APPLYING APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY APPROACH AS A FOUNDATION TO IMPROVE TEACHER PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify the benefits of using Appreciative Inquiry (AI) approach as a foundation to improve teacher performance. The respondents of this study are the teachers of SekolahMenengahAtas (SMA) Katolik (or Senior High School) Rantepao, KabupatenToraja Utara, Provinsi Sulawesi Selatan - Indonesia in the second semester of school year 2011-2012. Applying the qualitative and descriptive method, the researcher gathered the data from the teachers using four (4) activities, namely: (1) Half-day seminar on AIapproach and teacher performance: the fundamental ideas behind AI approach and detailed step-by-step of how this approach will be applied to teacher performance issue; (2) writing of daily journal performance experiences; (3) focus group discussion (FGD) using 4-D model of AI approach; (4) and personal interviews. The analysis and results of this study described that using this approach, the teacher were able to discover their positive experiences, to envision their future performance, to formulate the commitments of developing self-motivation and being role model for the students as theirbases to improve their performance.

Keywords: *Appreciative Inquiry, discovery, dreams, design, destiny/delivery, positive experiences, commitment, performance, self-motivation, role model*

INTRODUCTION

People are essential in any organization. This principle led to the belief that the successes and failures of an organization are significantly determined by how the personnel perform. In education, this principle is recognized by placing teachers as the important element in school. Pearson (2010) mentioned that teacher quality is the largest in-school factor affecting student learning at about 30 percent. Moreover, the recent research discovered claims that despite little evidence that teachers' credential matter for students achievement (Rockoff, 2003), the improvement of teacher quality raises students' scores as well as effects on the quality of education (Aaronson, Barrow, & Sander, 2007; Harris & Sass, 2007 a). Meanwhile, Nakpodia (2010), by comparing the trained teacher and untrained teacher proved that the shortage of human resource affect the quality of education. These descriptions, therefore, underscore that "teachers are central to any consideration of schools, and majority of education policy discussion focus directly or indirectly on the role of teachers" (Hanushek&Rivkin, 2006, p. 3).

The central position in education requires teachers to develop good performance. Tatar and Horenczyk (2000) explained that this good performance embodies teaching competence (teachers' behaviors such as explaining well, having strong control over the lesson content, being firm in keeping order in the classroom, and being well organized); help and assistance (the way teachers live the image as good educators, support and trust their students, and being aware of students' needs); and fairness (the way teachers honor their contractual).In the context of Indonesia, DitJen PMPTK (2008) claimed that there are three indicators that that are used to determine teacher performance, namely: teaching plans and materials (teacher competencies on understanding syllabus or constructing lesson plan); classroom procedures (teacher skills in classroom management, using media and resources, and method/strategy of teaching including the use of indigenous material and technology); and evaluation process (teachers' capacity in making and utilizing the evaluation process).

Because of the central role of teachers, there is expectation that more serious effort will be developed to improve teachers' performance. Especially, studies discovered that many teachers have low quality of performance caused by low level teacher professional competence (Mji and Makgato, 2006; World Bank, 2006; Department of Education in South Africa, 2001; Suryadi, 2009; Supriatna, 2010; Indrawati, 2006), school organization and management (World Bank, 2006), social aspects (Whannell& Allen, 2011), and even personal aspects, like stress (NUT, 1999). However, the concern to improve teacher performance can only be actualized if there is a good policy in school that provide good atmosphere for teachers to workand build self-reflection based on their routine experiences (Mrazik, 2009; Ripley, 2002).

As the realization of the mentioned expectation, this study will present Appreciative Inquiry (AI) as an approach in improving teacher performance. This approach is conceptualized by David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva in the 1980's as "a revolutionary and positive philosophy towards organizational change and is a process focused on leveraging an organization's core strengths" (Gordon, 2008 p. 19). Through a reflective process, people are invited to realize that a new vision for the future is basically found out in the positive experience in the past and present and an unlimited imagination about what can happen in their lives (Cooperrinder&Barret, 2002 as cited by Gergen, Gergen, &Barret, 2004). AI guides people to restore trust, generate hope, invite vision, and open up infinite vistas of possibilities (Hammond, 1998). This approach assumes that "every organization and community has many untapped and rich accounts of the positive – what people talk about as past, present, and future capacities, or the positive core" (Cooperrider& Whitney, 2005, p. 8). Johnson & Leavitt (2001) supported this idea by saying that AI is an organizational transformation tool that focuses on: learning from success; discovering what works well, why it works well, and how success can be extended throughout the organization; visioning and processing for developing the vision; and driving change throughout the organization. Therefore, the originator of AI, David Cooperrider mentioned that this approach is "a positive revolution" (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2005 p. 1).

In practice, as described by Whitney & Trosten-Bloom (2010), AIis often worked out by implementing the 4-D model: Introduction (Affirmative Topic Choice: determining a topic where the inquiry process will be focused); **D**iscovery (uncovering and valuing the rich description about the positive cores, best practices and exemplary actions of an organization); **D**ream (exploring collectively hopes and dreams in people's work, relationship, organization, and the world and envisioning possibilities that are big, bold, and beyond the boundaries of what has been in the past); **D**esign (drawing on discoveries and dreaming to select high-impact design elements, then crafting a set of provocative statements that list the organizational qualities they most desire); and **D**estiny or **D**elivery (commitment: planning and implementing a new vision).
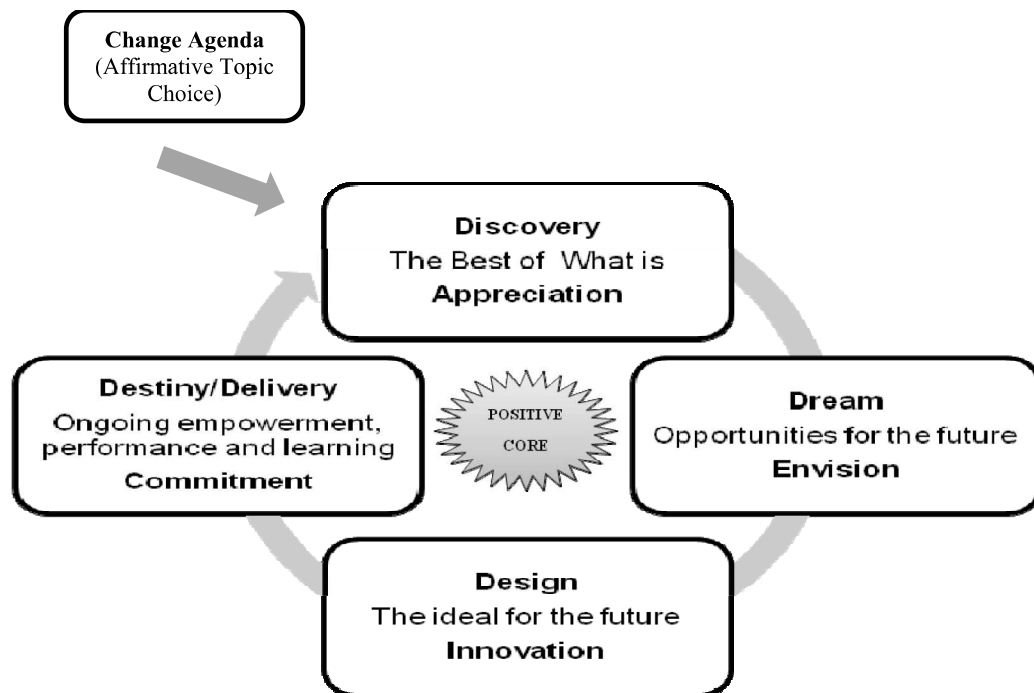

Figure 1: AI Process – 4-D Model

Through the inquiry towards the positive experiences, AI has contributed to the development of education field, especially in creating positive change in the school (Conklin & Hart, 2009; O'Grady, 2000, Ryan et al., 1999). For the teachers, these positive experiences become a framework in building new vision and knowledge (Pearson, 2010; Newberry, 2011; Akiri&Ugborugbo, 2009; Adediwura&Tayo, 2007; Rockoff, 2003). The findings of positive experiences also form a better spirit for

teachers not only to maintain the dignity of their profession (Karissa, 2006; Hanusek&Rivkin, 2006; Indonesian Teachers Act, 2005), but also to envision higher level performance in the future.

To achieve this higher level performance, Ai provides opportunity for teachers to form organizational (Conklin & Hart, 2009). Having the organizational commitment, teachers give positive contribution by creating a desirable atmosphere within the school and handle effectively their responsibilities as well as to go above and beyond the call of their responsibilities (Tella, Ayeni, &Popoola, 2007). This condition energizes teachers to perform at high level performance in order to present quality education for the school and students and to improve their professional knowledge, teaching profession and career continuance (Crosswell& Elliot, 2004; OECD, 2011; GemaPendidikan, 2010). Furthermore, this commitment can be used by the school administration as an entry point to build better policies and to offer support programs for teachers in order to achieve the quality of education (UNSAID, 2006; Sugiyarto, 2005; The Thailand Education Reform Project, 2002).

Through this study, it is expected that through the inquiry process using this approach, teachers can acknowledge their past and present positive experiences, envision and design a new vision, and build commitment for their future performance. Such expectation can move the practitioners in education to believe that this approach is an effective tool that become foundation to improve their performance.

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted in SekolahMenengahAtas (SMA) (or Senior High School) Katolik Rantepao, KabupatenToraja, Provinsi Sulawesi Selatan-Indonesia. There were 16 teachers who participated during the study. Applying qualitative research and descriptive method, the researcher gathered the data based on the following activities: (1) half day seminar on AIand teacher performance theory; (2) at the end of the seminar, as the beginning of discovery phase, the teachers were given a daily journal template to be filled out. They were given five school days to share their daily experiences. The intention of giving five days to write their reflection is to help the teachers in preparing themselves well, so that they have something to share during the focus group discussion (FGD); (3) The focus group discussion using the 4-D model. In the discovery phase the teachers were divided randomly in a group consisted of 4 or 5 teachers in order to build deep and intimate discussion. In their own group, they shared their personal performance experiences as recorded in their daily journal.

To help the teachers, the researcher gave the simple summary of their experiences as shared in the daily journal. During this phase, the teachers gave additional information regarding their performance experiences. Then, every group reported to the big group their sharing so that at the end of the discovery phase, a rich description about the teachers' positive experiences will be provided. After guiding the teachers to recognize their positive performance experiences, the researcher led them to envision possible achievements in the future (the dreams phase).

The next step is, the teachers were facilitated to craft a set of provocative statements to be selected as their future commitment (the design phase). Before facilitating this phase, they were asked to go all over again the activities conducted so that they would gain enough understanding about the idea presented. Finally, during the destiny/delivery phase, the researcher guided the teacher to vote for the commitments. The teachers identified which of the different commitment statements presented is the most relevant to be adopted as organizational commitment. As suggested by Conklin and Hart (2009) in "Appreciative Inquiry in management education: Measuring the success of co-created learning", the teachers were asked to cast their votes three times on one particular commitment or distribute their votes on other the proposed commitments.

The commitment with the highest number of votes became the most relevant organizational commitment. This process resulted to a list of commitment statements arranged from the most relevant to the least relevant based on the total number of votes. Having identified the most relevant commitment statements as their organizational commitment, the teachers were asked to reconvene with their small groups to discuss what they have to do to make their ideas become realities and on how they will undertake their responsibilities which would manifest their behavior towards the commitment already taken. To close the focus group discussion, every group reported the product of their discussions in front of all the other groups; and (3) The interview with the teachers in order to explore the information thoroughly. The interview was done two days after the focus group discussion. Every teacher was interviewed to find out their personal reaction about the organizational commitment.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Teachers' Experiences as Foundation of Improving Teacher Performance

The following findings discuss the positive experiences of the teachers according to the area of teacher performance:

Table 1: *Teachers experiences in area of teaching plans*

Themes	Significant Statements
Linking Syllabus to the Lesson Plan	*"I made the syllabus as an initial framework....It is necessary for me to develop a syllabus."* *"I directed the basic framework into lesson plan as mentioned in the syllabus so that there is integration between the syllabus and the lesson plan."*
Contextualizing Syllabus and Lesson Plan	*"I tried to reflect the syllabus in accordance with the students' needs…to help students to have more understanding about the meaning of Torajan heritage."* *"I emphasized in my lesson plan that students should find and recognize the folktales from their place…."*

	"I developed my syllabus based on the common values lived and practiced in the community."
Prioritizing Students' Needs, Interest, Experiences in the Syllabus and Lesson Plan Development	"I developed the materials…based on the concrete experience of students…related to their religious experience as well as helped them to understand the uniqueness of every religion." "…I adapted my lesson plan according to students' condition and their environment." "I consider students' varied perception and abilities."

Teachers' ability in understanding teaching plans is the foundation of successful teaching activities. In the domain of teaching plans, teachers have to deal with the two main activities related to developing syllabus and building the lesson plan (DitJen PMPTK, 2008; BadanStandarPendidikanNasionalPendidikan, 2007; Ministry of National Education Indonesia, 2006a & b). In relation to this study,the positive experiences of the teachers does not only describe their understanding on teaching plans but also illustrate their desire in building reformation of curriculum in school, developing educational process, and anticipating good achievement in the future. This desire revealed by their perseverance to bridge the syllabus content with the lesson plan design, to contextualize and integrate local culture and noble values of the community in the syllabus, and to consider students' situation and needs when undertaking the content of the syllabus.

The experiences of the teachers in connecting the syllabus' content into the lesson plan determine the success of the learning process. The work of Lane (2007) and Slattery & Carlson (2005) stated that teachers' skill in articulating syllabus' content into the lesson plan helps them to understand well the tone of the learning activities because every syllabus serves as the blue print of the learning process. This skill is considered as the basis for teachers to be professional and competent(Sugiyarto, 2005). It also keeps teachers' credibility as educators in front of their students (Banfield et al., 2006; Mji&Makgato, 2006; Department of Education in South Africa, 2001). Indeed, the experiences of the teachers described their comprehensive understanding about this skill. They considered that the syllabus and lesson plan are inseparable. The syllabus functions as a guideline in building a lesson plan (BadanStandarPendidikanNasionalPendidikan, 2007). Following the guidelines set in the syllabus, the teachers could undertake their lesson plans efficiently and effectively during the learning process.

Moreover, the teachers considered contextualization as an important issue in the syllabus and lesson plan development activities. In this case, they justified the idea of Ministry of National Education Indonesia (2006 c) that these activities are closely related to the actual situation and concern happening around the students, such as the local culture. In the realm of AI, the teachers'ability to integrate the local culture and the concern of the community in their teaching activity affirms how this approach facilitates people in recognizing the untapped and rich accounts in cultures

(Coopperrider& Whitney, 2005). This is part of the contribution of this approach to recognize, appreciate, and preserve the local culture. Undoubtedly, AIcan be used to build or unravel the culture of a community since there is always a possibility that in every culture there are inactive wisdoms which basically can be used to create more assets. Once these inactive wisdoms are activated, they will contribute significantly in building and rebuilding a community(Emery, Fey, & Flora, 2006). Furthermore, for the teachers, the above mentioned ability will become a seed in setting new vision for the improvement of teaching performance. It allows them to build an enjoyable learning process because the students learn lessons related to their actual lives. Consequently, they could easily guide the students, make innovation, and bring the transformative practice in the learning process.

BadanStandarNasionalPendidikan (2007) pointed out that in the syllabus and lesson plan development teachers have to consider the different capacity of their students regarding their intellectual level, potential, learning styles, needs, and background. In this study, the teachers applied this principle by considering always the students' condition, perception, and experiences in the syllabus and lesson plan making. Although they have to make some adjustments, the teachers discovered that this consideration helps the students improve the quality of their learning.These experiences proved that the teachers have sensitivity about the need of the students. This sensitiveness leadthe teachers to have a good performance in the managerial and instructional function during the learning process (Ranjan&Rahman, 2012; Zaslavsky&Lavie, 2012; Beltrán, 1995). Through managerial function, they can make a systemic educational plan which allows the students to meet the expected objectives, and to experience the process of information exchange with their teachers and classmates. This situation can create an atmosphere which gives chance for the students to express their knowledge based on their perception and experience. Meanwhile, the instructional function allowsthem to make intervention during the learning process: completing perception and experiences or correcting the information given by the students. They can maximize the use of giving examples in the classroom or the making of reflections on personal experiences that would direct the students to the right perception or experiences.

Table 2: *Teachers experiences in the area of teaching materials preparation*

Themes	Significant Statement
Seriousness in Preparing the Teaching Materials	*"Two weeks is an ideal time for me to prepare my teaching material and resources…."* *"By preparing teaching materials, I became more confident…."*
Collecting the Resources	*"My teaching materials are based on text books, students' worksheet, or other relevant references…."* *"…I used the paper of Torajan culture, Toraja Language dictionary, and the information from "To Minaa" (the traditional priest) and….the term or language used in "the rambutuka'" (thanksgiving feast) and "the rambu solo" (funeral feast)"* *"I downloaded several materials from the internet…."*

Preparation of teaching materials bridges teaching plans and classroom activities. During this preparation, teachers prepare the media and resources, develop activities promoting the learning process, and determine the learning process and teaching methods/strategies (Chamot, Keatley, & Kennedy, 2003).In this current study, the teachers discovered that their major positive experiences in preparing teaching materials related to their seriousness and the process of collecting the materials.

To be serious in preparing teaching materials is a way to anticipate the dynamic activities in the class considering that the teachers have to deal with students with different learning styles, behavior, and condition. They need to set a special time for material preparation so that they have opportunity to develop the capacity to manage the students. By preparing a special time, the teachers experience that they have more chance to learn or implement the new strategy for their teaching activities. They could not enter the classroom without doing any preparations. Otherwise, they would not be able to lead their students because of the lack of creativity and in looking for helpful information. The teachers' experience also explained that their seriousness in preparing teaching materials allow them to build self-confidence. Past studies proved that self-confidence contributes significantly toward teacher performance (Davies, 2000; Santamaria, Taylor, Park, Keene; Mandele, 2010). Self-confidence is a key factor in classroom management because it gives opportunity for the teachers to build creativity in teaching method/strategies and to deal with the unpredictable situation in the classroom. In relation to the personal development, self-confidence gives opportunity for the teachers to reflect their experience and to build more responses about their values, interpretation, and judgments in their lesson.

In process of collecting the teaching materials, it was discovered that the teachers maximized the used of reference materials provided by the text books or immediate environment, like indigenous materials as well as those provided by the modern technology. Definitely, these experiences are influenced by their comprehensive understanding about the content of the syllabus and lesson plan as well their seriousness in preparing their teaching activity. Then, they did not only depends on the earlier studies which proved that maximizing the references materials (like text books) have given significant influence in shaping students' knowledge (Zeringue, Spencer, Mark, &Schwinden, 2010); Reys, Reys, & Chavez, 2004). The teachers also believed that the integration of indigenous material and local culture contributes in developing the skills and knowledge of students, especially those that related to their daily lives (Ministry of National Education Indonesia (2006 c).

Moreover, the teachers also discovered that integrating technology contribute positively in their teaching profession. This experience described the readiness of the teachers to modify their lesson in an interesting, varied,and updated manner. These experiences also illustrated the teachers' willingness to develop their competence in information and communication technologies (ICT) as suggested by the Government (DitJen PMPTK, 2008). Furthermore, this competence helps teachers "to improve the communication in the learning and teaching process" (Selvi 2010, p. 172), especially since nowadays most of the students are technology literate.

Table 3: *Teachers experiences in the area of classroom procedures*

Themes	Significant Statements
Managing Students' Behavior (Classroom Management)	*"I created a joyful atmosphere which made my students enjoy...."* *"....I tried to attract students' attention. I started by smiling and greeting my students, and then moved on to motivate them. I used a friendly tone to make them feel at ease...."* *"I... opened the learning process by using games and sharing; started the learning process (making presentation, case study, discussion; and closed the activity by telling a story)."* *"....I believed that my students have cognitive, affective, and psychomotor capacities."* *"I made it a point that...all my students would listen carefully and actively participate in the flow of the learning process."* *"I believe that I have to be a role model to my students."* *"....I asked my students to participate in preparing the teaching media."*
Using the Media and Resources	*"...media and resources help me to change the learning process better and helped me to enrich my experience and my students' capability."* *"I used a folktale as one of my teaching aids."* *"....I used the national coat of arms and flag as my visual aids...text books and Indonesian 1945 Constitutions...."* *"The teaching media in my school is very limited. I tried to utilize the materials available in my classroom...."* *"I used other relevant resources...which are useful in actualizing the lesson being taught."* *"I instructed my students to observe the flowers in the school ground."* *"I prepared in my laptop the framework of the learning process and presented it through power point."* *"I used TV news as my media...."*
Method/Strategy of Teaching	*"I involved the students to take part in the learning process....I also encouraged the skillful students to assist their peers who are less skillful."* *"I used varied methods in the learning process: lecture, Q-A (Question-Answer), discussion, assignment techniques."*

Wong (1998) described classroom procedures as the set of procedures which is done by teachers, like organizing students, space, time, and materials to support the learning process. Also, these procedures include fostering students' involvement or cooperation and establishing a productive working atmosphere during the lesson. In this study, the teachers' experiences are more connected to the management of students' behavior, the use of media and resources, and teaching method/strategy.

In the process of managing students' behavior, the teachersdiscovered that the development of conducive atmosphere, building discipline/order, and inviting students' participation are the experiences determine their performance. Conducive

atmosphere results to enjoyable activities in the classroom. It also provides opportunities for the teachers to improve their teaching quality as well as for students to have good understanding about the lesson (Jones, 2008). To create this conducive atmosphere, they applied several strategies: setting gentle gestures to make the students feel at ease; making several creative innovations that aimed at eliminating students' boredom and arousing their interest (for examples: watching movies, singing, joking, or telling a story and so forth); cultivating respect, building positive thought, recognizing the students' contribution, and acknowledging their achievements.

Although creating conducive atmosphere is emphasized, the teachers still considered the importance of instilling discipline in order to supervise the students and facilitate the learning process as well. To establish discipline, they believed in the effectiveness of teachers to become role models, especially since their students are teenagers. As teenagers, students need a person who can display behaviors reflective of moral virtues(Ulug, Ozden, &Eryilmaz, 2011; Lumpkin, 2008). Through their behavior and attitude, teachers already played this role and affect students' personal life. While learning, students can take their teachers as their role models. This is especially because students spend most of their time, when they apart from their parents, with their teachers in school. The teachers believe that being role models gives chance for then to control the atmosphere in the classroom.

Moreover, the teachers also realized that inviting students' participation helps them to manage the classroom. They allow the students to take part in preparing the instrument/media and resources for the learning process. This is part of recognizing students' potentials and contribution in the learning process. Nowadays, the modern technology allows students to have more information and skills. Sometimes teachers have to learn from their students about the new information or technology. However, the teachers also have to realize that among the vast mass information offered by modern technology, not all of this information is valid and suitable for students (Avgoulea, Bouras, Paraskevas, &Stathakopoulos, 2002). Consequently, inviting student participation has to coincide with the capacity of teachers to filter the information and skills discovered by their students.

In using media and resources, the teachers affirmed the idea that media and resources function to facilitate the learning process. The use of media and resources helps the students to focus and participate actively as well as supports the teachers to develop the quality of learning process.In regards to the contextualization of media and resources, the teachers utilized the local instruments, like folktales or national symbols (national coat of arms and flag). This contextualization aims to share the information related closely to students' lives and the values and attitude sustained by the community for long time. Contextualization also helps the students recognize the characteristic of their culture and nation. Furthermore, it can build the personal character of students as contained in the noble values of their culture and nations (TjiptoSubroto, 2012; Fien, 2000).

Meanwhile, the effort to maximize the use of available media and resources (reference books, nature, and news/information, including the integration of technology) illustrates the teachers' strong determination in keeping their performance. Studies proved that despite the limited school facilitation, strong determination inspire teachers to keep their high motivation (Fujita et al., 2009; Al-Salmi, 2011; Gendron&Faherty, 2006). Strong determination also allows them to look for and share updated information for the students(SETDA, 2007; Alejandre, 2005; Peñas et al., 2008; Klopfer et al., 2009). In relation to the AIapproach, the consciousness about strong determination described how this approach brings advantage to the teachers in utilizing the media and other resources. Rather than fix the problem, like the concern on limited school facilities, the teachers motivated themselves to maximize what is working now in the community, school, and the world around them by utilizing the available media and resources. Thus, the teachers offered possibility in creating great changes in their profession, in the lives of the students, and in the community.

The ability of the teachers in managing the learning process is also determined by their teaching method/strategy that accommodates students' interest, including the use of varied teaching method/strategies.The teachers exercised a collaborative work with the students by inspiring them to demonstrate their knowledge as well as to assist their classmates. This capacity portrays the ability of the teachers to integrate the content of the lesson according to the students' condition and to actual situation in the classroom. Meanwhile, the capability to vary the method and strategy of teachings demonstrates the willingness of the teachers to let the students enjoys the learning activities. In the side of the teachers, this ability describes their comprehensive understanding about the lesson so that they can easily modify their method/strategy teaching.

Table 4: *Teachers experiences in the area of evaluation*

Themes	Significant Statement
Determining Evaluation Approach	"...I used the evaluation approaches which measured students' capacities through the giving of right answers." "...I emphasized students' capacities in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains."
Varying the Evaluation Tools	"I made essay questions....I gave positive comment for every improvement they showed." "I constructed creative and interactive tests such as quiz, on the spot question and answer with the use of stopwatch."
Integrating the Evaluation Result in the Whole Process of the Learning Activities	"I appreciated the students who had achieved the expected result ...."Very good", or showing them the thumbs up gesture." "I used the evaluation result to motivate my students....especially the ones who have not yet completed the requirements." "The evaluation process did not only function as a measurement for students' understanding, but also became a time for me to evaluate the way I teach my students."

Agrawal (2004) explained that evaluation is "universally accepted as an integral part of teaching and learning. Evaluation is one of the basic components of any curriculum and plays a pivotal role in determining what learners learn." (p. 361). It also relates to teachers activities: "what teachers teach and how they teach" (p. 361). In relation to the current study, these activities refer to the teachers' experiences in determining the evaluation approach, varying the evaluation tools, and integrating the evaluation result in the whole process of the learning activities.

The understanding of the teachers about the different capacity of the students as discovered in the classroom procedures area affected how they determine the evaluation approach. Wisely, they opted to emphasize on the right answer given by the students. However, the teachers still considered that the students should own the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. This option is anchored on the spirit of AIwhich emphasizes on maximizing the people's actual potential to achieve better performance in the future. The study of Bushe (2007) explained that by focusing on this potential, there are more possibilities for generativity, change in general, and build trust to make things better. To maximize the option to focus on the students' needs, the teachers provided variation of the evaluation tools, either in the written, oral, or performance tests. This variation aims to help the students in expressing their perception/understanding (Stiggins et al., 2004) and explaining their knowledge and skill in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains (Krathwohl, 2002; Intel Education, 2001). Furthermore, this option also describes their capability of the teachers to choose and apply the right strategy offered by many possible evaluation tools (Nurdin, 2009). The choice of using the right strategy, then, becomes the basic foundation for the teachers to determine the appropriate evaluation tools and approaches.

Evaluation plays a pivotal role in the school (Agrawal, 2004). The result of evaluation process describes students' achievements after experiencing the meaningful learning process. However, according to the teachers' experience, the result of evaluation tool does not only illustrate the students' achievements, but also describe the performance of the teachers. In regards to the students' achievements, the result of evaluation is beneficial to be use used in motivating the students either those who have good performance or who failed or need improvement. This principle is in accordance with the spirit of AIwhich highlights the need of appreciation and affirmation towards the peoples' works and achievement (Cooperrider& Whitney, 2005). It is strongly believed that the power of appreciation will develop strong foundation for the future success.

The teachers also discovered that the result of evaluation is useful to analyze their own teaching activities, including planning, method/strategy of teaching, and the use of media and resources. This analysis helps themto build willingness for better performance in the future, especially in involving students to participate actively during the learning process and in helping the students to have understanding about the lesson. This willingness is the sign of having strong motivation and optimism to maintain professional growthas educators (Li, 2008; Crosswell& Elliot, 2004). Such

kind of spirit will become very strong foundation to set dreams, design a plan, and choose organizational commitment for the sake of higher level performance in the future.

The Commitment towards the Improvement of Teachers' Performance

The next findings and discussion describe the teachers' choices about the commitment which will be used as the foundation to improve their performance based on the reflection process using AI approach:

Table 5: *The commitment towards teacher performance*

Statement of the Commitment	Total Votes	Rank
1. *Teachers become role models in punctuality, good grooming, courtesy, self-discipline and source of positive support, for example giving appreciation to students' effort and potential that will help them to develop self-discipline.*	11	2
2. *Teachers use persuasive approach to motivate students to participate actively in the class activities and to disenchant them from cheating during the evaluation process despite the absence of teachers.*	3	6
3. *Teachers develop self-motivation to learn including the use of modern technology, research, innovation in the teaching activities that aim to facilitate the students to achieve good result and to compete with other schools.*	13	1
4. *Teachers spare time for guiding and facilitating students in their learning process for them to apply the learning objectives in their daily lives (for example, students becoming inheritors and users of Torajan culture).*	3	6
5. *Materially, teachers have a well-established economic life that can support them to prepare teaching materials.*	3	6
6. *Teachers become more creative in preparing teaching materials, so that they become mentors to their colleagues and students.*	1	9
7. *Teachers have better skills in using teaching materials and technology.*	2	8
8. *Teachers gain respect from their students because they can provide creative teaching activities. Students love them and are proud they are their teachers.*	6	3.5
9. *Teachers get opportunities to join the trainings.*	6	3.5

The result describes that commitment statement number 3 is chosen as the organizational commitment for it was given the highest number of total votes which is 13. However, the commitment statement number 1 has been considered as another significant commitment because it was given 11 total votes. However, it should be noted that during the vote almost all of the teachers distributed their votes equally to every commitment chosen. The fact explains the teachers'consideration towards the importance of applying all the commitments as the foundation in improving their

performance. This consideration is quite logical because the bases of these commitments are the teachers' own experiences.

Seemingly, the reason for choosing the commitment statements number 3 and 1 based on the teachers' consideration that these commitments summarize the rest of the commitments. The decision for choosing commitment statement number 3 includes the commitment to have better skill in using technology (commitment statement number 7) and to be creative in preparing the teaching materials (commitment statement number 6). This idea is supported by emphasizing the need for getting opportunities to enrich their capabilities through training or seminar (commitment statement number 9). It was also mentioned that they have to be given a chance of having better standard of living (commitment statement number 5). Furthermore, the decision for choosing commitment statement number 1 includes the commitment to apply a persuasive approach in dealing with the students (commitment statement number 2) and to prepare special time in guiding and facilitating the students (commitment statement number 4).

The Reasons for Choosing Commitment Statement Number Three (3)

During the interviews, the teachers claimed that self-motivation is a thrust to build innovation in teaching activities. It inspires them to conduct research as part of enriching their personal knowledge and improving their performance:

> *"As teachers, our performance will improve if we have self-motivation...It is very influential for us."*

Self-motivation is the internal factor that determines teachers' competence (DitJen PMPTK, 2008; Sugiyarto, 2005). Self-motivation is considered as the spirit which can keep the teachers' professional growth and morality because it leads them to be responsible in their profession. Motivated teachers always have willingness and readiness to become good consultants and mentors for students. In this study, the teachers explain this experience during the discovery phase: creating collaborative atmosphere as well as appreciating and motivating students'effort. Thus, the teachers' option to develop self-motivation is a wise decision considering that self-motivation serves as the basis to improve the quality of learning process.

The teachers also explained that they chose commitment statement number 3 because self-motivation facilitates them in exercising a true example to students on how to perform well. During the interview, they claimed that self-motivation influences their enthusiasm in teaching. This situation inspires the students to participate actively during the lesson:

> *"I realized that teacher' self-motivation to learn more is the real model for students."*

Ulug et al. (2011) explained that teachers' motivation, as explained in their attitude, affects the learning process. This study claimed that teachers are the second-highest determining factor, second to students' parents, who influence the development of students' lives. As described in the teachers' experiences in the area of classroom procedures, their positive attitude leads the students toward good motivation and in building self-confidence. This attitude, finally, contributes in the students' personal performance developments (Lumpkin, 2008).

The teachers' options to choose commitment statement number 3 were motivated by their ideal during the dream and design phase. They wanted to be more professional by doing their responsibility creatively. As described in commitment statement number 6, the teachers were convinced that by being creative, they will become good mentors for their colleagues and students:

"Teachers become more creative in preparing teaching materials, so that they become mentors to their colleagues and students."

Franken (2001) defined creativity as "the tendency to generate or recognize ideas, alternatives, or possibilities that are may be useful in solving problems, communicating with others, and entertaining ourselves and others" (p. 396). Creativity is built because people need "for novel, varied, and complex stimulation, to communicate ideas and values to solve problems" (p. 396). In education, creativity is considered as a fundamental skill to be developed by teachers in school(General for Education, Training, Culture and Youth of European Commission, 2009). Creativity is a promising starting point in developing teaching practices and students' capability toward an active learning process. Although creativity was not accepted significantly as an inborn talent, it is accepted that creativity can be taught. As educator, to be creative is very possible thing for teachers because they have many chances to learn and apply creativity in every domain of knowledge and school subject.

In this study, the teachers mentioned several concrete creative activities. First, they wanted to improve their personal capacities through reading, researching, and using technology. To support this idea, the teachers proposed to the school administration that they be given chances to attend seminars or trainings (commitment statement number 9). The following statements describe the concrete activities which will be done by the teachers in the future:

"Teachers conduct researches."
"Teachers develop the culture of reading and the use of science and technology."

Second, the teachers wanted to be more productive in preparing method/strategy of teaching and teaching materials:

"...we formulate evaluation method."
"I will add more teaching media and resources."

The intention to be proactive in doing the above concrete activities describes the teachers' commitment on the professional knowledge development. By being proactive in improving their personal capability and productivity, the teachers could enrich their performance experiences which they have explained in the discovery phase. This rich performance experiences shows the effectiveness of using AIapproach. This approach facilitates the teachers in learning from success stories which could inspire them to be more successful.

Aside from being more professional, the teachers also mentioned that they develop their self-motivation by working collaboratively with their colleagues. Several activities like mentoring, sharing experience, and transferring informationwere considered as practical actions in building this collaboration:

"Teachers become mentors to their colleagues."
"We will share methods and techniques in evaluation ...."
"I will share my knowledge and skill ...."

McGuire (2011) and Wong (2003) emphasized that teachers' collaboration give positive influence to the teachers' professional development. These studies discovered that the teachers who work in isolation may have low self-efficacy. On the contrary, good teaching habit thrives in school when teachers work together in strong professional learning community. Collaboration allows teachers to work together in order to expand their capability through interaction, sharing individual belief and understanding with their colleagues (DitJen PMPTK, 2008). Working collaboratively also helps teachers to strengthen their commitment (Wong, 2003; Crosswell& Elliot, 2004). Teachers can develop their commitment when they feel connected to their school and colleagues. In many cases, the committed teachers are willing to share and learn from their colleagues. Moreover, by having good collaboration, they experience that their profession is not only a job, but also a part of their group development. This condition helps them to stay in school because they feel supported by the colleagues and have "high interpersonal relationships founded on trust and respect" (Wong, 2003, p.3) with them.

The Reason for Choosing Commitment Statement Number One (1)

The teachers also gave their reasons for choosing commitment statement number1. They mentioned that their professionalism can also be measured from their capability of being role models to their students. Based on the experienced described in the daily journal and during the discovery phase, there is a need for students to look at somebody who can give concrete examples. Faced with this situation, the teachers believed they have more chances to guide their students in the right path if they show positive examples in the school:

"My choice of commitment statement number 1 is based on my consciousness that by giving concrete examples, I can become a good role model ...."

Prior studies claimed that teachers can affect the development of students' personality (Machmudah, 2012; Ulug et al., 2011; Lumpkin, 2008; Yara, 2009). These studies contended that through their presence, teachers can help students learn about moral values (like honesty, trustworthy, fair, respectful, and responsible) or to live according to these values. Since they are still in formation, students can accept or copy directly the teachers' behavior. For example, whenever teachers admit their mistakes and correct them, they train their students to accept every consequence caused by their action. Such modeling of moral valuing helps students to understand that their teachers do not only talk about virtues, but incorporate it in their practice. Thus, teachers are expected not only to teach about knowledge, but also to train and guide their students based on the examples of their lives (Indonesian Teachers Act, 2005; Karissa, 2006).

Another reason for voting commitment statement number 1 is by being a model, thereby, develops good atmosphere in the classroom. This atmosphere, then, affects the students to be more enthusiastic during the learning process even if they do not like the subject:

"Giving positive examples means giving concrete examples to the students.... If the students can follow these examples, then the good learning atmosphere can be created."

In fact during the discovery process, the teachers have already been shared about being good role models in front of their students. During the dream phase, they envisioned that in the future their expectation toward the students has to be accompanied with positive examples practiced by the teachers themselves (like punctuality, discipline, being innovative and dedicated person). Meanwhile in the design phase, the teachers created other positive examples they would practice, namely, the need of using persuasive approach in guiding the students (commitment statement number 2) and preparing special time to help the students (commitment statement number 4).

This study revealed that the teachers are committed on developing their self-motivation (commitment statement number three) and be role models (commitment statement number one). These are significant factors which can be used to improve their performance. During the dream phase and design phase, the teachers planned these practical actions. First, by learning the use of technology, upgrading their knowledge (like doing research or being innovative and creative in the teaching process), and strengthening teachers' collaboration are the activities which could lead to cultivating self-motivation to learn more. Second, presenting good behavior, giving positive support, applying persuasive approach, and gaining students' respect are the activities which the teachers could uphold to be the role models in school. The

teachers believed that the chosen commitments and the practical actions mentioned above will contribute to the teachers' personal development (Tella et al., 2007; Shein&Chiou, 2011) and higher educational outcomes for students (Crosswell& Elliot, 2004; OECD, 2011; Roxas 2009; GemaPendidikan, 2010).

CONCLUSION

Appreciative Inquiry approach helps the teachers to give a rich description about their best practices and performance experiences.The success in sharing this rich description is predictable since AIapproach believes that individually and collectively people have unique gifts, skills, and contributions to life. It leads the teachers to recognize their past that describe their positive achievements as educators even for a very simple experience. Thus, AI approach can be considered as a potential effective methodology in addressing challenging issues and effecting transformation in the teachers' profession.

The spirit of this approach, "it is better to appreciate rather than to criticize" (Cooperrider& Whitney, 2005; Hammond; 1998), was able to inspire the teachers to not only to recognize their performance experiences (in the discovery phase), but also to be guided to the new vision (in the dream phase and design phase). Having these visions, the teachers looked at the future positively because they believe that it is possible to exercise the commitment of having self-motivation and being good role model since these commitments rooted in their past success experiences. To help the teachers to be diligently apply this commitment in their practice, then, the school administration can include this commitment as part of their performance evaluation.

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