

## Teachers and School Heads Engagement in Action Research: Needs and Administrative Support

Diocelle Ocmeja Taghap, LPT, MAEd<sup>1</sup>, Ma. Nova Mae Sarong Boyonas, LPT, MAEd<sup>2</sup>

diocelletaghap@gmail.com<sup>1</sup>, maemarianova@gmail.com<sup>2</sup>

<http://orcid.org./:0009-0005-1056-9043><sup>1</sup>, <http://orcid.org./:0009-0001-4971-6945><sup>2</sup>

Department of Education- Bohol Division  
Philippines

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.54476/apjaet/08488>

### Abstract

*As provided for in the Department of Education Order No. 43. s. 2015, teachers are encouraged to engage in research to improve the delivery of basic education. Moreover, DepEd has instituted research to promote an environment of evidence-based decision-making and establish a culture of research. Hence, this study was made. The study aimed to look into the teachers' and school heads' engagement in action research specifically identifying the needs and administrative support of elementary schools. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions: How many teachers and school heads are engaged in action research?; What are the factors that influence teachers and school heads to engage in action research?; What are the teachers' and school heads challenge's and needs in conducting action research?; What administrative support was needed by the teachers and school heads in the conduct of action research? And What research enhancement plan can be proposed based on the findings of the study? Based on the findings of the study, it concludes that teachers and school heads identified action research as beneficial to their academic undertaking since the majority of them were engaged in action research. However, they also emphasized that conducting action research was not an easy task and there were challenges along the way that somehow affected their desire to finish their research work. The findings implied that policy-makers and school administrators may consider and address the research needs of these educators to inspire more school personnel to be actively involved. Hence, when a community of teacher-researchers is formed, school concerns like instruction, facilities, and student performance and behavior are directly and instantaneously addressed.*

*Keywords: Education, Action Research, Engagement, Case Study*

### Introduction

Action research has received attention among educators and administrators in today's educational arena. A thorough investigation is carried out by educators, administrators, or anyone with a keen interest in teaching-learning activities or school environments to acquire data about how their specific institutions operate, how they instruct, and how their students study.

Education leaders have been doing significant ways to update and inform the public-school teachers about the importance of doing action research. Moreover, education leaders emphasized that action research enables teachers to research their classroom environments, including their teaching approaches, learners, and evaluations.

The involvement of teachers in the conduct of educational research is the key towards a research-based teaching profession and this can be achieved by creating locally based interpretative communities where teachers can collaboratively engage in the utilization and creation of research. Even reading research is unpopular among teachers, according to teacher respondents, “research did not solve practical problems in the classroom”, “research is not

designed to solve local problems in the classroom”, hence putting great value to engage teachers in research creates immediate and positive impacts on the classroom (Zabala, 2019).

Action research is a tool that is used to help teachers and other educators uncover strategies to improve teaching (Sagor, 2004). This contention is strongly recommended that doing research is a strong and potent strategy to ensure

quality education. Consequently, it has now become one of the major professional development concerns for teachers in Philippine schools. Teachers and principals are encouraged by the Department of Education to conduct school-based action research as part of their performance appraisal. Thus, aside from delivering effective instructions every day to the students, doing research has also become part of the teacher’s life.

The roles of teachers are no longer limited to being effective communicators with students, organizers of classroom activities, and facilitators of the learning process, teachers are also viewed as active catalysts for change in their educational environment. Since teachers are part of this educational environment where the problem occurs, action research enables them to discover what went wrong and what would be done to address the issue.

Previous research studies have indicated the positive impact that doing research has on teachers’ teaching pedagogies and professional growth. However, only a few studies concerning the challenges and benefits of doing research have been conducted in the Philippines and the ASEAN region (Ula 2018).

The primary aim of this study is to get an overview of the participation of educators in action research in their respective schools specifically in the district of Jagna. Furthermore, it unveils the teacher’s needs and administrative support needed in conducting action research to come up with a strategic plan of action to enhance, if not, maintain the quality of educators’ engagement in action research

## Objectives of the Study

The study aimed to look into the school heads and teachers’ engagement in action research specifically on identifying the needs and administrative support of elementary schools in Jagna District, Division of Bohol for the School Year 2021-2022.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following objectives:

1. To identify if the teachers and school heads are engaged in action research.
2. To determine the factors that influence the teacher/school head to engage in action research.
3. To evaluate the teachers’/school heads’ challenges and needs as they engaged in action research.
4. To determine the administrative support needed by teachers and school heads in the conduct of action research.

## Methodology

*Research Design.* The study employed a qualitative type of research since the aim of this study does not focus on giving numerical data but is more on providing detailed experiences of participants towards action research. This captured a range of perspectives from an interview with the participants. It

allowed the researcher to gain a greater understanding of the participants' engagement in action research especially their needs and administrative support desired.

Furthermore, this was also qualitative since it was a process of naturalistic inquiry that seeks an in-depth understanding of social phenomena within their natural setting. It focuses on the "why" rather than the "what" of social phenomena and relies on the direct experiences of human beings as meaning-making agents in everyday lives.

*Research Environment.* Jagna is the locale of the study. The town of Jagna is an exterior town southern coast of Bohol. It is considered a 3<sup>rd</sup> class municipality in the province of Bohol. It is situated 40.9 kilometers from the lone capital of the province, Tagbilaran City. It has a land area of 129.71168.49 square kilometers or 65.05 square miles. The research was conducted in twenty-two (22) public elementary schools located in the different barangays in Jagna. The researcher chooses these schools because based on the researcher's knowledge this district recently acknowledged and actively encourage teachers and school heads to participate and conduct action research. This is in line with Division Memorandum No. 0196 s.2022 entitled "Call for Action Research Proposals for CY 2022" which invites districts and schools to submit their best action research proposals for funding under the BERF program.

*Research Participants.* The study included teachers and school heads in the District of Jagna. There were ten (10) school heads but only eight (8) of them were able to participate in the interview. To have a complete representation of all twenty-two (22) public elementary schools in Jagna and to give teachers an equal chance of being chosen, two (2) teachers per school were randomly chosen. Through Microsoft Excel random sampling from the twenty-two (22) schools, forty-four (44) public elementary school teachers were part of the initial interview.

Purposive sampling was then used after identifying that out of forty-four (44) teacher participants, twenty-four (24) were engaged in action research. In qualitative research, purposive sampling is utilized to gather participants that can provide in-depth and detailed information about the phenomenon under investigation.

However, during the process, the researcher stopped interviewing the 16<sup>th</sup> teacher-participant since the researcher received the same responses and suggestions, and data saturation was reached.

In the broader context, saturation pertains to the point in the data collection when no additional issues or insights are identified, and data begin to repeat indicating that an adequate sample size is reached (Hennink, 2017)

In the selection process, the researchers considered the following general criteria for school heads and teachers' inclusion:

(1) Must be a teacher/school head who has the willingness to participate and the ability to communicate their thoughts and experiences about action research

(2) School heads/ Teachers must be currently assigned to any elementary schools in Jagna District regardless of their years of teaching experience and what grade level they are teaching (teachers).

*Research Instrument.* The study used an interview guide for the school heads and teacher participants. The questions contained in the interview were crafted by the researcher herself, presented, and approved by the panel of examiners during the proposal hearing.

Moreover, this guide was used to know the teacher and school head's engagement in action research, factors influencing their research engagement, and the interview guide will be used to know the teachers' level of engagement in research, factors influencing their research engagement, and training

needs and administrative support. And to gather data needing further explanation on their research engagement.

*Research Procedure.* In observance of the ethical procedures in conducting research, the researcher faithfully adheres to the highest ethical standards in the conduct of the study. The manuscript was carefully reviewed by the Holy Name University’s Ethics Review Board to ensure strict compliance.

The researcher underwent the proper procedure of securing approval from the Dean of the College of Education. Having obtained the permission, the researcher also wrote permission letters addressed to the Schools Division Superintendent of Bohol Division and District Supervisor Jagna. Securing all the official permits and endorsement from the Superintendent, these were presented to different schools in the Jagna district. The school heads in the selected schools were informed of the purpose of the study.

After having all the permits, the researcher secured the list of teachers and school heads in the elementary schools in the district of Jagna. Teachers identified in the random sampling were informed about the study, what it was all about, what the purpose of the study was, what would be expected from them, and how important their response would be.

In the letter of consent, participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they can openly express refusal if they feel it is not significant for them to join, and that they can withdraw anytime from the study.

## Results and Discussion

This chapter deals with the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the results of the study. Using thematic analysis as an analytic tool, the researcher discusses the findings on teachers’ engagement in action research that includes teachers’ needs and administrative support in Jagna District, Division of Bohol, as of the school year 2021 – 2022.

### 1. Engagement in Action Research

**Table 1**  
*Number of teachers and school heads who engage in action research*

Participants	Engagement in action Research	
	Yes	No
Teachers	24	20
School Heads	8	0

As can be gleaned from the data in Table 1, there were supposed to be ten schools (10) school heads, but only eight (8) were interviewed and considered part of the participants of the study. It is significant to note that those school heads on duty who were included in the study were all engaged in action research. This implied that as school leaders, they modeled the implementation of DepEd’s mandate for the teachers and school leaders to conduct action research in their respective schools. Their engagement in action research created an impact as there were teachers who were already engaged in research. The school heads’ engagement may eventually draw more teacher researchers in the near future.

On the other hand, out of forty-four (44) expected teacher participants, twenty-four (24) teachers signified that they were into action research already and presently engaged. This number means merely

half or only 54% of the participants were engaged in research. This explains that teachers and school heads are one with the DepEd’s activities and programs for the institutionalization of action research in Basic Education. However, as research is everyone’s concern in the academe, the remaining percentage who were not engaged yet is still a significant number among teachers who need more motivation, more support, and more time to equip themselves with the skills to do the task related to research for them to experience, learn and see the essence of engaging in research.

## 2. Factors that Influence the conduct of action research

Table 2 presents the influences on the conduct of action research. The two significant themes which emerged during the thematic analysis are (1) external factors; and (2) internal factors.

**Table 2**  
*Factors that Influence in Conducting Action Research*

Theme	Category	Codes
External Factor	Job Promotion	Economic upgrading, grade level increased
	Professional Growth	Improve our way of teaching, examine teaching practices, better and enhanced teaching strategies, and identify ways to properly assess the learners.
<b>Internal Factors</b>	Enrich Educational Experience	The investigative study, solution, address issues, evaluating classroom practices, the study of development and progress, problem-solving
	Personal Fulfillment	Personal satisfaction, achievement, happiness, self-worth, active participation and collaboration between teachers, support empowers the teachers and boosts their self-efficacy; highly engaged teachers; determination and willingness to finish paper; acquired wisdom from doing action research; highly engaged teachers and school principal

**External Factor.** A theme that was formed from the data interviewed was the external factor. These are tangible benefits that participants believed they can gain from conducting action research such as money or other rewards. Most of the participants stated that doing action research is a way to get promoted in their job. The majority of the participants mentioned that job promotion was also the main reason why they engage in action research since this would always mean a salary increase. Thus, higher positions mean a higher salary. Job promotion seems to play a significant role in motivating teachers and administrators. Herzberg highlighted the importance of promotion opportunities as a motivating factor among employees. The way teachers and administrators are rewarded (promoted) affects productivity and, therefore, the quality of education which must be monitored by the Department of Education.

**Internal Factor.** Internal factor refers to the inner drive of a person to conduct action research. They believe that doing action research can improve their knowledge as well as their full potential in their career. Moreover, they believed that action research leads to an assessment of the achievement of life goals which are important to teachers and school heads while engaging in action research.

The results of research help them grow professionally in their field, enrich their educational experiences, and lastly attain personal fulfillment. When teachers and administrators are engaged in research their personality, intellectual abilities, and skills were enhanced. As teachers do a thorough investigation and exploration, they discover their strengths and weaknesses into assets. Furthermore, participants agreed that research engagement improves the teaching functions of a teacher and is a tool for professional development. Professional development of teachers and administrators is the key to meeting today’s educational demands, and they can achieve this through research engagement.

### 3. Challenges and Needs Experienced while Engaging in Action Research

Table 3 presents the generated themes on the challenges and needs experienced by teachers and school heads action while engaging in action research. The identified themes are the following: school-related factors, learning resources, and personal factors. These themes support the reason why the teacher and school principal are hesitant to engage in action research.

**Table 3**  
*Challenges experienced by teachers and school heads to engage in action research*

Theme	Category	Code
School-Related Factors	Deloading of subjects	Teaching load/Administrative Functions, work overload; congested coordinatorship; time constraints; limited time due to overlapping tasks/conflicting schedules; time management issues
Learning Resources	References Internet Issues	Lack of internet load; Internet Issues; Lack of internet connection; No Signal, Unavailability of learning resources; No available learning materials, need updated resources
Financial Aspect from School Budget	Monetary Support	Not enough money to sustain the action research, lack of money, finances are enough to the basic needs of the family, more financial support from MOOE

**School Related Factors.** It pertains to teacher-related issues of teachers and school principals. When the participants were asked about their needs to do research, most of them said that teaching load and administrative functions challenged them to do research. The participants responded that most of their time was spent on classroom teaching, checking papers, and preparing lessons which give them no time to do research

It must be noted that in the Philippines, teachers are required to do teaching for more than 6 hours a day, or 30 hours a week (DepEd, 2008: CMO, 2007 as cited by UIIa, 2018). Ellois and Loughand (2016) stated that lack of time and time pressures relative to classroom teaching and doing research restricted the teachers to have good quality and quality research studies. Vasquez (2017) also mentioned that heavy teaching loads are the reason why teachers do not do research. As teachers compromised with priorities in their workplace, family, and society, they should be given quality time to do the things they are expected to do. In this way, quality work will also be expected from them.

**Learning Resources.** During the interview, participants revealed that internet issues and a lack of reference materials challenged them while engaging in action research. Unstable signals and lack of internet connection hamper the teachers and school heads from sustaining the end goal of action research.

Noticeably, the data indicated that teachers and school administrators clamor for learning resources that include textbooks and internet connections in their school. If learning resources will be provided to their respective schools, teachers will not anymore going to the city to do research. Hence, classes will not be hampered. It is very difficult to imagine today’s educational process without the use of various teaching and learning resources. Not only to make the process more attractive and interesting but also to encourage active learning and develop various skills. The availability of learning resources for the implementation of engaging teachers in action research should be given priority to enhance teachers’ motivation to conduct action research.

**Financial Aspect.** That aspect is also their main concern in conducting research. Research does not come cheap. It requires a budget for expenses that may be essential when doing fieldwork, administering interviews, or gathering data. According to them, the monetary expenses when one engaged in research held them hesitant on finishing their research. Their finances were just enough for the needs of their family, and they can’t afford additional expenses. They suggested that there should be financial support from the school through the inclusion of action research expenses in the school's MOOE budget and other linkages from stakeholders. The findings from this study disclosed some needs that these teachers and school heads encountered. It should be noted that when teachers have the support they need, they will be able to produce good-quality research work. Likewise, reducing teachers’ teaching hours also means quality time both for doing research work and for attending to their family needs. Teachers need to balance their life work and personal life; and by giving them a considerable number of hours for teaching and conducting action research, they will be able to deliver their work more effectively and efficiently.

#### 4. Administrative Support in Conducting Action Research

Table 4 presents teachers’ and school heads’ desired administrative support as they engaged in action research. Three themes were generated, (1) Upgrade of knowledge and skills; (2) Emotional Support; and (3) Compensation. These supports were identified by teachers and school heads as essential while conducting action research.

**Table 4**  
*Administrative Support Needed in Conducting Action Research*

Theme	Category	Codes
<b>Upgrade Knowledge and Skill</b>	Trainings	Seminars and trainings, LAC session, colloquium, research forum, workshop
<b>Emotional Support</b>	Academic Integrity	Action research is validated by a technical working group; sincerity in the collection of data; authentic data are collected

**Upgrade Knowledge and Skills.** When the teachers and school principals were asked about the kind of support they need to do action research, most of them said that they need support in upgrading their knowledge and skills in terms of conducting and participating in research training, seminars, and workshops. Furthermore, research training and seminars should also be made available for them to attend and must be conducted regularly. This was emphasized by the participants as their attendance and participation in research training will help them become knowledgeable to do research. Lastly, they also mentioned that incentives should also be given to them when they can produce research studies for the school.

**Emotional Support.** This support is about showing care and compassion for another person by giving value and praise to every good work such as research. It has been elaborated in Herzberg's motivational-hygiene theory that one factor that affects an employee's motivation and satisfaction at work is when a person is properly recognized and valued.

**Compensation.** This theme refers to the rewards and incentives desired by teachers and school heads as they engage in research. The findings show that compensation is one of the motivating factors that enable a researcher to successfully engage in a research endeavor. Moreover, these findings in administrative support strengthen the idea of Herzberg's motivation theory that motivators such as achievement, advancement, and growth should be considered or provided to enhance motivation among teachers and school heads in their work.

## Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the study concludes that teachers and school heads identified action research as beneficial to their academic undertaking since the majority of them were engaged. Their engagement in action research means that they have an interest in doing such. However, they also emphasized that conducting action research was not an easy task and there were challenges along the way that somehow affected their desire to finish their research work. The findings implied that policy-makers and school administrators may consider and address the research needs of these educators to inspire more school personnel to be actively involved. Moreover, when a community of teacher-researchers is formed, school concerns like instruction, facilities, and student performance and behavior are directly and simultaneously addressed.

## Recommendations

Considering the salient findings of the study, the following are hereby recommended by the researcher:

1. School administrators may continue to encourage and support their teachers in doing action research by designing an institutional action research policy that will sustain and enhance educators' motivation to engage in doing action research. Division heads may sustain and continue to educate teachers and school heads on new trends in research that would enhance professional growth.
2. School administrators may lessen the teaching loads of teachers who will do research by delegating their other teaching loads to teachers who are not doing action research at the moment, and they may take turns in doing this.
3. Give incentives to teachers who will conduct action research such as exemption from auxiliary works, giving service credits, or rewards in the form of money. Training and seminars about action research should be conducted to motivate teachers to engage in action research.

## References

Anwaruddin, S.M. (2015). Teachers' engagement with educational research towards a conceptual framework for locally based interpretative communities. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*. 23 (40).

- Applying Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to Employee Engagement (2022).  
<https://www.engagementmultiplier.com/resources/applying-maslows-hierarchy-needs-engagement-growth/>
- Asiri, A. (2020). Theoretical models for teaching and research. <http://opentext.wsu.edu/theoreticalmodel>
- Biruk, E.H. (2013). The practice and challenges in conducting action research: the case of suluta secondary schools. A Thesis. Institute of Educational Research. Addis Ababba University Ethiopia. Retrieved from <http://etd.aau.edu.et/bitstream/Birk/Hailege>
- Bughio, F.A (2015). Issues and challenges in doing action research in a public sector university. *Journal of Research in Social Science – JRS*. <http://search.proquest.com/openview/origsite=gscholar>
- Cain, T. and Milovic, S. (2010). Action research as a tool of professional development of advisers and teachers in Croatia. *European Journal of Teacher Education*,33 (1),19-30. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619760903457768>.
- Cherry, K. (2020). The Experiential Learning Theory of David Kolb. <https://www.verywellmind.com/experiential-learning-2795154>
- Department of Education Memo Order No. 16 s. 2017. Research management guidelines. <https://www.deped.gov.ph/2017/03/20/do-16-s-2017-research-management-guidelines/>
- Department of Education Memo Order no. 24 s. 2010. Basic education research fund. <https://www.deped.gov.ph/2010/03/08/do-24-s-2010-basic-education-research-fund/>
- Department of Education Memo Order no. 39 s. 2016. The adoption of basic education research agenda. [https://peac.org.ph/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/do\\_s2016\\_039.pdf](https://peac.org.ph/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/do_s2016_039.pdf)
- Department of Education Regional Memorandum No. 144, s. 2015. Regional Research Policies. Retrieved from [http://www.DepedBataan.com/issuances/1/division\\_memorandum\\_no.\\_100\\_s\\_2015.pdf](http://www.DepedBataan.com/issuances/1/division_memorandum_no._100_s_2015.pdf)
- Republic Act 9155. Governance of basic education act of 2001. <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/2001/08/11/republic-act-no-9155/>
- Department of Education Memo Order no. 43, s. 2015. Revised guidelines for the basic education research fund (BERF). <https://www.Deped.gov.ph/2015/09/16/do-43-s-2015-revised-guidelines-for-the-basic-education-research-fund-berf/>.
- Department of Education Regional Memorandum No. 144, s. 2015. Regional Research Policies. <https://www.scribd.com/document/336044899/RM-No-144-s-2015-Regional-Research-Policies-pdf>
- Dehghan, F. and Sahragard, R. (2015). Iranian EFL teachers' views on action research and its application in their classroom: A case study. *Journal of Teacher Education and Educators*,4 (1), 39-52. <http://jtee.org/document/issue7/MAKALE%203.Ppdf>

- Ellis, N. and Loughland, T. (2016). The challenges of practitioner research: A comparative study of Singapore and NSW. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*. 41(2).  
<https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2016y41n2.8>
- Grimma-Farrell, C. (2017). *Teachers as Researchers*. Springer Singapore: Springer Science and Business Media Singapore. <https://doi.org.2087-2>
- Hine, G.S.C.(2013). The importance of action research in teacher education programs . *Issues in Educational Research*,23(2):Special Issue. <http://www.iier.org.au/iier23.pdf>
- McLeod, S. A. (2020). Maslow's hierarchy of needs. *Simply Psychology*.  
[www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html](http://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html)
- McNiff, J. (2010). *Action research for professional development: Concise advice for new and experienced action researchers*. Dorset: September Books.  
<http://www.septemberbooks.com/actionresearchforprofessionaldevelopment.asp>
- Morales, M. P. E. (2016). Participatory action research (PAR) cum action research (AR) in teacher professional development: A literature review. *International Journal of Research in Education and Science*, 2(1), 156-165. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1105165>
- O'Neill, E. (2020). What is adult learning theory. <https://www.learnupon.com/blog/adult-learning-theory/>
- Schwandt, A. (2007). *The SAGE dictionary of qualitative inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications
- Smith, G.R.(2020). Employee engagement a review of current thinking.  
[https://www.employmentstudies.co.uk/system/files/resources/files/469 .pdf](https://www.employmentstudies.co.uk/system/files/resources/files/469.pdf)
- Sagor, R. (2004). *The action research guidebook: A four-step process for educators and school teams*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Tarrayo, V., Hernandez, P.J., Claustro, J.M.A.(2021). Research engagement by english language teachers in a Philippine University: Insights from a Qualitative Study. <https://tinyurl.com/ms4ak5hx>.
- Tindowen, D.J., Guzman J., Macanang D. (2019). Teachers' conception and difficulties in doing action research. *Universal Journal of Educational Research* 7(8): 1787-1794, 2019. Retrieved from <http://www.hrpub.org/>
- Ula, M. (2018). Benefits and challenges of doing research: Experiences from Philippine public school teachers. <https://www.iier.org.au/iier28/ulla.pdf>.
- Vasquez, V.E.L (2017). Teachers as researchers: advantage, disadvantages and challenges for teachers engaging in research activities. <https://www.academia.edu/719736>

Wa-Mbaleka, S. (2015). Factors leading to limited faculty publications in Philippine higher education institutions. *International Forum*, 18(2), 121–141

Zabala, B.A (2019). Engagement in Research of Public Elementary School Teachers in Sta. Maria District, Department of Education, Schools Division of Bulacan.

### **Copyrights**

*Copyright of this article is retained by the author/s, with first publication rights granted to APJAET. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4>).*