Slovenia and Kosovo emerged as states from the Former Yugoslavia (Slovenia in 1991 and Kosovo in 2008) and in such a context share commonalities in two directions. Firstly, the roots of their education systems were grounded in a common set of norms, dispositions and to some extent values. Secondly, both countries have been aspiring reforming education systems to transform as societal development measure to move towards wider European family values. While Slovenia has already joined EU and Kosovo is nearly completing the stabilization and association process with the EU, both countries have undergone major reforms in teacher education.

Teacher education reform in both countries in general has followed the trends of raising the standards for qualifications of teachers (demanding master level qualification for teachers) as well as raising teacher professionalism bar (introducing teacher standards and expectations on professionalism). The question however remains whether the transition towards developing desired teacher professionalism has been adequately resourced professionally and administratively. The purpose of this research is to identify the current status and challenges in introducing teacher research and the role of the wider cultural and educational context in transitioning towards a research-based teacher education.

More specifically, the study will aim to answer the following research questions
- What are the commonalities and peculiarities in Slovenia and Kosovo in developing teacher research practice?

- What is the role of the wider cultural and educational context in developing teacher research as a development tool in school culture?

- What is a viable model of developing teacher research practice in school context?

This research is largely framed based on the Common European Principles of Teacher Competencies and Qualifications (2005) which emphasizes the competencies of “working with the knowledge”, “working with others”, and “working in and with the society”. Furthermore, the Engenstrom (2001) Activity Theory was utilized as a theoretical frame for examining teacher work realities in broader terms. Looking at teacher research through Activity Theory perspective, this study directs the data analysis process towards looking at the input dimension, the tools for teacher development and processes teachers are engaged in, as well as the broader social context their work is placed within the school context and education system.

Method

This study is a qualitative study of descriptive design. In-service teachers were involved in the study by responding to open ended questions in written form. There were 57 teachers studying Master level studies in education in Ljubljana and 53 teachers completing Bachelor and Master level studies in Prishtina. All participants had teaching experience and they had taken a prior introductory training on research skills. The survey questions were oriented towards teacher understanding of the role of the teachers, their understanding of the definition of research, and difficulties they face in research practice. The qualitative data analysis was done by using the content analysis method by coding answers of participants (first step) and then following up with grouping codes into categories and drawing patterns. In addition, data were collected from different education documents and strategies such as the various bylaws regulating teacher performance expectations and the autonomy of schools in order to explain the broader educational context where teachers’ work is embedded.

Expected Outcomes

The outcomes of this research elaborate a model of developing teacher research in contexts grounded in strong tradition of academic orientation to teacher education and in cases where a gap exists between desired teacher professionalism and current classroom practice realities. The study suggests a new model of broadening the framework of looking at teacher research and provides modalities to ensure pre-service teacher education serves the development of teacher research at school context.

References

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