, the researcher revised and edited the interview questions to be part of the interview.

3.3 Data Collection

3.3.1 Questionnaire

To obtain the quantitative data, 153 teachers were asked to fill out the questionnaire. They were allowed to ask the researcher about technical questions or unclear information in the questionnaire during the survey. Also, a consent form for taking a questionnaire was distributed to all the samples. Only the teachers who agreed to participate in the study signed the form. The research data provided were kept in confidential.

3.3.2 Structured Interview

The final version of structured interview guide was administered to 4 administrators and 7 key trainers for CAR at STTC in Lao PDR. The Lao version was used to interview the administrators and key trainers for CAR. Each of the 11 interviewees was interviewed for approximately 5 minutes. Each interview was audio-taped to ensure that all the information is recorded and can be reviewed afterwards. After the interviews had been completed, the audiotapes were transcribed.

3.4 Data Analysis

After checking the completion of each questionnaire, the data gathered from the questionnaires were statistically analyzed by using Statistic Package for Social Science (SPSS) mainly Version 20 focusing on the descriptive statistics analysis i.e. alpha coefficient, frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. The statistical devices employed in this study were as follows:

3.4.1.1 Alpha coefficient of Cronbach was used to calculate the reliability of questionnaire.

3.4.1.2 Frequency (f) and percentage (%) were used to calculate the data of the personal information of the samples.

3.4.1.3 Mean (\bar{x}) and standard deviation (S.D) were used to investigate the current status, statement of the problem and self-development needs for CAR of teachers at STTC in Lao PDR. The following criteria were employed for interpretation by **Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995)** as shown in table 1 below.

Table 1 Criteria for Scoring of Questionnaire

No.	Scores	Interpretation
1	4.50-5.00	The most difficult
2	3.50-4.49	Very Difficult
3	2.50-3.49	Average Difficult
4	1.50-2.49	Little difficult
5	1.00-1.49	Least Difficult

3.4.1.4 Descriptive analysis technique was used to analyze the data from the open-ended form.

3.4.2 Structured Interview

The data obtained about problems on doing CAR, ways to solve those problems, knowledge, understanding, and ability to do CAR of teachers at Savannakhet Teacher Training College in Lao PDR from the structured interview were analyzed by content analysis technique.

4. Research Results

4.1 The current status, statement of the problem and self-development needs for classroom action research of teachers at Savannakhet Teacher Training College in Lao PDR

The current states of doing classroom action research of teachers at Savannakhet Teacher Training College in Lao PDR can be classified into 3 aspects: teachers' CAR knowledge, CAR process promotion and CAR Importance Giving and its Curriculum. The results of those current states were illustrated in Table 2-4 below.

Table 2: Teachers' knowledge on classroom action research at Savannakhet Teacher Training College in Lao PDR (n=153)

Teachers' CAR knowledge	\bar{x}	S.D.	Interpretation
1. Assigning the problem	3.78	0.78	Very Difficult
2. Entitle	3.80	0.78	Very Difficult
3. Setting up the objectives	3.78	0.76	Very Difficult
4. Setting up hypothesis	3.75	0.74	Very Difficult
5. Scoping	3.74	0.74	Very Difficult
6. Definition of terms	3.69	0.81	Very Difficult
7. Reviewing literatures	3.92	0.87	Very Difficult
8. Assigning research tools	3.88	0.90	Very Difficult
9. Assigning data collection	3.91	0.93	Very Difficult
10. Using statistics for analysis	4.01	0.89	Very Difficult
11. Writing results	3.99	0.86	Very Difficult
12. Writing discussion	3.99	0.83	Very Difficult
13. Writing report	3.73	0.73	Very Difficult
14. Using reference	3.69	0.84	Very Difficult
Total			Very Difficult

As shown in Table 2, teachers' knowledge on doing classroom action research at Savannakhet Teacher Training College in Lao PDR in overall was at "very difficult" ($\bar{X} = 4.00$, **S.D. = 0.92**). When considering each item, it was found that the highest mean score was no. 10 "Using statistics for analysis" ($\bar{x} = 4.01$, *S. D.* = 0.89), followed by no. 12 "Writing discussion" ($\bar{X} = 3.99$, *S.D.* = 0.83), and no. 11 "Writing results" ($\bar{X} = 3.70$, *S.D.* = 0.89), respectively. In contrast, the lowest mean score was no. 14 "Writing reference" ($\bar{X} = 3.69$, *S.D.* = 0.84) and no.6 "Definition of terms" ($\bar{X} = 3.69$, *S.D.* = 0.81).

Table 3: Teachers' CAR process promotion at Savannakhet Teacher Training College in Lao PDR (n=153)

CAR Process Promotion	\bar{x}	S.D.	Interpretation
1. STTC's policy on CAR	3.73	0.92	Very Difficult
2. STTC assigning unit for CAR	3.69	0.87	Very Difficult
3. STTC assigning personnel for CAR	3.64	0.81	Very Difficult
4. STTC supporting CAR	3.80	1.02	Very Difficult
5. STTC providing stage for CAR	3.85	0.98	Very Difficult
6. STTC allocating the budget for CAR	4.00	0.92	Very Difficult
Total			Very Difficult

As shown in Table 3, the result showed that the teachers' CAR process promotion at Savannakhet Teacher Training College in Lao PDR in overall was at "very difficult" ($\bar{X} = 4.00$, *S.D.* = 0.92). When considering each item, it was found that the highest mean score was no. 6 "STTC allocating the budget for CAR" ($\bar{X} = 4.00$, *S.D.* = 0.92) while the lowest mean score was no. 3 "STTC assigning personnel for CAR" ($\bar{X} = 3.64$, *S.D.* = 0.81).

Table 4: Teachers' CAR Importance Giving and its Curriculum at Savannakhet Teacher Training College in Lao PDR (n=153)

Importance Giving and CAR Curriculum	\bar{x}	S.D.	Interpretation
1. STTC giving the importance of CAR	4.05	0.98	Very Difficult
2. Curriculum of CAR	3.97	0.90	Very Difficult
3. Content of CAR	3.88	0.83	Very Difficult
4. Training having continuously and for all	3.80	0.94	Very Difficult
5. Completion of CAR	3.75	0.87	Very Difficult
Total			Very Difficult

As shown in Table 4, the result showed that the teachers' CAR importance giving and its curriculum at Savannakhet Teacher Training College in Lao PDR in overall was at "very difficult" ($\bar{X} = 4.00$, **S.D. = 0.92**). When considering each item, it was found that the highest

mean score was no. 1 “STTC giving the importance of CAR” ($\bar{X} = 4.05$, S.D. = 0.98) while the lowest mean score was no. 5 “Completion of CAR” ($\bar{X} = 3.75$, S.D. = 0.87).

In conclusion, the survey showed that the 3 factors affecting to the capacity of teachers doing the classroom action research. Firstly, the statistical analysis, result and discussion writing, and data collecting were the factors which had an impact on the teachers’ knowledge. Secondly, the budget, the stage of classroom action research report, management support, and the policy factors were regarded in the process promotion of CAR. Thirdly, the STTC giving importance, curriculum, content, and training were factors of the CAR promotion.

4.2 Knowledge, understanding, and ability to do classroom action research of teachers at Savannakhet Teacher Training College in Lao PDR.

To find the solution or to overcome the existing problems of Classroom Action Researcher for teachers at Savannakhet Teacher Training College, the management and the key trainers were asked to have the interview under the 3 main specific questions as the following aspects:

4.2.1 What is the current situation of learning-teaching at Savannakhet Teacher Training College?

The Management said that the learning-teaching and doing classroom action research is the starter between the teachers and the students. However, doing classroom action research of teachers was not still the heart of research process yet under the vision of the college.

The key trainers mentioned that the learning-teaching at STTC was like lecturing and giving assignments to students make a report to the class without synthesizing the elements or making critical thinking. In brief, learning and teaching was rote learning. The classroom action research of teachers at STTC was only a few and the quality of the research seemed to be unreliable. The groups of teachers who made a classroom action research were mainly two groups namely, English Office and Natural Science Office out of the 10 offices at the STTC.

2. What is the statement of the problem of classroom action research?

The all management gave similar comments on the problems of classroom action research that the content of CAR was not unique, out of date source. The teachers used their own experience to fulfill the content of CAR for the students. The workload of the teachers would be another obstacle that made the teachers ignore doing it.

The key trainers mentioned that most of the teachers had lack of knowledge and skills of doing the classroom action research, so it had brought many of them were afraid of doing it. Some of the main problems were assigning the research problem, setting up the objectives, and the statistics.

3. The solution to promote and develop the classroom action research for STTC teachers

The management also provided the comments to overcome the problem of teachers doing classroom action research as the following points:

1. The Teacher Training College Council should formulate the textbook of classroom action research uniquely for all teachers among the 8 Teacher Training Colleges. The teachers should seek the new method or innovation to develop their learners’ learning well.

2. The teachers should increase extra time for the students to practice more about doing classroom action research. The Teacher Training College Council should have a standard or believable model of classroom action research for the teachers and the students.

3. The Teacher Training College Council should increase the capacity of teachers on classroom action research frequently in every year. The teachers should do classroom action research to find the answers to their own problems. It also sharpened their own skills.

4. The Teacher Training College Council should lead the students do classroom action research to solve several problems of learning-teaching to make doing research competitive and cheerful. The most important thing, STTC should assign clear plan to make the teachers and the students get involved in the work of classroom action research in all levels according to their abilities to meet our vision.

The key trainers gave the comments to those problems that STTC should hold the statistical training regarding to the statistics, especially SPSS, provide the sufficient budget, and locate the professional experts on CAR.

5. Discussion

The following points based on the research results were discussed:

5.1 The research had been conducted in line with the samples' current status, the statement of the problem and needs, so their answers were analyzed their factors affecting to their classroom action research doing. The problems of the teachers' knowledge were based on statistics for analysis, result and discussion writing, and the data collecting. This is identical to the process proposed by the scholars who said that the current status of most teachers doing classroom action research come from the limited knowledge, and they have the idea of doing classroom research a difficult thing (Phounlabthavy & Saenpathepthing. 2002)

5.2 Secondly, the budget, stage of Classroom Action Research Report, the management support, and the policy were the factors regarding the process promotion of STTC to CAR. It is in the line with Lao National Educational Plan 2015-2020 (TTD. 2015: 89) that pointed out that all the Teacher Training Colleges ensures that all new graduate could perform CAR and the TTS must monitor and coach them effectively and regularly.

5.3 Thirdly, the STTC giving importance, the curriculum, the content, and the training of the teachers were the factors of the CAR promotion. This is identical to the process proposed by the scholars who developed the classroom action research curriculum to improve the teachers' knowledge and understanding, and could perform the CAR effectively (Sitthisomboun. 2006)

5.4 The solution to the problems for teachers doing classroom action research at the STTC in Lao PDR as the management and the key trainers was in terms of providing creating system of productive training to input the knowledge to the teachers, monitor them, and coach them until they reach the last destination. According to the following scholars, the best way to overcome the problems of STTC teachers is to develop the coaching and mentoring system for teachers to do classroom research at Savannakhet Teacher Training College in Lao PDR. Marlene and McHenry (2002: 2-5) mention that mentoring is the act of a person who has the specific knowledge and skill accepted by others or is a management in a unit to give consult and advice to junior workers or subordinates in an organization to work productively and to increase the effective works.

6. Conclusion

The samples thought that they had problems of statistics, result and discussion writing, and data collecting. The samples also wanted the STTC management to provide the budget, stages for reporting the research result, to set up clear policy to classroom action research. Some of these would affect knowledge and the ability of teachers to do classroom action research. They would also require the STTC give the importance of CAR, reform the curriculum, the content of the existing textbook of CAR, and set up the sufficient and regular training of teachers. Some of the solution from the management and the key trainers at STTC were training system, monitoring, and coaching them new graduate teachers.

7. Recommendations

The following are some recommendations based on the research results:

7.1 The perspectives of teachers towards the factors affecting their classroom action research performance could be the effective reflective journals of STTC teachers, the policy makers, and the management to develop coaching and mentoring them doing classroom research.

7.2 It is also recommended that further studies should be conducted for developing coaching and mentoring system for teachers to do classroom action research at Savannakhet Teacher Training College in Lao PDR.

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