Teachers’ Autonomy – The Missing Link in the Teacher Education and Professional Development in Indonesia

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Abstract
Despite many teacher professional development (PD) programs conducted by the government, teachers in Indonesia have long been criticised for being low quality and under performance. Questions, therefore, arise regarding the effectiveness of PD programs designed and implemented by the government. In addition, due to the large number of teachers in Indonesia, ineffective teacher PDs are a waste of time, money, and energy. Using the framework of the Self-determination theory of motivation (Deci, 1972; Deci, Eghari, Patrick, & Leone, 1994; Deci & Ryan, 2008), and the theory of planned behaviour principle (Ajzen, 1985, 1991), this study aims at investigating factors causing the ineffective PD programs and offering alternative solutions to the problems. Data about teacher motivation and their intention regarding the PD programs were collected from 210 school English teachers in Yogyakarta Special Region using the Teacher Motivation for a PD Program Scale (TMPDS) and Intention to Implement a PD Scale (IIMPDS). Structural equation modeling (SEM) using AMOS is used to analyse the data. Findings suggest that although teacher motivation is high, teachers lack of autonomy, particularly when implementing the results of the PD. Findings imply that it is necessary to find alternative professional development design that can boost teacher motivation

Keywords: teacher autonomy, teacher motivation, teacher intention, teacher professional development.

Introduction
Teacher professional development (PD) programs have long been considered crucial both as an effort to improve teacher quality and education (Guskey, 2002). They are also an important part of education reform in general (Bredeson & Johanson, 2000). They are viewed as opportunities for teachers to improve knowledge and instructional practices (Borko, 2004) and are able to facilitate teachers’ quality improvement. They are even considered one essential effort to improve the quality of student learning and schools (Borko, 2004; Opfer & Pedder, 2011). In addition, it is believed to be able to change teachers’ teaching practices and beliefs, as well as students’ learning outcomes (Guskey, 2002).

The success of a PD, however, is determined by a number of factors, such as the design, materials, facilitators in the PD programs, and other teacher-related factors. Teacher PD programs which are well-designed, with rich appropriate materials, and supported by good facilitators tend to bring high possibility of success. On the other hand, teacher-related factors such as teacher motivation and engagement in the PD program will also help determine the positive results of PD programs.

Motivation is said to be a strong determinant of successful PD programs. It is, therefore, necessary to ensure that participants attend a PD program with favourable motivation. It has been a common ‘agreement’ among the researchers that intrinsic motivation is more favourable and is a better predictor of success. Teachers who go to a PD program because they want and like to do that will
tend to be more successful in the PD program. Among other causes is intrinsic motivation will result in better and more sustained engagement in the PD activities.

However, such an ideal precondition of going to a PD program is rarely found in the context of Indonesian teachers going to a PD program. In most cases, teachers go to a PD program due to an invitation from either the local or central government. Although it is an invitation, teachers can rarely see the option for not attending the PD program. Instead, they consider they have to go to the PD program, regardless of whether or not they feel the needs for the PD, or whether they like going to the PD program. Another common drive for teachers to go to a professional development is because they are assigned by the school. It is the school principal that makes them go to the PD. Their motivation are, therefore, extrinsic. Such extrinsic motivation is considered not a good predictor of success in attending a PD program.

This study, therefore, aims at investigating the motivation of school English teachers in attending the PD programs. It tries to find out whether teachers’ external drives can contribute to their success in the PD. In addition, it also tries to find out whether teachers intend to implement the results of the PD program in their classroom. In providing the data needed to achieve the above objectives, this study was framed under two major theories of motivation, namely the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci, Eghari, Patrick, & Leone, 1994; Deci & Ryan, 2008) believes that there exist certain regulatory processes that lead to different types of self-regulation.

SDT categorizes two regulatory processes as introjection and integration. By introjection, SDT refers to a situation when people take in or regulate a value without embracing as their own. On the other hand, integration is referred to as a process of internalization when people accept or regulate the value of an activity by assimilating it with their own personal self (Deci, Eghari, Patrick, & Leon, 1994; Deci & Ryan, 2008). It is these regulatory processes that determine the types and quality of motivation. The introjection results in more controlled types of motivation, while integration results in the more autonomous types of motivation. Based on the two regulatory processes, SDT researchers classified four types of regulation regarding externally driven activities or behaviors (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Vallerand et al., 1992). The first two types, the external and introjected regulations, are resulted from the introjection process that occurs within an individual. The other two types, the identified and integrated regulations, are resulted from the integration process within an individual, see Deci and Ryan (1985) for the regulation types. SDT also suggests that it is possible to facilitate internalization. One way that is proposed is by presenting autonomy supports (Grolnick & Ryan, 1989). In practical internalization can be promoted by presenting a) meaningful rationale, b) acknowledgement of one’s perspectives, and c) presentation of choice rather than control (Deci, Eghari, Patrick, & Leon, 1994). In addition, internalization will also be facilitated if the behavers believe that the activities satisfy their needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness (Deci et al., 2001; Deci, Ryan, & Williams, 1996; Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, & Ryan, 1991).

There are two major theories related to predicting behavioural intention; 1) the theory of reasoned action (TRA) (Fishbein, 1979; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), and 2) the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1985, 1991). Both theories have been widely used to predict behaviours, especially those in a specific context. While TRA is used to understand and predict volitional behaviours and their determinants, TPB is considered more accurate in predicting behaviours when restrictions on the volitional condition exist (Ajzen, 1985). In a completely volitional condition, a person performs an action when s/he is inclined to do the action, while in the absence of the volitional condition; an individual performs an action due to compliance.

Theory of planned behaviour is expected to work better to predict teachers’ intention of Indonesian teachers. It is preferable over theory of reasoned action because of the restriction, if not absence, of the volitional condition. There is no choice available to the participants except to respond to the invitation or assignment to attend the PD program. Constraints are present due to problems among Indonesian teachers with regard to their levels of autonomy (Bjork, 2004). Following the
theory of planned behaviour, teachers' intention are predicted by three factors of attitudes toward behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural.

**Method**

This research is a quantitative study with the population of junior school English teachers in Yogyakarta Special Territory of Indonesia. Data about teacher motivation to attend a PD program and their intention to implement the results of the program were collected from 202 junior secondary school English teachers in the province. Sample was recruited directly from all English teachers in the five districts in the province using predetermined criteria of sample. Sample recruitment was done by going to the monthly teacher forum meetings in the four districts of Sleman, Bantul, Kulonprogo, and Gunungkidul, and Yogyakarta municipality. Not all teachers, however, are fit to be the sample of this study. Only teachers who had completed the genre-based English teacher training and had been in the teaching profession for five years or longer were eligible to be the participants. The description and distribution of the sample is presented in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Table 1 Sample description and distribution</th>
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<td>Demographic variables</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<td>Years in teaching</td>
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Data about teachers’ motivation to attend a PD program were collected using the Teacher Motivation for a Professional Development Scale (TMPDS). These five-subscale questionnaire was adapted from The Work Tasks Motivation Scale for Teachers (WTMST) (Fernet, Senécal, Guay, Marsh, & Dowson, 2008). Adaptation was done mainly by changing the wording to fit with the context of the present study. The subscales, consisting of three statements each, address different types of regulation arranged from the intrinsic motivation, followed by the most autonomous or least controlled to the less autonomous or most controlled, and ended with amotivation. TMPDS was anchored on a ten-point Likert-like scale. Teachers’ intention to implement the PD program was collected using a four-subscale questionnaire called Intention to Implement a Genre-based English Teaching (IIGbET). This scale was developed based on TPB and consisted of four subscales of intention, attitudes toward the new instruction, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control.

Descriptive statistics was used to analysed data about motivation to see the central tendency within the data – means and standard deviation in particular. Data about teacher intention, on the other hand, were analysed using the structural equation modelling (SEM) using AMOS to see whether the three predictors predict teachers’ intention significantly. Construct validity was established using the confirmatory factor analyses to test the model-fit indices.
Results and Discussion

Findings suggest that teachers’ motivation are generally high and belongs to the autonomous types of motivation. It can be seen from the mean scores of the intrinsic motivation and identified regulation, which are well above the middle point on a ten-point scale (see Table 2).

Table 2 Means and standard deviations of Teacher Motivation for a Professional Development Scale (TMPDS)

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<th>Factors</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<tr>
<td>Intrinsic Motivation</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>7.58</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identified Regulation</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>7.91</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introjected Regulation</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>5.73</td>
<td>2.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External regulation</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>6.51</td>
<td>1.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amotivation</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>2.17</td>
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It implies that although reasons for attending the PD was initially extrinsic, that was due to invitation from the government or school assignment, the participants identify their reasons for the PD as part of themselves and find enjoyment from the PD. High scores on both types of regulation suggest that participants motivation are more autonomous than controlled types. In other words, the regulatory process experienced by the participants is more of the integration.

Teacher intention to implement the genre-based English teaching (GbET) is high ($M = 6.74$, $SD = 1.06$, on a 0 to 9 Likert-like scale). This means that participants say that they will implement the GbET in their classroom teaching practices after finishing the PD program. Such findings are good regarding the initial motivation of the teachers to attend the PD program which is external.

Findings, however, are different from those of the majority of TPB research. Figure 1 suggests that while subjective norms ($R^2 = .360; p < .001$) and PBC ($R^2 = .454; p < .001$) significantly predicted participants’ intentions to implement GbET, teacher attitudes toward the implementation of GBET did not significantly predict intention ($R^2 = .049; p < .508$). It implies that no matter how favourable or unfavourable the attitudes of the teachers towards the implementation of GbET were, they did not affect whether teachers intent to implement GbET in their classroom.

![Three-factor model of teachers' intention](image)

Figure 1. Three-factor model of teachers’ intention

Findings, however, are supported by at least two studies using TPB. Yan (2014) found that although instrumental attitudes, an appraisal of how advantageous would be when performing a behaviour, predicted teacher intention, affective attitudes, the feelings or emotions predicted to arise when performing the behaviour, did not. Brown et al. (2002) also reported the same findings.
suggesting that attitudes failed to significantly predict intention. Both Yan’s and Brown’s studies share the context of the present study in which volition was absent – the implementation of school-based assessment and standardized computer banking system are institutionally mandated.

The non-significant predictive power of teachers’ attitudes towards the implementation of GbET in their classroom in this study was expected. It makes sense in the context involving Indonesian English teachers in particular, and the teaching profession in general. Teachers perceived the absence of volitional condition which means that they do not see any other options than doing what are recommended by their superiors – school principals or the Ministry of education and Culture.

Two explanations support the insignificant predictive power of teacher attitudes towards their intention in the context of the present study. The first explanation is related to the nature of the implementation of GbET. Although GbET was not institutionally mandated, teachers considered the new instructional approach as ‘compulsory’. Such consideration is triggered by the long tradition of centralisation that leads to a dependency on the policies introduced by the central government. From this point of view, it could be expected that attitudes would not matter. Whether or not teachers liked GbET, they will intend to implement the curriculum - they perceived no other choice is available.

Secondly, Bjork (2003, 2004, 2006) has suggested that teachers in Indonesia were low in their sense of autonomy. The low sense of autonomy together with the excessive external pressures on teachers leave them with no option but to implement whatever introduced in the PD program. In this case, they did not consider their own attitudes toward the approach. The lack of autonomy has led to significant predictive power of subjective norms on teachers’ intention to implement GbET. Subjective norms which were related to what significant others said or expected about implementing GbET functioned as social pressures for teachers. When teachers are able to be highly autonomous, social pressures would not overwhelmingly affect them. However, because teachers were low in their sense of autonomy, whatever their superiors said was what they thought they had to do.

Conclusion

This study proves that initial extrinsic motivation changed with the course of the PD program. Teachers in the sample experienced an internalization that make their regulation is more autonomous. The fact that attitudes did not significantly predict intention, however, is concerning. Teachers’ intention to implement the results of a PD program might signify a successful implementation of a PD. However, when such an intention to take on a PD is not because teachers choose to embrace, but because they try to comply, it was not a good sign. Taking on a PD due to compliance will not lead to quality teacher practices. Ideally speaking teachers change because they want to change and because they choose to change. The government so far seems to pay little attention, if not none, to the state of being autonomous among teachers. Teacher PD programs cater mostly about teachers’ content knowledge or pedagogical content knowledge. There are hardly found PD programs that aim at looking after teachers’ psychological aspects, like autonomy. This is probably why society keeps criticizing teachers for being low in the quality and performance. This is time where program developers and designers start looking at improving the psychological aspects of teachers.

References


