

UNLEASHING HINDERING FACTORS THAT AFFECT TEACHERS IN CONDUCTING SCHOOL-BASED ACTION RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the factors that hinder teachers at Carmona National High School (CNHS) from conducting school-based action research. Using a qualitative research design, the study gathered data through interviews with teachers selected via convenience and criterion sampling. Thematic analysis identified key barriers, including writing anxiety, workload, insufficient time, and a lack of relevant training. Teachers reported significant stress related to grammar and data analysis, a heavy workload exacerbated by teaching responsibilities, and difficulty finding time for research. To address these challenges, the study highlights practical strategies: collaboration with colleagues, self-motivation, administrative support, and effective time management. The findings underscore the importance of a supportive school environment where teachers can share research tasks, receive guidance from experts, and have dedicated time for research. Recommendations include integrating time management modules into professional development, reevaluating workload distribution, and providing workshops to improve teachers' writing skills. Implementing these strategies could empower teachers, reduce research-related anxiety, and enhance the overall quality of educational practices at CNHS.

Keywords: *anxiety, collaboration, self-motivation, school-based action research, school administration support, time management, workload*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the implementation of the K-12 Basic Education Program in the Philippines has brought a heightened focus on evidence-based policies to improve student success, curriculum instruction, and teacher quality. As highlighted by Abaya (2017), these reforms necessitate continuous professional development and research-driven strategies in educational settings. To address this, the Department of Education (DepEd) issued Order No. 39, s. 2016, mandating the adoption of the Basic Education Research Agenda. This agenda aims to generate new knowledge, address pressing educational challenges, and optimize research resources for effective policymaking and program development.

Despite these initiatives, a significant gap remains in

understanding the barriers teachers face when engaging in school-based action research, particularly within the context of public secondary schools like Carmona National High School (CNHS). Previous studies have identified some common challenges, such as time constraints, workload, and limited research training (Beausaert et al., 2016; Garner & Kaplan, 2021). However, these studies often provide a generalized perspective, overlooking the nuanced and contextual factors specific to individual schools or regions.

This research addresses this gap by focusing on CNHS teachers and examining the interplay of institutional, personal, and skill-related challenges they face when conducting action research. For instance, how do school-specific workloads exacerbate these difficulties? To what extent does the lack of localized research training programs

hinder their progress? Furthermore, while literature frequently highlights barriers, there is limited exploration of actionable, tailored strategies that teachers can employ to overcome these challenges (Pekrun et al., 2019; Schleicher, 2020).

By identifying these unexplored aspects, this study seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges unique to CNHS teachers. Additionally, the research aims to propose actionable solutions that align with the institutional context, offering practical implications for both educators and policymakers. This localized focus contributes to bridging the gap in the existing literature while addressing the urgent need for research capacity building in the Philippine basic education system.

Theoretical Framework

The study is grounded in several theoretical perspectives that underscore the importance of reflective practice and continuous improvement in educational settings. Action research, as conceptualized by Kemmis and McTaggart (2005), emphasizes participatory and iterative processes aimed at solving real-world educational problems. Schön's (1983) theory of reflective practice highlights the necessity for teachers to engage in continuous self-evaluation to improve their teaching strategies. Furthermore, the Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) is applied to understand the role of intrinsic motivation in driving teachers to undertake research despite the challenges. Collectively, these frameworks guide the study's exploration of strategies that can empower teachers and improve research outcomes in schools.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to identify and uncover the factors that affect teachers in writing action research. Specifically, it identifies the difficulties encountered by the teachers of Carmona NHS in conducting school-based action research, particularly in terms of institutional barriers, personal challenges, and skill-related issues. Additionally, it seeks to determine how the findings can inform the development of an actionable plan to address the challenges and enhance the capacity of teachers to engage in

meaningful research.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative research approach to explore the challenges faced by teachers in conducting school-based action research at Carmona National High School (CNHS). The emphasis was placed on understanding the meanings, experiences, and perspectives of the participants. Qualitative research methods are particularly effective in capturing the nuances of such experiences, which are often missed in quantitative approaches (Creswell, 2013).

Sampling Technique

The study employed a combination of convenience sampling and criterion sampling. Convenience sampling was chosen for its efficiency, allowing the selection of participants who were readily accessible and willing to participate within the constraints of time and budget. Criterion sampling was used to ensure that participants met specific, predetermined criteria relevant to the research objectives. The criteria included:

1. Being a current teacher at Carmona NHS.
 2. Having prior experience or expressed interest in conducting school-based action research.
- Facing identifiable challenges in engaging with research activities.

These criteria were chosen to ensure that the participants could provide rich, relevant insights into the barriers and strategies associated with action research. Participants were identified through consultation with school administrators and peer recommendations, ensuring a diverse range of experiences and perspectives.

Instrument and Validation

Data collection was conducted using a semi-structured interview protocol. The development of the interview questions was guided by the study's objectives and existing literature on school-based action research. To ensure the validity and reliability of the instrument, the interview protocol underwent expert review. Educational researchers and

experienced practitioners provided feedback on the content and structure of the questions, which were then refined to improve clarity and relevance.

The interviews were designed to elicit detailed narratives from the participants about the obstacles they face and the strategies they employ in conducting research. Probing questions were included to allow for a deeper exploration of themes that emerged during the conversations.

Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather in-depth information. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes and took place in a private, quiet setting within the school premises to ensure participants' comfort and confidentiality.

The interviews were recorded with participants' consent and later transcribed verbatim for analysis. Probing questions were used to explore emerging themes, allowing for a deeper understanding of participants' experiences.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the qualitative data. This method involved identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns or themes within the data. Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach to thematic analysis was followed. Themes were developed using an inductive coding process, where codes were generated directly from the data without being constrained by pre-existing theoretical frameworks. The process involved several steps:

1. **Familiarization:** Researchers repeatedly read the transcripts to gain a deep understanding of the content.
2. **Initial Coding:** Codes were assigned to segments of the data that represented meaningful units or ideas.
3. **Theme Identification:** Related codes were grouped to form broader themes that captured the essence of the data.

4. **Review and Refinement:** Themes were reviewed to ensure they accurately reflected the data and were distinct from one another.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the data, several strategies were employed:

1. **Member Checking:** Participants were asked to review the transcriptions and preliminary findings to validate the accuracy and credibility of the interpretations.

2. **Triangulation:** Data from the interviews were cross-checked with existing literature and peer feedback to enhance reliability.

3. **Peer Debriefing:** Regular discussions with research colleagues provided an external perspective to identify potential biases and improve analytical rigor.

Thus, these measures ensured that the findings were healthy, credible, and reflective of the participants' experiences.

Table 1 shows the analysis revealed four key themes affecting teachers in conducting school-based action research: ***"Anxiety", "Workload", "Lack of Time", and "Training Insufficiency"***. These findings align with prior studies, emphasizing how personal and systemic barriers influence teachers' research engagement.

Anxiety: A Prevalent Barrier

"The fear of failing to finish my research makes me question starting it".

Teachers predominantly highlighted anxiety as a major hindrance. Negative perceptions about research, mistrust in colleagues' research abilities, and fears about grammar and data analysis contributed to heightened stress levels. One participant vividly shared, ***"I always feel that my grammar isn't good enough, and I worry about interpreting the data wrong"***.

Table 1. Difficulties encountered by the teachers of Carmona NHS in doing school-based action research

NO.	EVIDENCE/STATEMENT OF PARTICIPANT	THEME
1.	Additional workload and burden on the part of the teacher	workload
2.	Writing anxiety	anxiety
3.	Lack of Time	time
4.	Negative perceptions and attitudes towards action re- search writing	anxiety
5.	Lack of Trainings/Seminars related to action research	insufficiency
6.	Mistrust of colleagues' research capacity	anxiety
7.	Coordinators and additional tasks or ancillary tasks	workload
8.	Coordinators and no. of preparation	workload
9.	Failure to finish the study	anxiety
10.	Burden of conducting a study	anxiety
11.	Lack of Time	time

This finding echoes Pekrun et al. (2019), who highlighted that academic anxiety negatively affects educators’ ability to engage in research tasks. Addressing these concerns through skill-building workshops can alleviate this barrier.

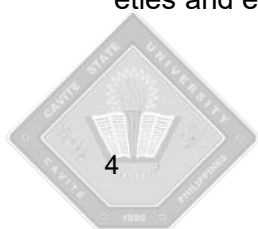
Writing anxiety, particularly regarding grammar and statistical analysis, emerged as a significant deterrent to teacher-researchers. Recent findings by Bonsaksen et al. (2021) suggest that self-efficacy in academic skills is closely linked to reduced stress and improved research engagement. Additionally, the complexity of statistical analysis adds another layer of difficulty, with educators fearing that errors could undermine their credibility. According to Alizadeh et al. (2022), targeted interventions in writing and data analysis training are critical to alleviating these anxieties and empowering teachers to engage confident-

ly in research. Consequently, these anxieties not only inhibit teachers' research productivity but also limit their contributions to the academic community and the advancement of educational practices.

Time Constraints: A Common Dilemma

“Research demands time I just don’t have with my teaching load”.

The lack of sufficient time emerged as a key issue, with participants stating, ***“Between teaching responsibilities and personal obligations, there’s no room for research.”*** Teachers’ inability to dedicate focused time to research reflects similar conclusions drawn by Beausaert et al. (2016), who found that time allocation is one of the most significant



challenges faced by teacher-researchers. Flexible scheduling and administrative support are potential remedies to this issue.

Teachers often struggle to find uninterrupted time for research amidst professional and personal demands. According to Garner and Kaplan (2021), teachers face work-life imbalances that hinder their ability to focus on scholarly activities. Professional responsibilities, such as lesson planning, grading, and extracurricular commitments, extend beyond school hours, while personal duties further constrain available time. Addressing this issue requires innovative scheduling solutions, such as designated research hours or reduced teaching loads for teachers actively engaged in research.

Workload: A Layered Challenge

Workload was another recurring theme, described as ***"an additional burden on top of teaching and other roles."*** This aligns with Schleicher (2020) emphasized that the increasing workload on teachers worldwide often impedes professional growth activities, including research. Streamlining administrative processes and assigning research mentors could address this challenge.

The additional workload associated with teaching responsibilities is a significant hindrance to research. Teachers frequently face demands such as lesson planning, grading, and administrative duties, leaving little time for academic pursuits. Recent studies by Farrukh et al. (2020) highlight that excessive workload not only reduces teachers' capacity for research but also negatively affects their job satisfaction. Furthermore, a lack of institutional support exacerbates the issue, as limited access to research funding and professional development opportunities makes it challenging for educators to engage meaningfully in research. Proactive interventions, such as optimizing task distribution and offering institutional resources, can address these workload-related barriers. Consequently, the additional workload and associated stress not only impact teachers' ability to conduct research but also affect their overall job satisfaction and professional growth, limiting their potential contributions to educational innovation and improvement. Therefore, the additional workload and associated stress not only impact teachers' ability to con-

duct research but also affect their overall job satisfaction and professional growth, limiting their potential contributions to educational innovation and improvement.

Insufficiency in Training and Support

Some teachers reported a lack of relevant training, leading to insecurity about their research capabilities. A participant shared, ***"I've never attended a seminar that truly helped me understand action research."*** This points to an urgent need for accessible, practical workshops tailored to educators' contexts.

A lack of relevant training was another common theme, with one participant stating, ***"I've never attended a seminar that truly helped me understand action research."*** This reflects the findings of Cordingley et al. (2015), who noted that effective professional development is essential for building teachers' capacity to engage in research.

Table 2 shows the participants' proposed strategies to mitigate these challenges, categorized into Collaboration, Self-Motivation, Administrative Support, and Time management. Among the four themes that arose, self-motivation got the greatest number of participants with a total of four, followed by time management with a total of three respondents, and finally, both collaboration and support got two respondents.

Collaboration

"Together, we can overcome the daunting aspects of research".

Teachers highlighted teamwork as essential, stating, ***"When we work in pairs, the workload feels lighter, and ideas are more diverse."*** This supports Hargreaves and O'Connor's (2018) advocacy for collaborative professionalism.

Collaboration is a highly recommended strategy for teachers aiming to overcome barriers and successfully conduct research. By working together, teachers can share the workload, combine expertise, and provide mutual support, which can significantly alleviate individual pressures and enhance the research process. Collaborative research enables teachers to

Table 2. Strategies the teachers of Carmona NHS may use in conducting school-based action research

NO.	EVIDENCE/STATEMENT OF PARTICIPANT	THEME
1.	Collaborate with co-teachers to share workloads and benefit from different perspectives.	Collaboration
2.	It should be done by pair.	Collaboration
3.	Time management and setting priorities are very important.	Time management
4.	Diligently pursuing the studies	Self-motivation
5.	Believe in yourself that you can.	Self-motivation
6.	Seek help from experts.	Support
7.	Be motivated and be inspired in doing such task and always think that many people would benefit with your study.	Self-motivation
8.	Self-motivation why you are doing your research	Self-motivation
9.	May the school administration support the teacher who wants to conduct action research.	Support
10.	Proper time management and asking for help from experts	Time management
11.	Setting priorities	Time management

draw on each other's strengths, whether in data collection, analysis, or writing, thus fostering a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the research topic (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Additionally, collaboration can create a supportive community of practice where teachers can share insights, provide feedback, and develop professionally. This collective effort not only makes the research process more manageable but also enhances the quality and impact of the research findings (Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2018). Institutions can facilitate collaboration by providing structured opportunities for teamwork, such as research groups or partnerships with higher education institutions,

thereby fostering a culture of collaborative inquiry and continuous improvement. Therefore, embracing collaboration as a strategy can empower teachers to conduct meaningful research despite the challenges posed by their demanding schedules.

Self-motivation

Teachers stressed intrinsic drive, with one noting, ***"I remind myself that this research can benefit so many students."*** This reflects Cheon et al. (2018), who emphasized that self-determination plays a significant role in fostering persistence in professional goals.



Self-motivation is a crucial strategy for teachers aiming to overcome obstacles and effectively engage in research. The intrinsic drive to achieve personal and professional goals can significantly enhance a teacher's commitment to the research process. According to Howard et al. (2021), teachers who set clear, achievable goals and maintain a positive mindset are better able to sustain momentum throughout the research process despite barriers. Furthermore, self-determined teachers often seek out continuous professional development opportunities, enriching their research endeavors and contributing to their overall effectiveness. By leveraging intrinsic motivation, teachers can enhance their professional growth and make meaningful contributions to educational practices.

Support

Participants called for institutional backing, such as seminars and flexible schedules. One teacher remarked, "Support from school heads would make a world of difference."

Support from school administration is a vital strategy for facilitating teachers' engagement in research activities. Effective administrative support can significantly enhance teachers' ability to conduct research by providing the necessary resources, time, and encouragement. Recent studies by Garner and Kaplan (2021) suggest that administrative support, including providing dedicated time for research and professional development, is instrumental in reducing barriers to teacher engagement in research. Additionally, recognizing and rewarding teachers' research efforts fosters motivation and validates their contributions to educational practice (Farrukh et al., 2020).

Creating collaborative research structures, such as partnerships with academic institutions or school-based research groups, can further facilitate problem-solving and knowledge sharing. This comprehensive support not only addresses practical barriers but also cultivates a culture of continuous improvement and scholarly inquiry within schools.

Time Management

Participants identified setting priorities as crucial, stating, **"Good time management allows me to**

balance teaching and research effectively." van der Heijden et al. (2015) emphasize that structured schedules and prioritization are key to optimizing teachers' productivity.

Effective time management involves creating structured schedules, setting specific goals, and breaking tasks into manageable components (Merrill et al., 2021). Teachers who allocate dedicated time slots for research and align their professional responsibilities with clear objectives are more likely to engage productively in research activities. Setting priorities also allows educators to focus on critical tasks, reducing the impact of multitasking and procrastination. Implementing these strategies enhances efficiency and reduces stress, enabling teachers to maintain a balanced and fulfilling professional life.

CONCLUSIONS

The study identified key factors hindering teachers of Carmona National High School (Carmona NHS) from conducting school-based action research, including "Anxiety," "Workload," "Lack of Time," and "Training Insufficiencies". Proposed strategies to address these challenges – "Collaboration", "Self-Motivation", "Administrative Support", and "Time Management", highlight the importance of a supportive environment for empowering educators in their research efforts. By addressing these barriers, institutions can enable teachers to engage in meaningful and impactful research, ultimately enhancing educational practices and student outcomes.

However, the study has several limitations that should be acknowledged to contextualize its findings. First, the sampling method, which relied on convenience and criterion sampling, may limit the generalizability of the results beyond Carmona NHS. While the qualitative approach provided rich insights into participants' experiences, the findings may not fully capture the diversity of challenges faced by teachers in other schools or regions. Additionally, the specificity of the findings to Carmona NHS means that the recommendations and strategies proposed might require adaptation to suit different institutional contexts.

Future studies could expand the scope by including a larger and more diverse sample of teachers from

various schools and regions to enhance the applicability of the findings. Research exploring longitudinal impacts of implemented strategies on teachers' research engagement would also provide valuable insights. Despite these limitations, this study contributes significantly to understanding the barriers teachers face and offers practical solutions to promote a culture of research within educational institutions.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study's findings, several targeted interventions are recommended to address the hindering factors affecting teachers' ability to conduct school-based action research at Carmona NHS. These recommendations are designed to unleash the potential of teachers by mitigating obstacles such as lack of time, excessive workload, and anxiety related to writing and motivation.

Intervention 1: Addressing Lack of Time

Objective:

- To enable teachers to effectively balance teaching duties and research by equipping them with practical time management skills.
- To institutionalize a schedule that includes dedicated research time for teachers.

Implementation Plan:

Phase 1: Needs Assessment (1 month)

- Conduct a survey among teachers to identify specific time management challenges and constraints.
- Persons Involved: Action Research Coordinator, Teachers
- Outcome: Identified time-related obstacles to research engagement.

Phase 2: Development of Training Modules (2 months)

- Create modules on time management techniques, prioritization, and scheduling specific to educators' responsibilities.
- Persons Involved: Learning and Development Coordinator, External Time Management Experts
- Outcome: Comprehensive and practical training materials tailored to teachers.

Phase 3: Implementation of Training and Schedule (1 month)

- Conduct time management workshops and pilot a weekly schedule that includes a 2-hour slot for research.
- Persons Involved: Teachers, Master Teachers, School Heads
- Outcome: Improved scheduling practices and institutionalized research time.

Phase 4: Monitoring and Adjustment (Ongoing, quarterly)

- Gather feedback on the effectiveness of the training and schedule, then adjust as needed.
- Outcome: Sustainable integration of research time into the school calendar.

Intervention 2: Managing Workload

Objective:

- To alleviate the additional burden of conducting research by redistributing tasks and optimizing staffing assignments.
- To ensure equitable workload distribution aligned with institutional standards.

Implementation Plan:

Phase 1: Workload Audit (1 month)

- Conduct an audit using School Form 7 (SF7) to identify teachers with excessive ancillary duties.



- Persons Involved: Administrative Officer II, School Head, Teachers
- Outcome: Detailed report on workload distribution.

Phase 2: Optimization Plan (2months)

- Develop a staffing and workload optimization strategy to distribute ancillary tasks more evenly.
- Persons Involved: Administrative Officer II, School Leadership Team
- Outcome: Realignment of tasks to reduce excessive burdens on individual teachers.

Phase 3: Implementation of Task Re distribution (1 month)

- Reassign responsibilities and appoint additional staff, where necessary, to cover critical roles.
- Outcome: Reduced non-teaching workload for educators actively involved in research.

Phase 4: Follow-up Monitoring (Ongoing, quarterly)

- Evaluate workload distribution regularly and adjust to maintain balance.
- Outcome: Sustained reduction in workload-related stress.

Intervention 3: Reducing Anxiety Related to Writing Skills

Objective:

- To boost teachers' confidence and competence in academic writing and data analysis.
- To reduce anxiety by providing targeted training and support.

Implementation Plan:

Phase 1: Skills Assessment (1 month)

- Use pre-training assessments to evaluate teachers' proficiency in academic writing and data analysis.

- Persons Involved: School Head, Research Experts

- Outcome: Baseline data on teachers' writing and analytical skills.

Phase 2: Writing and Data Analysis Training (3 months)

- Conduct hands-on workshops and one-on-one mentoring sessions focused on grammar, statistical tools, and interpreting results.

- Persons Involved: Research Experts, Teachers, Master Teachers

- Outcome: Teachers' improved confidence and ability in research writing and analysis.

Phase 3: Post-Training Mentorship (Ongoing)

- Establish a mentorship program pairing novice researchers with experienced ones for continuous support.

- Outcome: Reduced anxiety and steady improvement in writing quality.

Intervention 4: Increasing Motivation for Action Research

Objective:

- To foster intrinsic motivation by showcasing the impact and benefits of action research on teaching and learning.
- To inspire teachers through recognition and incentives for engaging in research.

Implementation Plan:

Phase 1: Motivation Campaign (1 month)

- Organize a kick-off event highlighting successful teacher-researchers and their work's Impact.

- Persons Involved: School Head, Master Teach-

ers, Research Champions

- Outcome: Increased interest and excitement about action research.

Phase 2: Incentive Program Development (2 months)

- Design a program with tangible rewards such as certificates, funding for projects, and career advancement opportunities.
- Persons Involved: School Leadership Team, Administrative Staff
- Outcome: Formalized system for rewarding research efforts.

Phase 3: Implementation of Seminars and Recognition Events (Ongoing)

- Conduct biannual research symposiums where teachers present their studies, and outstanding projects receive recognition.
- Outcome: A sustained culture of research and motivation among teachers.

Implementing these interventions is expected to create a supportive environment that fosters effective action research among teachers. By addressing time management, workload distribution, writing skills, and motivation, Carmona NHS can enhance the capacity of its teachers to conduct meaningful and impactful action research, ultimately contributing to the improvement of educational practices and student outcomes.

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