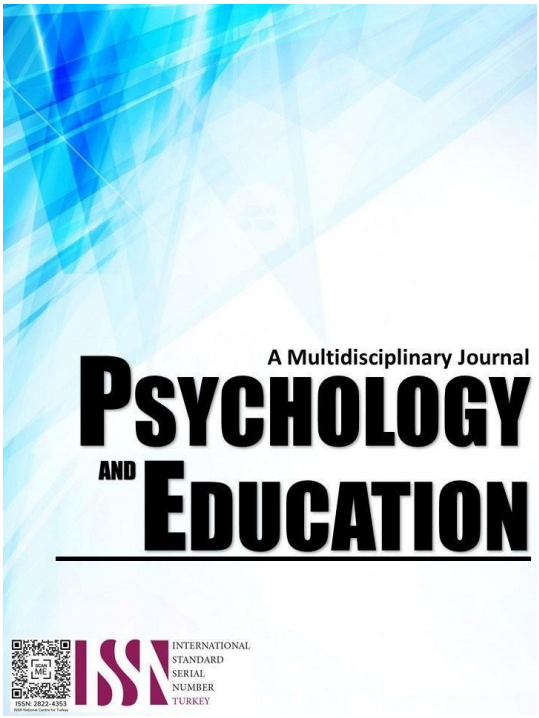
ACTION RESEARCH AS CATALYST TOWARDS CLASSROOM EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE: VOICES OF MASTER TEACHERS



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Research Article

Action Research as Catalyst Towards Classroom Evidence-Based Practice: Voices of Master Teachers

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Abstract

This study explored the critical role of master teachers in using action research as a catalyst for evidence-based practice in public schools in the Third Congressional District of Bohol, Philippines. It examined how master teachers employ action research to bridge theory and classroom practice by addressing instructional challenges with context-specific, data-informed solutions. Using a descriptive qualitative design, the study gathered insights from 10 master teachers to document their experiences, the challenges they encountered, and the influence of their research on instructional decision-making. Findings show that action research strengthens professional growth, encourages sustained reflective practice, and supports continuous improvement in teaching strategies. Institutional support, collegial collaboration, and community involvement emerged as key enabling conditions that sustain research engagement, while limited resources, curriculum constraints, and time demands constrained consistent implementation. Master teachers disseminated research findings through Learning Action Cell sessions, district research presentations, professional networks, and local conferences, thereby enabling evidence-based practices to influence both school-level instruction and broader educational communities. The study concludes that action research enhances educational quality by providing master teachers with a systematic framework for diagnosing classroom concerns and implementing targeted instructional interventions. Recommendations focused on capacity-building programs, strengthened institutional support mechanisms, and policy-level initiatives to sustain teacher-led research.

Keywords: *action research, evidence-based practice, master teachers, reflective practice, professional development*

Introduction

Action research writing is an indispensable part of the teaching profession. A review of published literature highlights its crucial role in improving the quality of education in public schools (Ulla et al., 2017). When teachers engage in research, they are empowered to examine their practices, reflect on classroom realities, and implement improvements grounded in systematically generated evidence. Thus, action research serves as a practical pathway for teachers' professional development and for enhancing teaching–learning outcomes.

The central role of research in the teaching–learning process prompted the Department of Education (DepEd) to actively encourage teachers, particularly Master Teachers, to engage in action research through the issuance of policies and memoranda beginning in 2015. In the same year, DepEd issued an order providing financial support to teacher-researchers through the Basic Education Research Fund (BERF), institutionalizing research as a mechanism for evidence-based policy formulation. In 2016, the department articulated its research agenda to align teachers' research initiatives with national education priorities. To further strengthen research governance, DepEd issued DepEd Order No. 16, series of 2017, which provides comprehensive research management guidelines and remains in effect to date (Caingcoy, 2020).

Meanwhile, the DepEd Division of Bohol envisions itself as a data-driven and research-oriented organization in crafting decisions related to curriculum and instruction, school governance, and learner support. In line with this vision, the division consistently promotes action research as a tool for instructional improvement. This commitment is operationalized through initiatives that encourage master teachers to lead evidence-based practices within their respective schools and districts.

Master teachers occupy a critical position in the public school system due to their advanced expertise in curriculum implementation, instructional leadership, and mentorship. Their extensive professional experience positions them as role models for teachers in lower ranks. Studies describe master teachers as instructional leaders whose pedagogical expertise and mentoring roles distinguish them from non-master teachers (Basilio & Bueno, 2019). Given this role, they are expected to initiate instructional reforms and model evidence-based practices through sustained engagement in action research.

However, existing literature consistently reports a persistent gap between policy expectations and actual research practice among master teachers. Despite their teaching experience and conceptual understanding of action research, many master teachers struggle to design studies, analyze data, and translate research findings into concrete classroom interventions (Ulla, 2018; Anzaldo & Cudiamat, 2019; Abelardo et al., 2019). Bongcayao (2023) further noted that challenges in conceptualizing research and in technical writing limit teachers' ability to complete and utilize action research effectively. While these studies identify constraints and skill-related challenges, they largely focus on levels of competence, perceived difficulties, or training needs rather than the lived experiences of master teachers as practitioner-researchers.

More specifically, limited attention has been given to how master teachers experience the entire action research process, how they make sense of evidence in their classrooms, and how they apply research findings beyond individual instruction to influence school or

district practices. This lack of qualitative insight constrains understanding of how action research functions as an authentic mechanism for evidence-based practice in real classroom contexts.

In response to this gap, this study employed a qualitative approach to explore master teachers' experiences with action research as a pathway to evidence-based practice in their classrooms and professional communities. By examining their narratives, the study sought to surface the challenges they encounter, the supports they rely on, and the aspects of evidence-based practice that require further strengthening.

Although quantitative studies have documented teachers' research competencies and challenges, they provide limited depth in explaining how master teachers interpret, enact, and sustain action research in practice. For this reason, qualitative inquiry was deemed more appropriate to capture the complexity of their experiences and generate context-sensitive insights. In this context, the present study was undertaken.

Research Questions

This study explored the experiences of master teachers in public schools in the Third Congressional District, Division of Bohol, as they utilize action research to bridge the gap between theory and practice, implementing evidence-based strategies in their classrooms during the 2024-2025 school year. Specifically, this study sought to explore the following:

1. How do master teachers describe their experiences with conducting action research?
2. What factors facilitate or hinder the implementation of evidence-based practice among master teachers?
3. How do master teachers share and apply their action research findings to modify and improve educational practices within their schools and the external educational communities?

Literature Review

Master teachers play a vital role in strengthening the quality of education, as their instructional expertise, leadership, and mentoring responsibilities directly shape teaching and learning in public schools. Their position requires them to model effective teaching practices and guide colleagues toward continuous improvement. As leaders of evidence-based practice, master teachers are expected to use systematic and data-driven approaches, such as action research, to respond to classroom challenges and improve student outcomes.

This study draws from three complementary theoretical perspectives that explain how master teachers engage in action research. Donald Schön's Reflective Practice Theory highlights the importance of reflection during and after teaching as a means of improving professional practice (Schön, 1983). Through reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, teachers examine classroom experiences and make informed instructional adjustments. Malcolm Knowles' Adult Learning Theory views teachers as self-directed learners who rely on prior experience and engage most meaningfully when learning is relevant to their work (Knowles, 1968). Action research aligns with this view by allowing teachers to investigate real classroom problems and apply learning directly to practice. Jack Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory further explains how critical reflection through research can reshape teachers' perspectives, beliefs, and professional identity as they confront and respond to instructional challenges (Mezirow, 1978).

Action research functions not only as a research method but as a reflective and participatory approach to professional learning. It emphasizes contextual inquiry, collaboration, and iterative problem solving within authentic teaching environments (Pine, 2009). Classroom-based action research enables teachers to study concerns within their instructional control through structured cycles of planning, action, and reflection (Convery, 2014). Its roots in Lewin's spiral model highlight the value of continuous improvement grounded in evidence generated from practice (Lewin, 1946; Vaughan, 2020). Recent studies confirm that action research strengthens reflective practice, professional growth, collaboration, and data-informed decision-making among teachers (Monem & Cramer, 2022; Crawford, 2022; Zajić et al., 2021).

In the Philippine setting, master teachers use action research to refine teaching strategies, address learner needs, and support school-wide improvement initiatives, often with encouragement from the Department of Education (Enerio, 2020). Research consistently shows that action research contributes to improved teaching effectiveness, curriculum development, and student engagement while enhancing teachers' professional confidence (Abrenica & Cascolan, 2022; Basilio & Bueno, 2019). It also develops higher-level skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and ethical decision making, which are essential to instructional leadership (Johnson, 2012; Tindowen et al., 2019).

At the same time, the literature points to recurring challenges that limit sustained engagement in action research. Teachers frequently report insufficient training, heavy teaching loads, unclear research roles, limited resources, writing anxiety, and time constraints as major obstacles (Abelardo et al., 2019; Tindowen et al., 2019; Salcedo Relucio, 2019). Studies across different regions in the Philippines indicate that while teachers may understand basic research concepts, many struggle with data analysis, interpretation, dissemination, and publication of findings (Gepila et al., 2018; Oestar & Marzo, 2022; Cortes et al., 2021). Even among master teachers, competing responsibilities and time pressures often hinder the completion and application of research outputs despite strong instructional leadership skills (Enerio, 2020; Podador, 2023).

Support mechanisms emerge as critical in addressing these challenges. Mentoring, administrative encouragement, and structured

professional development have been shown to strengthen teachers' research competence and motivation (Tupas, 2019; Escopete & Garcia Jr., 2023; Codilla Jr. & Yangson Barot, 2023). Early integration of action research in teacher education and sustained capacity-building opportunities further support the development of a research-oriented teaching culture (Anzaldo & Cudiamat, 2019; Borreo, 2023). Sharing research findings through conferences and professional networks also helps extend the impact of classroom-based studies and promotes collective learning among educators (Cortes et al., 2021).

At the policy level, master teachers contribute to educational improvement by translating classroom evidence into instructional and policy-related decisions. Action research findings have informed curriculum development and teacher training initiatives, strengthening the connection between classroom practice and system-level reform (Barcelona, 2020). This emphasis on research is supported by national legal frameworks, including the 1987 Philippine Constitution, which prioritizes research and innovation (Official Gazette, 2015), Republic Act 9155, which underscores the role of research in basic education governance (Capulso, 2020), and DepEd Order No. 16, s. 2017, which institutionalizes research management within the Department of Education (Department of Education, 2017).

Synthesis and Identified Gaps

The body of literature clearly shows that action research enhances instructional practice, professional learning, and evidence-based decision-making among teachers. Research also documents the persistent challenges that limit teachers' engagement in research and highlights the importance of mentoring, institutional support, and professional development. However, much of the existing work focuses on measuring competencies, identifying barriers, or reporting outcomes, offering limited insight into how master teachers personally experience the research process and use evidence in their daily practice.

Current studies rarely explore how master teachers make sense of action research, navigate institutional constraints, and extend research findings beyond their own classrooms to influence colleagues, schools, and districts. In addition, the heavy reliance on quantitative and survey-based designs limits understanding of reflection, meaning-making, and professional transformation among teacher researchers. These gaps point to the need for a qualitative inquiry that foregrounds the voices of master teachers and examines how action research operates as a lived and sustained pathway toward evidence-based practice in real classroom contexts.

Methodology

Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive qualitative research design, which is appropriate for describing events and experiences and for gaining insight into phenomena that are not yet well understood (Kim et al., 2017). According to Lambert V. and Lambert C., qualitative descriptive studies aim to provide a comprehensive summary of events as experienced by individuals or groups.

This study aimed to describe a common phenomenon experienced by all participants, specifically their engagement with action research as a pathway toward evidence-based practice. It focused on documenting master teachers' action research experiences, challenges, coping strategies, and perceived technical support needs.

Participants

The study was conducted in the Third Congressional District of the Schools Division of Bohol during the 2024–2025 school year, a locale that actively promotes research-based practice through Learning Action Cell sessions, school research committees, division research conferences, and the implementation of DepEd Order No. 16, s. 2017, yet continues to show uneven research productivity among master teachers, making it suitable for exploring their lived experiences in action research; participants consisted of 11 teachers from public schools in the district, selected through purposive sampling based on criteria that required them to hold the position of Master Teacher, be actively involved in school-based research initiatives, have completed at least one action research study, be currently assigned in the district, and provide informed consent, while those nearing retirement, not engaged in research-related activities, or without prior research experience were excluded to ensure meaningful contributions aligned with the study's objectives.

Instrument

Data were collected through in-depth interviews using a semi-structured interview guide aligned with the research questions. Interviews were conducted in person or virtually, audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and subjected to member checking. To ensure content validity, the interview guide was reviewed by experts prior to data collection. Qualitative research experts from Bohol reviewed the alignment and sequencing of the questions, assessed conceptual relevance and clarity, and evaluated the ethical sensitivity and neutrality of the interview prompts. Revisions were incorporated based on their feedback.

Procedure

Prior approval was obtained from significant authorities. Interviews were conducted through online platforms or face to face interactions to ensure rich responses. Ethical principles of non-maleficence, beneficence, confidentiality, and voluntary participation were strictly observed. Participant identities were protected through the use of pseudonyms and secure storage of interview transcripts.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis following the six phases proposed by Braun and Clarke. The researcher familiarized themselves with the data, generated initial codes, developed and refined themes, and produced a coherent analytic narrative supported by verbatim excerpts (Byrne, 2022; Braun & Clarke, 2021; Braun et al., 2023).

Following this, the researcher engaged in coding, where significant segments of the data are systematically identified and labeled. These codes, which emerge organically from the data, were grouped into potential themes that reflect broader patterns of meaning relevant to the research questions. Themes were iteratively reviewed and refined to ensure they accurately represent the data and are distinct from one another. This process ensures that the final themes are robust and meaningful, providing a rich interpretation of the master teachers' experiences (Braun et al, 2023)

In the final stages, the researcher defined and clearly articulated each theme, supported by data extracts that illustrate the participants' voices. The themes were presented in a coherent narrative that addresses the research questions and connects the findings to existing literature on action research and evidence-based practice. The Reflexive Thematic Analysis enabled deep engagement with the data, ensuring that the study provides valuable insights into the factors influencing master teachers' use of action research to bridge the gap between theory and practice in educational settings (Braun et al., 2023).

Results and Discussion

This section presents the results and findings of the study, which explored the experiences of master teachers in public schools in the Third Congressional District, Division of Bohol, as they utilize action research to bridge the gap between theory and practice, implementing evidence-based strategies in their classrooms during the school year 2024-2025.

Table 1 summarizes the major themes, categories, and codes that emerged from the participants' narratives.

Table 1. *Lived Experiences in Conducting Action Research*

Theme	*Category*	*Codes*
1. Context-Driven Research for Targeted Classroom Solutions	● Teaching Context and Subject Focus	Dual teaching roles; Research focus alignment; Curricular relevance; Student-centered topics; Classroom-based challenges
	● Identification of Specific Needs	Recognizing skill gaps; Curriculum alignment; Relevance to learning needs; Addressing engagement; Problem-centered interventions
	● Data-Driven Focus	Student data as a basis; Evidence-based adaptation; Analyzing student performance; Contextual relevance; Observing direct impacts
2. Systematic Approach to Enhancing Instructional Practices	● Research Process Steps	Defining issues; Formulating research questions; Data collection; Analysis of findings; Implementation of insights
	● Action Plan Development	Structured interventions; Implementation timeline; Research goals; Application to teaching practice; Student impact focus
	● Compliance and Accountability	Adhering to research guidelines; School-level support; Consistent data monitoring; Responsibility in interventions; Documentation of process
3. Reflective Practice for Professional Development	● Continuous Reflection	Regular self-assessment; Adjusting strategies; Assessing teaching impact; Reflective practice habits; Evaluating outcomes
	● Evidence-Based Adjustments	Data-informed adjustments; Responsiveness to student needs; Flexibility in approach; Iterative improvements; Targeted instructional changes
	● Growth and Professional Fulfillment	Increased confidence; Skill development; Enhanced teaching; Fulfillment from impact; Professional pride
4. Collaborative Empowerment and Knowledge Sharing	● Professional Collaboration	Team-based approach; Peer support; Knowledge exchange; School-wide learning; Collective improvement
	● Community of Practice	Sharing insights with peers; Encouraging research culture; Presenting findings; Joint problem-solving; Research-oriented environment
	● Institutional Support and Motivation	School head encouragement; District-level support; Professional development; Recognition of contributions; Motivated participation

Theme 1: Context Driven Research for Targeted Classroom Solutions

This theme describes how master teachers anchored their action research on the needs, routines, and learning concerns within their own classrooms. Participants selected topics that matched their teaching assignments, learner profiles, and observed learning gaps, which allowed them to frame action research as a practical response to classroom realities rather than a purely academic task.

Participant 1 shared, "My experience with conducting action research has been unique because I teach both elementary and high school students. I handle science subjects at Tugas Elementary School and robotics for Grades 7-9 at Candijay Municipal High School." (52, Female, Master Teacher 1, Candijay District). This account shows how teaching context shaped research focus and helped the participant develop interventions aligned with subject demands and learner needs.

Participant 8 added, "Since it's Action Research, we chose our topic based on the needs of the classroom and students." (54, Female, Master Teacher 1, Guindulman District). This statement reinforces that the starting point of their inquiry was the classroom problem itself, which guided the choice of intervention and the evidence collected.

These findings align with the view that action research is context sensitive and develops through iterative cycles of inquiry grounded in actual teaching situations (Simmons et al., 2021). Ronen (2020) likewise describes action research as a flexible methodology responsive to practitioner needs, which mirrors how participants adjusted their research goals and actions to fit local classroom conditions.

Theme 2: Systematic Approach to Enhancing Instructional Practices

This theme highlights how master teachers followed a structured process in conducting action research, beginning with problem identification and moving through planning, data collection, analysis, and implementation of findings. Participants described action research as manageable when they treated it as a sequence of steps guided by policy and school-level expectations.

Participant 2 stated, "We followed what has been stipulated on the DO #16 s 2017, the activities need to be done, we need to perform all those processes." (Participant 2, 32, Female, Master Teacher 1, Batuan District). This indicates that DepEd guidelines served as a procedural anchor that shaped how participants planned, documented, and evaluated their interventions.

Participant 7 shared, "In conducting my action research, I followed several key steps. First, I identified the specific problem in my classroom that required intervention, based on observations and student performance data." (Participant 7, 35, Female, Master Teacher 1, Batuan District). This illustrates how systematic planning helped participants rely on evidence rather than intuition when refining instruction.

These findings connect with models that emphasize structured and sequential inquiry as a foundation for purposeful action research (Raghavan, 2019). Pineda et al. (2022) also argue that a systematic framework strengthens application in real classrooms, which parallels how participants linked data analysis to instructional adjustment and monitoring.

Theme 3: Reflective Practice for Professional Development

This theme describes how action research supported professional growth through continuous reflection, evaluation, and evidence-based adjustment. Participants described action research as a process that sharpened professional judgment and strengthened their confidence in implementing change.

Participant 7 stated, "Conducting action research has deepened my understanding of the critical role a teacher plays as both an educator and a researcher. It has empowered me to design and implement research-based interventions tailored to the unique needs of my learners." (Participant 7, 35, Female, Master Teacher 1, Batuan District). This reflects a shift in professional identity toward intentional, research guided practice.

Participant 9 noted, "Conducting action research has significantly influenced my teaching methods by making them more reflective and evidence based." (Participant 9, 42, Male, Master Teacher 1, Loay District). This suggests that reflection operated as a routine habit connected to measurable classroom outcomes.

These findings support literature that positions reflective practice as central to professional growth, including reflection during action and after action (Burgoyne & Chuppa-Cornell, 2018). Robertson et al. (2020) likewise emphasize reflective teaching as a driver of instructional improvement, and Martínez (2021) connects reflective inquiry with collaborative practice, which resonates with participants' accounts of learning through structured reflection and revision.

Theme 4: Collaborative Empowerment and Knowledge Sharing

This theme captures how action research fostered collaboration and shared learning among master teachers. Participants described working with peers, receiving encouragement from school and district leaders, and building groups that sustained research engagement. They experienced action research as easier to sustain when collegial support reduced workload pressure and strengthened motivation.

Participant 2 shared, "My overall experience with conducting action research is challenging, it takes a lot of things to consider… and there were lots of work that needed to be done as adviser and a school coordinator." (Participant 2, 32, Female, Master Teacher 1, Batuan District). This points to role strain and shows why peer support and shared responsibility mattered in completing research tasks.

Participant 8 stated, "Our PSDS encouraged us to participate, leading to the formation of our group, the Guindulman Action Researchers, where I was unexpectedly elected as President." (Participant 8, 54, Female, Master Teacher 1, Guindulman District). This demonstrates how institutional encouragement strengthened participation and created structures for collective learning.

These findings reflect the idea that communities of practice strengthen professional learning through shared inquiry and collective problem solving (Johannesson, 2020). Khasawneh et al. (2023) likewise note that collaboration builds professional knowledge and social support, which corresponds with participants' emphasis on teamwork, motivation, and shared accountability.

Participant narratives also suggested variation in experience based on teaching assignment, available resources, leadership support, and

competing workload demands. These contextual differences appeared to shape how easily participants conducted action research and how widely they applied or shared their findings. A deeper comparative discussion across districts, years of service, and levels of institutional support may further explain why some master teachers sustained research engagement more consistently than others.

The findings also carry implications beyond individual classrooms. When master teachers used action research systematically, they developed practices that could influence school-level routines, improve shared instructional strategies through LAC sessions, and support district-level replication of effective interventions. These outcomes suggest that action research can contribute to longer-term instructional change when schools provide time, resources, and mentoring structures.

Facilitating and Hindering Factors in Implementing Evidence-Based Practices

The analysis revealed that the implementation of evidence-based practices among master teachers was shaped by interrelated facilitating and hindering factors operating at institutional, community, personal, and classroom levels. Eight (8) themes emerged, illustrating how supports and constraints influenced teachers' ability to apply action research findings in instructional practice.

Table 2. *Factors in Implementing Evidence-Based Practices*

Themes	*Sub-Themes/Categories*	
	Facilitating Factors	*Hindering Factors*
Institutional Support and Resources	● Access to resources like robotics kits, manipulatives, and materials from DepEd and school administration ● School administration provides flexibility, resources, and encouragement	● Lack of an established curriculum for specialized subjects (e.g., robotics) ● Rigid policies, strict curriculum guidance, and standardized testing schedules limit innovation
Community and Parental Engagement	● Strong cooperation from parents who see the value in the research for their children ● Community support, including local stakeholders and partnerships	● Limited local resources require adaptation of available materials
Personal Commitment and Experience	● Teachers' expertise and backgrounds in specific fields (e.g., robotics, research training) ● Dedication, perseverance, and passion for continuous improvement	● Resistance to change from students and colleagues accustomed to traditional methods ● Time constraints in balancing teaching responsibilities with new strategies
Technical and Peer Support	● Guidance from research specialists and collaboration with technical working groups ● Mentorship and partnerships with research experts from the division	
Student Engagement and Adaptation	● Provision of incentives and constant communication with parents to engage students	● Difficulty maintaining student interest, especially in new or integrative tasks ● Additional support required for students struggling with unfamiliar content, adding to teacher workload
Resources and Materials	● Resourcefulness in adapting available materials	● Limited access to technology and teaching materials, hindering comprehensive interventions
Time Management Issues	● Collaborative planning and gradual integration of strategies to manage time constraints	● Insufficient time due to regular teaching duties and integration of evidence-based practices
Curriculum Flexibility	● School's openness to innovative teaching, even without explicit policies	● Existing curriculum structure often restricts full implementation of new and evidence-based strategies

Theme 1: Institutional Support and Resources

Institutional support played a central role in facilitating the implementation of evidence-based practices. Master teachers benefited from access to teaching materials, manipulatives, and administrative encouragement, which enabled them to implement research-based interventions more effectively. One participant noted that the availability of manipulatives, peer support, and research materials helped ease both the research process and classroom application.

However, participants also reported that the absence of an established curriculum for specialized subjects such as robotics constrained their capacity to sustain innovation. Without formal curriculum guides and sufficient references, teachers relied heavily on improvisation and personal initiative. These findings are consistent with studies emphasizing that access to resources and administrative flexibility are critical for effective evidence-based practice, while weak curriculum support limits innovation, particularly in emerging disciplines (Bathgate et al., 2019; Unal, 2019; Mitchell, 2018).

Theme 2: Community and Parental Engagement

Community and parental engagement served as a motivating and reinforcing factor in implementing evidence-based practices. Participants described strong parental cooperation when parents recognized the benefits of research-based interventions for their children. Such support encouraged teachers to continue refining and applying innovative strategies.

In contrast, limited community resources hindered implementation, forcing teachers to rely on available materials and personal expertise. These findings align with Utami (2022), who emphasized that parental and community involvement enhances educational outcomes, although insufficient resources may restrict the scope of innovation.

Theme 3: Personal Commitment and Experience

Teachers' professional background and personal commitment significantly influenced their ability to implement evidence-based practices. Participants with extensive experience in specialized fields reported greater confidence in addressing instructional and research challenges. Their prior knowledge enabled them to design and implement interventions more effectively.

At the same time, participants acknowledged that personal dedication became demanding when institutional support and structured curricula were lacking. The time-intensive nature of planning and implementation often intensified workload pressures. This finding supports Klaeijsen et al. (2018), who noted that intrinsic motivation sustains innovation but may lead to fatigue when external support is insufficient.

Theme 4: Technical and Peer Support

Technical assistance and peer collaboration emerged as essential supports for sustaining evidence-based practices. Participants highlighted the value of mentorship, collaboration with colleagues, and guidance from research experts in refining their instructional strategies and strengthening confidence.

Conversely, limited access to expert guidance and formal research policies led some teachers to feel isolated, despite the school's openness to innovation. These experiences align with studies showing that professional networks and collaborative structures enhance teachers' social capital, confidence, and implementation capacity (Yoon, 2018; Pilla et al., 2022; Bathgate et al., 2019).

Theme 5: Student Engagement and Adaptation

Student engagement strongly influenced the success of evidence-based practices. Participants reported that student interest and participation determined the effectiveness of research-based interventions. When students were disengaged or resistant, teachers exerted additional effort to sustain instructional changes.

This finding is consistent with Cannata et al. (2019), who emphasized that active student participation is essential for sustaining instructional innovation and improving learning outcomes.

Theme 6: Limited Resources and Materials

Limited access to teaching materials and technology hindered the full implementation of evidence-based practices. Participants described relying on personal resources or improvised materials due to shortages in instructional tools. Such constraints reduced the scope and consistency of interventions.

These findings support Ajadi and Kayode (2022), who identified adequate resources as foundational to effective teaching and instructional innovation.

Theme 7: Time Constraints

Time constraints emerged as a significant barrier to implementation. Participants struggled to balance routine teaching responsibilities with the demands of planning, implementing, and monitoring evidence-based practices. The lack of dedicated time restricted sustained engagement with action research.

Consistent with Young et al. (2021), the findings show that without protected time for planning and reflection, teachers face difficulty embedding innovation into daily instructional routines.

Theme 8: Lack of Curriculum Flexibility

Rigid curriculum structures and standardized testing schedules limited teachers' ability to adapt instruction based on research findings. Participants reported that strict curriculum requirements restricted experimentation and responsiveness to learner needs.

This finding aligns with Jonker et al. (2018), who emphasized that curriculum flexibility is essential for educational innovation, particularly when implementing context-sensitive, evidence-based practices.

The findings indicate that master teachers' implementation of evidence-based practices depended on the interaction of enabling supports and contextual constraints. Institutional backing, collaboration, professional commitment, and community engagement facilitated practice, while limited resources, time pressures, rigid curricula, and uneven student engagement hindered sustained implementation. These factors collectively shaped how action research translated into instructional improvement across classroom and school contexts.

Master Teachers' Strategies for Sharing and Applying Action Research Findings to Enhance Educational Practices

Table 3 summarizes the strategies used by master teachers, showing how internal and external dissemination, classroom integration, and broader institutional influence contributed to a sustained culture of evidence-based practice at the school and district levels.

Table 3. *Strategies for Applying Action Research to Improve Educational Practices*

Themes	*Categories*	*Codes*
Dissemination of Research Findings	Internal Dissemination	● Presenting findings at school level ● Sharing in Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions ● Discussing findings during staff meetings ● Presenting in Division research presentations ● Sharing in professional learning communities (PLCs) ● Informal sharing in teacher networks
	External Dissemination	● Presenting findings at local conferences ● Sharing insights with district stakeholders ● Exploring journal publication ● Engaging in external workshops and seminars
Integration of Findings into Teaching Practices	Classroom Application	● Incorporating findings into science and math lessons ● Using manipulatives to enhance learning ● Developing customized reading materials ● Implementing interactive activities to boost engagement ● Applying differentiated instruction for diverse learner needs
	Student Outcomes	● Improved comprehension and engagement ● Increased interest in STEM subjects ● Higher participation in reading programs ● Positive growth in academic performance ● Enhanced motivation and involvement in class activities
Influencing Broader Educational Practices	School-Level Influence	● Colleagues adopting research-based strategies ● Sharing best practices across departments ● Promoting formative assessments among teachers ● Encouraging hands-on learning methods school-wide ● Initiating interdisciplinary collaboration on teaching approaches
	District-Level Impact	● Expanding successful programs across the district ● Distributing materials for use in multiple schools ● Involving district feedback for program improvement ● Adapting instructional methods for broader application ● Replicating research-driven practices district-wide

Theme 1: Dissemination of Research Findings

Master teachers actively disseminated their action research findings through structured internal and external channels, positioning research as a shared professional resource rather than an individual endeavor. Within schools, Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions served as the primary venue for sharing findings, fostering collaborative dialogue and collective reflection on instructional improvement.

One participant explained, "I share the findings of my research within the school and the district through Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions. These sessions provided an opportunity to collaborate with colleagues, present key insights from the research, and discuss practical applications for improving teaching practices" (Participant 7, 35, Female, Master Teacher 1, Batuan District).

These internal dissemination practices allowed research findings to inform instructional decisions beyond the originating classroom, strengthening professional learning communities and promoting shared accountability for improvement. Externally, master teachers extended the reach of their findings by engaging with teacher networks, district stakeholders, and professional forums. Participants reported presenting studies at division-level research conferences, informal professional gatherings, and external workshops. Although journal publication remained a long-term goal for some, teachers continued to share findings through practical and accessible platforms.

One participant noted, "We rolled out our study to other grade levels, and they found it very useful. Even during our presentation in the Division, they asked for a copy of our crafted materials" (Participant 2, 32, Female, Master Teacher 1, Batuan District). This demonstrates how dissemination functioned not only as reporting but as a mechanism for scaling effective practices across schools.

These findings are supported by García-Sánchez et al. (2019), who emphasized that structured knowledge-sharing within schools strengthens professional growth and institutional learning. Similarly, Lima et al. (2022) highlighted that participation in collaborative networks enables research-based practices to circulate across educational systems, amplifying their instructional impact.

Theme 2: Integration of Findings into Teaching Practices

Beyond dissemination, master teachers systematically integrated their research findings into daily classroom instruction, translating

evidence into concrete pedagogical adjustments. Participants described incorporating research-based strategies into science, mathematics, and reading lessons through manipulatives, interactive activities, and customized learning materials.

One participant shared, "Gigamit nako ang mga manipulatives sa akong regular nga pagtudlo aron matabangan ang mga estudyante nga masabtan ang multiplication nga mas epektibo" [I've incorporated manipulatives into my regular teaching to help students grasp multiplication more effectively] (Participant 6, 35, Male, Master Teacher 1, Guindulman District).

These instructional adjustments were consistently linked to observable improvements in student engagement and understanding. Teachers reported increased participation, stronger interest in STEM subjects, and improved comprehension, particularly when lessons were contextualized to learners' experiences.

A participant explained, "They find reading more interesting since they can relate to what they read and easily understand because they were familiar with the setting and context of the story" (Participant 2, 32, Female, Master Teacher 1, Batuan District). Such accounts illustrate how research-informed instruction directly shaped learner motivation and classroom dynamics.

These findings align with Vereijken et al. (2018), who found that teachers who integrate research into instruction provide more effective and engaging learning experiences. Cannata, Redding, and Nguyen (2019) further noted that continuous assessment and adaptation of evidence-based strategies lead to sustained improvements in student outcomes.

Theme 3: Influencing Wider Educational Practices

Master teachers' action research extended its influence beyond individual classrooms, contributing to school-wide and district-level instructional change. Within schools, participants shared findings during professional development sessions, encouraging colleagues to adopt evidence-based strategies and formative assessment practices.

One participant stated, "I shared the findings with my colleagues during professional development sessions, encouraging them to adopt similar evidence-based practices in their classrooms. This collaborative effort has fostered a culture of continuous improvement and innovation among our teaching staff" (Participant 4, 42, Female, Master Teacher 1, Loay District).

At the district level, successful interventions were adapted and replicated across multiple schools. One participant reported, "The ESIM tool was replicated in the whole district and utilized as one of the reading tools" (Participant 4, 42, Female, Master Teacher 1, Loay District). This indicates that action research outcomes informed instructional decisions beyond the originating context, contributing to system-level improvement.

These findings support Constantinou and Ainscow (2020), who argued that teacher-led research influences both school and district practices through iterative knowledge sharing. Harris and Jones (2019) likewise emphasized that dissemination of practitioner research can prompt broader instructional and organizational change. Bergmark (2020) further highlighted that the spread of effective practices across schools strengthens collaborative cultures and sustains professional learning.

The findings demonstrate that master teachers functioned as both researchers and instructional leaders by disseminating, applying, and scaling action research findings. Through structured sharing, classroom integration, and influence on school and district practices, action research became a vehicle for sustained instructional improvement rather than an isolated academic activity. These strategies reinforced a culture of evidence-based practice that extended beyond individual classrooms and contributed to long-term professional and institutional development.

Conclusions

This study shows that action research, when undertaken by master teachers, functions as a transformative, practice-based approach that bridges theory and classroom application. Through context-driven inquiry, systematic research processes, and sustained reflective practice, master teachers addressed instructional challenges using targeted, evidence-based interventions that improved instructional quality and supported professional growth. The sharing of research findings within schools and across educational communities further strengthened a culture of inquiry, collaboration, and continuous improvement.

The findings also indicate that the effectiveness and sustainability of action research depend on institutional conditions. Challenges such as limited resources, rigid curriculum structures, and competing time demands constrained teachers' ability to sustain research-based practices. In contrast, administrative support, access to instructional and research resources, and curriculum flexibility emerged as critical enablers, allowing master teachers to integrate action research into instruction and extend its influence beyond individual classrooms.

In response, schools and educational institutions are encouraged to institutionalize action research through sustained capacity-building programs, mentoring, and structured research support systems. Strengthening existing school and district research committees, allocating protected time for research activities, and promoting mixed-method approaches can enhance rigor, relevance, and sustainability. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms with active involvement of school leaders, district supervisors, and community stakeholders are likewise essential to ensure that action research informs instructional decisions and supports long-term evidence-based improvement.

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