

# Enhancing Educators' Individualization, Individuation and Authenticity for School Improvement Performance: A Participatory Action Research Approach

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## Abstract

Although there is a vast amount of literature about learners' individualisation in class, it appears that there is very little about educators' individualization, individuation, and authenticity, all deemed to improve school performance. For this study, the researcher intends to encourage educators to enhance their individualization, individuation, and authenticity for the improvement of school performance. Self-management and self-consciousness can drive and underpin both the individuation and authenticity of educators in the work environment. Although an educator may have knowledge of the subject matter, this needs to be prepared, taking learners and didactic knowledge into consideration, hence self-knowledge and self-realization are paramount. Clearly, that an individual is an autonomous centre of consciousness, however, there seemed to be principals and educators of schools whose performance management reflects a lack of robustness needed for the improvement of school performance due to a lack of individualization, individuation, and authenticity. Unless one is engaged with one's work, one can hardly become effective. The relationships in the institution should be principled so that educators work efficiently hence individual offices can promote both determination and preparedness. Office individualization encourages educators to develop their own principled standard of practice. The researcher selected three primary schools including two (2) from a rural area and one (1) from an urban area in the same district. Two (2) educators from each school including one (1) from management and one (1) educator were selected for interviews. The participants comprised a total of six (6). The purpose of selecting these participants was to determine individualization, individuation, and authenticity in their working environment and to ascertain how these factors can improve school

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performance. The participants were interviewed individually at their respective schools at their own convenient times. Their answers were recorded in a reflective diary, and having been audio recorded, and then transcribed by the researcher. Their responses were presented as a participatory action research report.

### Keywords

Authenticity, Individualization, Individuation, School Performance

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## 1. Introduction and Motivation Underlying the Problem

Although many schools seem to be performing well, they could still improve on their performance if educators could enhance their individualization, individuation, and authenticity. This is because the quality of learning and teaching is as important as the quality of time educators spend on their own preparation of the lesson. School performance could improve if educators developed their individual personalities. This is significant but habits need to be transformed. One's sense of being self might become differentiated from the collective group, because an individual is an autonomous centre of consciousness. Self-actualization is fundamental especially for educators who are expected to rescue many souls every day. Presumably, if an educator knows his/her being he/she will engage in genuine and worthy acts for the school, unlike someone who does not have self-knowledge. Authenticity is not a simplistic issue, but a process of transformation from collective to individuation in order to drive educators to profoundly encourage learners by providing genuine, and worthwhile and constant support.

Individuation involves differentiating and becoming aware of the presence of different selves operating within a particular environment. This requires an imaginative engagement with the unconsciousness, a working dialogue between ego conscious and the powerful contents of the unconscious for the transformation of an individual. Perspective transformation relies primarily on critical reflection, reason, and rationality (Dirkx, 2000). Individuation describes a process of self-realisation for the discovery of one's life purpose or what one believes to be the meaning of life. When individuals lose touch with certain aspects of their selves, they may be able to reintegrate these aspects of their nature through individuation; however, individuation contributes to the differentiation and form of the individual psyche. Those who do not have trouble with the ongoing process of individuation may find it easier to maintain mental and emotional well-being (Carl, 2004).

Individualization is a process of planning and implementing learning experiences that are responsive to each child's interests, strength and needs. Educators therefore reflect on their observations of each child and then plan the most effective ways to support each child's learning and development, hence it is important that the curriculum supports educators in planning learning experiences

that are responsive to individual children's strengths and needs (Early Child Learning and Knowledge Center, 2014).

In this study, the quality of educative teaching is directly proportional to the quality of time that the educator spends in preparation of a lesson. As critical thinkers in their offices, they can imagine and explore alternative methods and think in a different way based on self-reflection. Educators should therefore have a conducive place for the preparation of their lessons rather than being in large group where educators may lose their focus in frivolous arguments instead of intellectual discussions. Preparation, due to lack of a particular place to contextualise their consciousness, mean going to class unprepared.

Individuation and authenticity are all significant in the transformation of an individual and closely related. The lifelong process of individuation involves people learning to know who they are, relative to the rest of humanity, how they differ from others and what the similarities are. This involves integrating the various facets of the psyche to develop a full and deep consciousness of the self. Similarly, in becoming authentic, people come to see who they are and express that sense of self in the community and in relationship with others. If we critically participate in life and live accordingly, we must be on the path to authenticity. If we are becoming authentic, we must be engaged in individuation (Cranton, 2006). For this study, educators must know who they are in the school and how they differ from their colleagues and their learners. Educators should also understand their relationship with the community. Learners and community members should be able to learn from educators if educators are authentic in the work. Educators reflecting individualisation and authenticity, can achieve what is expected of them at school and what ultimately results in excellent school performance.

## 2. Literature Review

Individuation as stated refers to a process whereby an individual being is formed and differentiated from a group. This includes development of the psychological individual as a being distinct from the general collective psychology. This process develops the individual personality (Mezirow, 1997). For this study, individuation relates to self-development of an educator that transforms the behaviour of the individual. It includes self-management and a principled standard of practice that could ultimately contribute towards the improvement of school performance. Authenticity can be defined as socially situated and involving knowing who we are in our social world, understanding how that world shapes us and how we position ourselves in that world (Kerns, 2016). For this study authenticity refers to how educators understand themselves in an educational environment and this includes self-knowledge. They must realise how education has shaped their attitudes, mindsets, and behaviour so that they, in turn, can change the behaviour and mindset of learners for excellent performance.

Individualization refers to the pace of learning when it is adjusted to meet the

needs of each learner. With individualization, each learner shares the same overall learning goals, but individual students can progress through learning objectives at different speeds. To operationalize individualization requires identifying clear learning outcomes and tracking learners' mastery with these objectives. Learners all go through the same learning experiences but learn at their own pace. The emphasis shifts from seat time to mastery. Each student engages in a crucial element of personalised learning (Kerns, 2016). For this study, individualisation refers not only to the pace that each educator adjusts to meet the needs of his/her subject but also the needs of learners for the improvement of school performance. For individualisation, the educator shifts from seat time or naïve argument to teaching or preparation time. Each educator spends time in personalising working attitude and behaviour.

Educators must be recognised as specialists in their respective areas of expertise, but is however, outstanding their skills are, no educator who is left behind can duly carry out his or her function. The act of teaching does not take place in a vacuum. The greater the availability of sources of information for learners, the greater is the security of content required of the teacher in the scientific content imparted and in his/her authority in guiding students (Victor, 2006). The authentic educator uses authentic assessment to enhance the learning process and help learners to gain knowledge while completing tasks that are beneficial to their real-world experience, unlike taking an exam, learners work on the authentic assessment over a period, and they are not limited to filling in bubbles on scannable test paper to demonstrate what they know. Authentic assessment helps learners to analyse what they have learned and apply it to their own experience. When teachers use assessments for the first time, they should expect some challenges and work through them as best as they can (Ozan, 2019).

The purpose of authentic assessment is to provide students with the opportunity to engage in authentic tasks to develop, use and expand their knowledge, high level thinking skills and other competence. Authentic tasks do not only assess student' authentic performance or studies, but also evaluate their ability such as solving complex problems, positive habits of mind, growth mindset, resilience, and self-directed learning (Ozan, 2019).

### 3. Research Design and Methodology

The researcher adopted a Participatory Action Research Approach (PARA) within a Critical Paradigm. A Critical Paradigm aims to the empower the participants and focuses on ways to change the situation. A Participatory Action Research Approach is a study which aims to empower and build the capacity of the participants.

The researcher employed the qualitative technique for data collection and identified three (3) primary schools from the same district. The selected schools included two schools from rural and one schools from urban areas. The three primary schools were selected randomly. The researcher selected two (2) educa-

tors from each school to make up a total of eight (6) participants. The purpose of selecting these participants was to determine individualisation, individuation, and authenticity in their working environment and to ascertain how these factors can improve school performance. Another purpose was to confirm if they had problems regarding to a conducive environment for preparing their lessons. The participants were interviewed individually in their respective working environments at their own convenient times. The same questions were used for the interviews with all participants. That helped in the validity and reliability of the measuring instrument. The purpose of using the same questions was to ascertain how they could enhance individuation, individualisation, and authenticity to improve school performance. Their responses were recorded in a reflective diary, and audio-recorded and then transcribed by the researcher. The responses to the interview questions were presented as an inductive research report. The findings were analysed using a data matrix and then interpreted.

#### **4. Theoretical Framework**

Critical reflection on experiences is fundamental to experience a perspective of transformation. The reflection involves a critique of assumptions to determine whether or not the belief through cultural assimilation in childhood remains functional for adults (Mezirow, 1997). Critical self-reflection is thought to play an important role in facilitating educator transitions and is closely linked with the development of higher-order thinking skills. Critical self-reflection also refers to becoming aware of our presuppositions and challenging our established patterns of thinking to provide a clearer understanding of this concept (Fisher, 2003). The researcher was encouraged by both Fisher (2003) and Mezirow (1997) and worked within Critical theory for the empowerment of the participants and readers. The qualitative technique was used to collect the data, as stated.

#### **5. Results**

##### **The individuals' responses to interview questions**

Their responses were recorded and then transcribed by the researcher. The respondents used their experiences to respond to the interview questions. The purpose of the interview questions was to find out if the respondents know how to improve school performance through individuation, individualisation, and authenticity. Another purpose was to find out the respondents' views on individuation, individualisation, and authenticity. The aim of the research was to encourage educators to have time to prepare their lesson before going to a class. Their responses were discussed below:

##### **Why do some educators appear to spend much of their time doing things that do not benefit schools?**

The first respondent indicated that those were unproductive educators who would do something else because they felt bored. In addition, educators' training is far different from the previous training because they do not have adequate

methodological knowledge and learners' interest. The second respondent reported that some educators do not enjoy their work. Teaching profession is too broad that it needs educators who spend their time studying and bringing something new to simplify the subject matter. Educators should always make research if they enjoy their teaching. The third respondent showed that some educators do not prepare themselves before going to class. They would be move from one place to another sharing their stories instead of preparing themselves. The fourth respondent emphasised that educators should be give work or task in time to do to avoid doing something else. Those who spend time doing things that do not benefit school do not plan their work. Educators should avoid wasting time by doing thing that do not benefit school. The fifth respondent pointed out that they should be given work to do to avoid doing unnecessary things in school. If they are not given something to work on, they would do their own things or engage themselves in naïve argument. The sixth respondent indicated that they feel spending much time in schools, therefore they must do something else. They always plan what they would do after school.

The responses to the interview question showed that indeed there were some educators who would spend much of their time doing things that do not benefit school. That zeal of a profession was not properly developed to some educators who might feel bored at their work. The responses to interview question suggest that the mindset, attitude, and behaviour of an educator should be emphatically discussed during the training time of the educator. Self-consciousness should be included in the discussions.

#### **What would you prefer to do in your free periods?**

The first respondent pointed out that he/she preferred to prepare the next lesson by collecting teaching aids, determining the best methodology to assist the slow learners during free periods. The second respondent confirmed that free periods were used for lesson planning, collecting teaching supporting materials, marking assessment tasks, designing intervention strategies to assist learners and generating modern teaching skills and strategies that can improve learners' performance. The third respondent indicated that he/she would prefer to mark learners' work in the staff room. Again, he/she would prefer to supervise learners who could be working. The fourth respondent showed that free periods must be used for the planning of lessons and all administrative work. In addition, these periods are used for marking learners' activities such as tests. The fifth respondent showed that he/she would prefer to administer and plan all activities related to his/her lesson. An educator must use free periods for marking learners' assessment tasks. The sixth respondent assured that marking learners' work and thorough lesson planning should be done during free periods for quality teaching and learning. In case learners would be working on their own, they should be monitored by an educator.

The responses to the interview question indicated that educators were aware that unless they use free periods for lesson planning and marking assessment tasks, they would not be using free periods profitably and effectively. The res-

pondents pointed out that strategies for teaching must be developed during free periods taking slow learners into consideration. The responses to the interview question showed that if free periods could be used effectively, there could be improvement of learners' performance that would ultimately improve school performance.

**Unless you belong to a particular group, you could hardly enjoy your work. Do you agree with the statement? Motivate your views.**

The first respondent agreed with the statement and indicated that belonging to a particular group at workplace could help because people share strategies for solving learners' problems in groups. How to work with child-headed family as educators. It was lucky to belong to an effective and constructive group because some groups were not constructive enough. The second respondent agreed and pointed out that groups were in most schools, therefore one must join a group of hard workers and lifelong learners to improve your teaching method and subject knowledge. An effective group would always come with innovation to improve the school performance. The third respondent agreed with the statement and showed that in groups they update one another. The fourth respondent disagreed with the statement and pointed out that one could work with others although they were not in groups. Some of groups in some of the institutions were not effective because they did not promote hard work but laziness. The fifth respondent indicated the teaching and learning include teamwork. Teamwork is not equivalent to mere groups that are available in most of the institution. It was better to be in teamwork than to be in a group. In teamwork, educators support one another and share workload to mitigate an individual workload. The sixth respondent reported that one should be in one of the groups if one loves his/her work. It was not easy to work without a support of the group, therefore should belong to a particular group.

The responses to the interview question confirmed that some of the educators could not distinguish between a group and teamwork. The respondents still believe that in groups, people could only do what is relevant to a particular situation, hence people could also engage themselves with irrelevant things to that institution. In teamwork, individuals should engage themselves with solving problems and establishing strategies for improving a particular situation. Therefore, the responses to the interview question suggested that the respondents should understand to differentiate the two concepts, group, and teamwork to get the most significant one for school improvement.

**If educators are allocated to individuals' office, this can contribute towards improving school performance. Justify this statement by your views.**

The first respondent motivated the statement that there would be time to talk about matters related to education if individuals could have office. Each educator would focus on his/her work and the space for teaching and learning material could be available. Disciplinary measures could be implemented to individual learners by individual educator rather than by all staff members. The second respondent indicated that educators should not be allocated to individual office

because they have to enjoy the togetherness by sharing everything of life. The third respondent showed that educator would concentrate and focus on the daily business if individuals are allocated office. It was very rare to find an educator doing something that does benefit school if he/she could be alone in the office. Therefore, individuals' office could contribute towards school improvement. The fourth respondent pointed out that individual office could assist educators to do they administrative work easily, they could plan for their coming lesson in a quite environment. Educators would focus on their work only and even realised their weakness and strength so that they plan for assistance. The fifth respondent justified that when you have space to organize your work, you plan better, concentrate more, and get your work done well and faster. Therefore, this could improve an individual performance of educators. The sixth respondent confirmed that this could contribute towards improving school performance because an individual would focus on his/her work. One could plan for the slow learners and intelligent learners differently. There could be no time to talk about things that do not benefit the school.

The responses to the interview question confirmed that the respondents knew that when individuals could have office, preparation of lesson could be done excellently. No educators could get to class without preparation. Educators would focus on their teaching and learning of the child. It was possible to realise one's weakness and strength when one had been allocated an office. There could be full concentration of individual educator on the performance management of learners. Therefore, an individuals' office of educators might contribute towards improving school performance.

**When do you think is the best time to prepare your lesson? Motivate your views.**

The first respondent pointed out that a lesson should be prepared a week in advance so that one could collect all supporting materials including more information about the topic. In case the topic is difficult, one could easily consult and planned in time. The second respondent indicated that lesson could be prepared after school and during weekend more especially if there could be no other activities. The third respondent reported that lesson planning should be done during free periods when one might be in one's office. The fourth respondent showed that plan a day before you present your lesson so that you could make some adjustment if necessary to your lesson plan. One can still make adjustment when the lesson could be in progress. The fifth respondent confirmed that lesson plan should be done two to three days before a lesson presentation to get supporting materials in time. A lesson that could be planned in time could be more effective and efficient than a lesson planned the same day or unprepared. The sixth respondent pointed out that a lesson should be prepared during free periods so that one could think deeply about the topic. In case the topic was difficult, one consult or get more information from another colleague.

The responses to the interview question showed that the respondents were aware that preparation of lesson is crucial in the educative teaching. Lesson

preparation should be done in advance during free time so that one could get more information and understanding about the topic. It was crystal clear that educators should prepare themselves thoroughly before presenting each lesson. Therefore, free periods in an individual office could promote preparation of lesson that could ultimately improve the school performance.

#### **How does one build and develop self-knowledge?**

The first respondent indicated that one could build and develop self-knowledge by knowing what you must do. However, you must do only what you know. The second respondent pointed out that one should engage with a lifelong learning. Unless you become a researcher, you could hardly build and develop self-knowledge. Aspiration of knowledge could help you to develop self-knowledge. The third respondent confirmed that one must engage with research to develop self-knowledge. The fourth respondent showed that one should engage with lifelong learning to build and develop self-knowledge. The fifth respondent reported that you must sit down and think about yourself. You must what you can and that which you cannot do. One would think of improving what one does not do. One could plan to engage oneself with lifelong learning. The sixth respondent indicated that good self-esteem could contribute towards building and developing self-knowledge. One should engage with self-study and participate in workshops to develop self-knowledge.

The responses to the interview question indicated that the respondents were aware that building and developing self-knowledge was not a simplistic issue. The respondents confirmed that lifelong learning could contribute towards building and developing self-knowledge. Self-knowledge and individuation cannot be separated but they can only be distinguished. Therefore, both self-knowledge and individuation can develop through lifelong learning hence the aftermath could be school performance improvement.

#### **Why is self-realisation significant to educators?**

The first respondent reported that self-realisation helped an educator to have self-introspection and reflected all the lessons. The second respondent indicated that educator could not depend on others for school development but would involve him/herself in the progress of the school. One would use free time to develop oneself. The third respondent showed that educator discovered and understood him/herself through self-realisation. This could also encourage educator to perform better than before. The fourth respondent indicated that self-realisation helped educators to fulfil their role as educators. The fifth respondent confirmed that educators would know their duties and roles in their schools. The sixth respondent ascertained that it enabled educators to deal with issues related to their teaching.

The responses to the interview question indicated that the respondents were aware that self-realisation was significant to each educator for better performance. It is significant that each educator understand him/herself and the role expected of him/her for school performance. Educator should know what do at a particular time to improve school performance despite supervision from school

management. Therefore, self-realisation of educator could enhance authenticity and individualisation of teachers to improve school performance.

#### **What do you understand by self-management of an educator towards school performance?**

The first respondent pointed out that self-management of an educator referred to that ability of educator to manage his/her work effectively through planning, organizing, and controlling for better performance. These are skills that are significant for better performance. The second respondent indicated that educator should have ability to choose what should be done in a particular working environment for better performance. Educator should spend most the time developing him/herself for the improvement of performance. Teaching needs people who are honest and dedicated to their work to improve performance. The third respondent showed that educator should have ability to control him/herself to improve his own work. If an individual's work improves, the school performance could improve. The fourth respondent pointed out that if educator could manage him/herself, the work in school would be done effectively and efficiently in time. The fifth respondent indicated that if you were organised, your work would be up to date and would never have stress or under pressure. Self-management enabled educator to make submission in time. The sixth respondent pointed out that self-management helped educator to do what was expected of him/her towards improving school performance.

The responses to the interview question indicated that the respondent knew how significant self-management is towards improving school performance. One should control oneself at work to do what is expected of him/her. Self-consciousness is magnificent to each individual educator to work towards improving school performance. The responses to this interview question confirm that educator could improve school performance through self-management.

#### **What is the relationship between self-management and school performance?**

The first respondent reported that such relationship was best described by the mother-father relationship to bring up the child. School performance depended on the self-management of educators of a particular school. The second respondent confirmed that self-management and school performance are intertwined that there could be no impressive school performance if educators could hardly manage themselves with special reference to school leadership. School performance depended on self-management of educators. Educators who were not serious in the profession, did not mind about their self-management. The third respondent indicated that if educators' self-management could be effective, the work could be properly done in time. Tests would be written and marked in time if educators could manage themselves. Learners would know what should be done in time if there could be self-management by educators. The fourth respondent showed that self-management was equalled to self-discipline of educators themselves. Work would be done in time if there could be self-discipline by the educators that could improve school performance. The fifth responded

pointed out that self-management of educators improved school performance in our institutions. The sixth respondent confirmed that most of the schools that do not perform satisfactorily, comprised of educators and learners who do not mind about self-management.

The responses to the interview question confirmed that the respondents knew that self-management is significant to improve school performance. In addition, self-management ensured self-discipline of educators themselves. In schools where self-discipline of educators and learners prevailed, school performance improves yearly. Hence school performance could be used as the best strategy for schools to market themselves. Therefore, self-management resulted from individualisation, individuation and authenticity of educators to improve the performance of each school.

## 6. Discussions

Individualisation is a process of planning and implementing learning experiences that are responsive to each child's interests, strength and needs. In United State, educators reflect on their observations of each child and then plan the most effective ways to support each child's learning and development. It is important that the curriculum support teachers in planning learning experiences that are responsive to individual child's strengths and needs (Department of Health and Human Services, 2014).

The programme of the school and the performance of principals and educators may also be regularly scrutinised through personnel assessment or inspectorial visits by central authorities or delegates. Educators feel professionally compromising, intimidated, and stressed by the inspection process and that there were no lasting impacts on what teachers do in the class. Quality pool of educators and principals only without quality environment could hardly bring school improvement (Mulford, 2003). For this study, educators prepares well if they know their learners' needs and weakness. Educators who are always prepared for their classes, do not mind if some would come to them for assessment unlike any an educator who could not be prepared. Individuation and individualisation refer to the time that educators spend in their offices doing their work. Some cannot spend their time preparing their lessons because of lack of offices in some schools.

Regardless of what an educator decides to differentiate whether it is subject matter, the learning process or even the environment where learning occurs, differentiation is an awareness of and active response to students' varied learning styles. It involves exercising flexibility in assessment, grouping and instruction to create the best learning experience possible. An educator responds to a student's unique learning needs through the learning process, the educational content or the specific learning vehicle or product based on a student's interest, learning profile or readiness (Basye, 2018).

There is strong evidence that high quality infrastructure facilities, better instruction improve student outcomes and reduce dropout rates among other bene-

fits. Although education policymakers are increasingly focusing on the quality of education and school learning environment, many countries use a fragmented or piecemeal approach to investing in their education infrastructure (Teixeira, Amoro, & Gresham, 2017).

Educators are perceived as authentic when they know what they are talking about and can translate subject matter to the students' knowledge level. Authentic educators are passionate about what they teach, and they give students the feeling that each student and each class is different. Authentic educators are not friends with their students but have an interest in them. All these help to build better relationship between students and educators. However, to be perceived as authentic by being a master of the content is not enough without passion and enthusiasm for the subject area. Students must feel that an educator is involved with his /her subject and with the students. In addition, passion as a criterion means that students are motivated by the educator who invest the time and effort in preparing lesson, who looks for creative ways and methods to bring across the subject matter and who sees that students hold their attention (De Bruyckere & Kirschner, 2016).

## 7. Conclusion

The fact that anyone who wants to become a professional should soon develop the mindset, attitude and behaviour of a professional should be emphatically explained in the development and training of educators. This could conscientize them to do the right thing at the right time hence individuation and authenticity are significant in this regard so that school performance could improve. The conclusions of the findings of the interview questions indicated that there were some educators who would not mind to their own things during working hours that had negative impact to school performance. Self-management of educators and school performance reflect each other in a particular school. Educator should have self-control and be adaptive to contribute significantly towards school performance.

## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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