



Assessing the teachers' experiences in action research based on SWOT analysis

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ABSTRACT

This study determined the experiences encountered by the teachers of JBT Caing Sr. Memorial Integrated School, Tambilil Kiamba, Sarangani Province, Philippines, in conducting action research. The data was gathered through interviews with purposively sampled 10 teachers from elementary, secondary, and senior high school departments. They are neophytes in conducting research. A qualitative approach through an interview guide was used for data collection. The data from the interviews were transcribed, analyzed, and thematically described. From the swot analysis, the main themes occurred and showed that teachers have encountered the following major challenges: lack of research knowledge, time-constrained, and low level of English proficiency. Furthermore, it was discovered that the teachers had positive feedback toward research even though they had difficulties in conducting action research. The Department of Education (DepEd) policymakers and officials should consider its results to address the research needs of the teachers to build a community of teacher-researchers committed to educational research.

Keywords: Action Research, Challenges, Experiences, SWOT analysis, Teachers'

1. INTRODUCTION

In the field of education, the importance of research on teachers' professional development and practice has long been recognized. It searches for and discovers effective interventions and innovations that have an impact on learners, institutions, and societies. Besides, teachers have become responsible and committed to addressing the needs of the learners, specifically how they should be improved. It equips teachers and other experts with the knowledge and skills they need to identify and solve problems in schools in a systematic manner (Hine, 2013). Abelardo et al. (2019) describe action research as a technique to figure out how a certain practice might be improved or altered to solve a specific educational issue as well as provide a narrative account of what happened. Furthermore, it is the practice of analyzing a school scenario in order to comprehend and improve the educational process.

In the present circumstances, many teachers are urged to conduct research to uncover issues and develop solutions. Teachers in the classroom and at the school undertook and carried out the current study, which encompasses classroom research, school-based research, teacher research, and action research. This form of study is done largely to examine and identify a problem or an issue in the classroom or at school for which the teacher-researchers wish to find a solution by carefully comprehending it (Burns & Kurtoglu-Hooton, 2014). Moreover, it has been claimed that doing action research in teachers' classrooms and schools is a potential strategy for professional learning that has a significant impact on the lives of students and the community. It offers insights into pedagogical practice and encourages the use of evidence-based teaching methods (Burns & Westmacott, 2018).

Teachers who enjoy doing research, however, may struggle to keep going for a range of factors. The research issues indicated below are based on Ulla's (2018) research. First, there is a lack of support from the school in terms of resources, work opportunities, and training. The absence of the school library, alternative sources of information that include current periodicals and magazines, and even internet connection are



inadequate reference materials. Third, there is an increase in the teacher's workload and burden. As a result of the overburden of work that teachers are carrying, research has acquired a negative connotation. Additional factors of the difficulties are writing anxiety, time constraints, and a lack of knowledge of how action research is conducted (Ulla, 2018). In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) issued an order urging both teaching and non-teaching personnel to conduct education research and adhere to the basic education research agenda (BERA), which includes the following research themes: teaching and learning, child protection, human resource development, and governance. It aims to generate new knowledge on less explored but critical fields of basic education, build on existing research gains, systematically focus the DepEd's attention to relevant education, and maximize available resources for research within and outside the department (DepEd, 2016). As a result, it has become one of the most important areas of professional development for public-school teachers in the Philippines.

According to previous studies, teachers in the Philippines have various perspectives on action research and its methodology as well as unique difficulties. Teachers become disengaged from conducting AR specifically due to their lack of knowledge, expertise, desire, and technical and financial support. This may be explained by the varying local educational contexts that researchers work in, as well as their varied research experiences as a result of the many exposures and possibilities that the teacher-researcher has access to. As a result of a high percentage of teachers disengaging with AR, the country's research efficiency, particularly in the basic education sector, is limited. Despite the fact that AR is a key component of their expected results and a prerequisite for advancement to higher levels in their job pathways, this is the case (DepEd, 2007). However, in JBT Caing Sr. Memorial Integrated School, it was found out that there were only 10 teachers (17.86%) out of 56 teachers who got involved, based on the annual school research accomplishment reports. In addition, during the School Monitoring and Evaluation Plan Adjustment (SMEPA), it was found that the school has produced a small number of research outputs.

Hence, the purpose of this study was to investigate the experiences and possible interventions for teachers to overcome their challenges when doing action research. This aimed to provide new information and literature about teacher-researchers to government officials, policymakers, and institutional leaders to guide them in crafting professional development policies in the country.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The qualitative approach was used by the researchers, which is concerned with current phenomena in terms of conditions, practices, beliefs, processes, relationships, or trends. The teachers described the difficulties they encountered while conducting research in this section. A qualitative descriptive design may be the most appropriate because it recognizes the subjective nature of the problem and the various experiences participants have, and it presents the findings in a way that clearly demonstrates or closely reflects the terminology used in the initial research question (Bradshaw et al., 2017). Purposive sampling was used to identify the participants. The participants included ten novices in the field of action research. All identified teacher-participants taught a variety of subjects. The researchers used a semi-structured interview adapted and revised from Mehrani (Mehrani, 2017). The questionnaire was divided into three sections. Part one was a profile of the teachers, and part two was about the challenges that teachers face when conducting action research. The data was then presented using SWOT and thematic analyses, as described by Braun and Clarke (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To develop the themes, the data from the interviews was transcribed, analyzed, and thematically described.

3. PARTICIPANTS' PROFILE

Table 1 shows that many of the teachers, 28 or 50%, graduated with a bachelor's degree, followed by 20 teachers, or 35.71%, who earned units for a master's degree. This implies that the teachers may encounter difficulties in doing action research, which necessitates research skills and abilities that can be obtained through enrolling in a graduate school program. This result supports the study by Abelardo et al. (2019) that conducting action research requires research skills and capabilities that can be developed through advanced studies.

Table 1: Highest Educational Attainment

	No. of Teachers	Percentage
Bachelor's Degree	28	50%
Earned Units in Master's Degree	20	35.71%
Master's Degree	5	8.93%
Earned units in Doctoral Degree	3	5.36%
Total	56	100

Source: Authors

Table 2 shows that the majority of teachers (23/or 41.07%) are new to the service; 16 (28.57%) have 11–20 years of service; 14 (25%) have 6–10 years of service; and 3 (5.36%) have 20 years or more. This indicates that the JBT Caing Sr. Memorial Integrated School teaching force is composed of very young teachers who belong to the elementary, junior high school, and senior high school departments. These teachers may be capable enough of conducting research because they are computer literate and could be easily influenced.

Table 2: Teachers' Years in Service

Teachers' Years in Service	Frequency	Percentage
0-5 Years	23	41.07%
6-10 Years	14	25%
11-20 Years	16	28.57%
20 Years & Above	3	5.36%
Total	56	100%

Source: Authors

Table 3 reveals that there was little research output produced in the succeeding years. This shows that only a few teachers in JBT Caing Sr. Memorial integrated school have been engaged in educational research in recent years. Some of these teachers gave less importance to conducting research. They are not used to engaging in action research since this kind of activity has not yet been institutionalized in school. The coverage of the publication of the teachers ranged from 2017 until 2021. There were expected outputs per year, but these were not published due to varying reasons. Overall, there were only a total of 15 research projects that were produced, but not necessarily published in journals.

Table 3: No. of Teachers' Produced Research Output

	No. of Teachers Involved	Total No. of Research Produced	Expected Output
2020-2021	10	5	19
2019-2020	7	5	17
2018-2019	5	4	15
2017-2018	3	1	12

Source: Authors

Table 4 shows the results of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis, wherein the teachers mentioned that they encountered challenges in conducting action research. They experienced difficulty in the title formulation, data interpretation, using statistical treatment, and technical writing. The threats are being overloaded by teaching loads.

Table 4: SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
Teachers' Involvement in Research	Formulation of Title, SOP etc.
Peer Collaboration	Data Interpretation
	Statistical Treatment
	Technical Writing
Opportunities	Threats
Promotions	Overloaded by teaching loads
BERF Recipient	
Strengthening School-Community Relationship	

Source: Authors

However, despite these challenges, the teachers perceived benefits from conducting their studies. They said that engaging in research provides teachers with personal development; enhances teachers' pedagogical knowledge and teaching practice; strengthens school-community relationships; and improves teachers' capacity to conduct more studies. This finding is supported by Wangdi and Tharchen's (2021) study, which showed that teachers were aware of how research benefits students, universities, and the community.

4. THEME FINDINGS

Table 5 revealed that the teachers are aware that they must be involved in research due to the DepEd Order and that it helps them a lot to address pressing educational issues, including pedagogy, classroom management, teaching and learning, assessment and instructional methods, and community and school relations, among others. Ulla et al. (2017) discovered that teacher-respondents had positive perceptions of conducting research and its benefits to their teaching practice and learning process of their students.

Table 5: Research Involvement

Statements	Codes	Theme
I have to participate because there's a DepEd Memorandum to conduct action research. It helps me solve school issues/problems. (#2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation 	Teachers' Involvement in Research
The DepEd Order required us to conduct Action Research that's why I have to join and I know it helps us a lot to solve school's problems.(#5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct studies 	
It's a need for teacher to participate and conduct action research due to DepEd Order. Any school problem will be solved.(#6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solve School problems, DepEd Order 	

Source: Authors

Table 6 shows that one of the primary themes that emerged from the research is that teachers are hesitant to conduct action research since they lack research knowledge. Teachers are having difficulties figuring out how to formulate a title, a statement of the problem, what statistical treatment, and other parts of the action research. Such results were congruent to the results of the studies of Abelardo et al. (2020), Ulla (2016), and Gomez and Catan (2021), which found that if teachers did not have the research knowledge, they would not be able to carry out the task successfully and thus hinder teachers from conducting their studies.

This implies that the teachers of JBT Caing Sr. Memorial Integrated School have difficulties following the research process and how it is done. It cannot deny the fact that the entire course of action research does not happen in a flash. Several academic steps and rules should be observed by teachers. It may be easy for them if they have sufficient background. They must be provided with training and seminars-workshops for them to overcome their difficulties.

Table 6: Lack of Research Knowledge

Statements	Codes	Theme
“ I’m lack of experience, I have no idea about action research just like how to make a title, statement of the problem and other parts and mostly how to analyze the data.”(#6)	• No idea on research	Lack of Research Knowledge
It’s nose bleeding to craft action research due to lack experience, honestly speaking, at start I got difficulty how to start, how should its parts be done and to how analyse the data.” (Respondent#3)	• Analyze data	
“Honestly speaking, it’s really hard to make action research for I have lack of experience, especially if you don’t have any idea on its parts and how the data be analyzed.” (#8)	• Lack of experience	

Source: Authors

Table 7 shows that another theme that emerged from the transcripts was the writing anxiety of the teachers due to their low level of English proficiency. They are wary of analyzing data, and some have grammar issues since they lack experience in this area. The findings is supported by Ulla et al. (Ulla et al., 2017). Their study revealed that low English proficiency limits teachers' ability to conduct research. Indeed, research writing is considered a difficult task because it involves professional activity in which the coherence of thoughts and results on a topic must be communicated. English writing knowledge and skills are useful tools for producing high-quality research output. Teachers who want to improve their writing and speaking skills in English still require training and coaching.

Table 7: Low Level of English Proficiency

Statements	Codes	Theme
“ I’m not confident with my grammar in writing n, I admit that.”(#2)	• Weakness	• Lack of Research Knowledge
“I have weakness in grammar and I am not confident of that especially in writing.” (#4)	• Grammar	
“I have poor in grammar that’s why I have no confident in writing.” (#5)	• Writing anxiety	
	• Not confident	

Source: Authors

Table 8 shows that in the teacher participants' statements, there is a positive contribution for teachers when they are actively involved since they will obtain credit, which will help them in their next endeavors. It implies that the teachers of this study understand that participating in educational research will lead to another milestone in their lives, particularly in terms of promotions. This result is supported by the study of Abrenica and Cascolan (2022), which shows that doing action research is a big help in a teacher’s professional development and promotion endeavors.

Table 8: Professional Development

Statements	Codes	Themes
“For me, action research really has a big contribution especially in promotions.” (#10)	• Promotion	• Professional Development
“I striving to conduct action research because it needs for promotions; it gives me a big contribution.” (#5)	• Contribute	
“I have to participate in research because of its contribution where it helps me for promotions.”(#2)		

Source: Authors

Earning certificates will help them advance in their careers because they will be recognized. It is nearly impossible for a teacher to avoid conducting action research in this situation because it is one of the requirements for promotion from their current teaching position or rank to the next level. Furthermore, competition for professional development and advancement is stringent in DepEd. One of the criteria for calculating points during ranking is being expected to give an outstanding performance. This is specified in

DepEd Order No. 66, s. 2007, also known as the Revised Guidelines on the Appointment and Promotion of Other Teaching, Related Teaching, and Non-Teaching Positions.

Table 9 shows that the respondents claimed that conducting appropriate research takes a lot of time and effort. However, it is one of the major challenges and experiences that they have encountered. This factor continues to be the primary constraint in conducting action research for teachers, correlating with previous findings (Bullo, 2021; Morales et al., 2016; Zhou, 2013).

Table 9: Time-Constraints

Statements	Codes	Themes
<p>“I experienced that in conducting action research, the researcher needs enough time due to a lot of paper works and overburdened by teaching responsibilities. Sometimes my weekends were sacrificed and it’s stressful” (#7)</p> <p>I got pressured and stressed because I have a lot of things to do; overburden by teaching responsibility, mostly my time in weekends was sacrificed.” (10)</p> <p>I got stressed because of no enough time due paper works, my weekends were sacrificed.”(#10)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overburdened by teaching responsibilities • Sacrifice weekends • Stressful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time-Constraints

Source: Authors

The teachers of JBT Caing Sr. MIS may have limited time and energy left to do quality research due to their busy workload and the demanding nature of their work. Teachers who are given enough time to teach and conduct research will be able to complete their tasks more successfully and efficiently. On the other hand, teachers experiencing workload issues as a result of difficult responsibilities, overlapping activities, and sleepless nights, can lead to their burnout and inefficiency.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that most of the teachers in JBT Caing Sr. Memorial Integrated School are new in the service and produced a small number of research outputs. The results showed that in the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (swot) analysis, the teachers have encountered major challenges such as lack of research knowledge, time constraints, and difficulty in English technical writing. Hence, the Department of Education (DepEd) should provide regular trainings, seminars, and workshops to give technical assistance to the teachers in the basic principles and process of action research. Every school must institutionalize research and make a school-research program that could consider the workload realities of the teachers. Rewards and incentives should be included in making a policy for teachers to be motivated to conduct studies. The school principals should create a time frame for the annual activities to serve as a guide for the teachers to plan in advance their prospective research projects.

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