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A Single Case Study on Tabor Secondary School Teachers' Engagement in Action Research Activities in Hawassa City Administration

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Abstract

The main objective of this research was to investigate the status of secondary school teachers' engagement in action research. To achieve this goal, a single case study with an embedded design was employed. Hawassa Tabor Secondary School was selected as the case study site due to its extensive history in secondary education and the considerable teaching experience of its staff. Data were collected through document analysis; focus group discussions (FGDs), and semi-structured interviews. The data, analyzed using qualitative methods, revealed that teachers' engagement in action research is at a rudimentary level. While teachers held positive perceptions of action research, they were not conducting it in accordance with the accepted steps of the process. Several factors were identified as barriers to teachers' engagement in action research, including a lack of recognition for research efforts, insufficient financial and technical support, limited time, and inadequate cooperation and coordination among colleagues. Based on these findings, implications and recommendations were provided for the Education Office, the case school, and secondary school teachers to address these challenges and enhance teachers' participation in action research.

Keywords: action research, teacher practice, teacher study, school practice

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.2.Background of the Study

Action research is a systematic investigation conducted by educators to understand and improve their practices, instructional methods, and student outcomes (Mills, 2000). It involves practitioners examining their own practices to refine and enhance them, blending "action" and "research" in a unique and purposeful way. Unlike other forms of inquiry, action research integrates both elements in an iterative process, where action and research mutually inform each other.

Characterized as a process aimed at improving practice, action research is typically designed and implemented by practitioners using data analysis to enhance their work. Richard (2000) describes it as a systematic investigation carried out by and for those directly engaged in the activity. The primary goal is to enable practitioners to refine their methods and improve their actions, directly impacting their instructional effectiveness.

Benefits for educators are central to the value of action research. A study by Avalos (2011) suggests that action research fosters collaborative learning among educators, providing opportunities for teachers to share insights, collaborate on solving problems, and learn from each other's experiences. This collaborative aspect is particularly valuable in fostering a sense of community and collective responsibility for improving student learning outcomes. Similarly, a study by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) reinforces the idea that action research provides a platform for teachers to engage with theory and practice simultaneously, deepening their understanding of both pedagogical content and the contexts in which they teach.

The process of action research follows a cyclical and non-linear pattern, with practitioners alternating between reflection, data collection, and action. Kempis (1994) describes this process as a "self-reflective spiral," where educators observe their actions, experiment with different practices, and interpret the outcomes to inform future improvements. This iterative approach encourages continuous development and enhances teaching effectiveness. It allows teachers to make small, manageable changes that can be tested over time, contrasting with traditional professional development

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models, which often offer one-time workshops or strategies that may not allow for ongoing refinement. As teachers engage in multiple cycles of action and reflection, they build confidence in making informed decisions about their teaching, which leads to greater teaching effectiveness (McNiff, 2013). Recent studies further support this approach, showing that it not only improves teaching practices but also positively impacts student learning. For example, Hargreaves (2004) found that teachers involved in action research were more likely to incorporate innovative strategies and create student-centered learning environments. The continual process of testing and adjusting ensures that teaching remains responsive, relevant, and effective.

Teacher empowerment is one of the most significant benefits of action research. By engaging in this process, teachers take control of their professional growth. Rather than merely following external directives, teachers identify specific challenges in their classrooms and seek practical solutions. This proactive approach not only improves teaching practices but also fosters a sense of ownership in the improvement process. Teachers engage in continuous self-assessment, experiment with new strategies, and make adjustments based on the unique needs of their students (Berg, 2016; Mertler, 2017).

Through action research, teachers gain greater autonomy in decision-making. Analyzing their practices, gathering data, reflecting on results, and implementing strategies for improvement allows them to become effective problem-solvers. This approach leads to more personalized, impactful professional development (Berg, 2016).

Teachers who participate in action research often report increased job satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment. Taking ownership of their learning and seeing tangible results strengthens their connection to their work, motivating them to create positive changes in their classrooms. This empowerment boosts morale and encourages long-term professional growth (Mertler, 2017).

A central component of action research is reflective practice, which encourages teachers to critically evaluate their teaching methods and student outcomes. This ongoing process of self-assessment helps teachers identify areas for improvement and

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experiment with new approaches. By collecting data and reflecting on classroom dynamics, teachers refine their instructional strategies and enhance their effectiveness (Schön, 1983; Mertler, 2017).

Critical reflection is key to professional growth. As teachers examine their practices, they gain insights into what works and what requires adjustment. This cycle of reflection, action, and evaluation fosters lifelong learning, motivating educators to continuously improve their skills. Reflection also prompts teachers to question assumptions, consider new perspectives, and make informed decisions that benefit student learning (Zeichner & Liston, 1996; Berg, 2016).

Reflective practice in action research bridges theory and practice. By applying theoretical knowledge to real classroom situations, teachers can assess the effectiveness of different approaches in meeting students' needs. This evidence-based decision-making process leads to improvements in teaching quality and student outcomes (Kember, 2000). Teachers are better equipped to adapt to diverse learning contexts, fostering a student-centered approach.

Participating in action research also helps teachers deepen their understanding of educational theories and their practical applications. Teachers engage with contemporary research and apply theoretical frameworks to solve classroom challenges, which keep them informed about the latest trends and best practices in education.

Action research not only promotes continuous improvement but also fosters collaboration and knowledge-sharing. Teachers collaborate with peers to conduct research, exchange ideas, and support each other's professional development. This creates a professional learning community where educators stay engaged with current trends and best practices, sustaining motivation and growth (Berg, 2016).

Collaboration within schools is another major benefit of action research. Traditional professional development often isolates teachers, limiting opportunities for teamwork. Action research, however, facilitates collaboration among teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders, creating a space for shared problem-solving and reflection (Berg, 2016). This collaboration strengthens the school

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community and encourages a culture of continuous learning and improvement.

Involving various stakeholders in the research process ensures that the outcomes of action research align with school goals and policies. This collaborative approach fosters trust and mutual respect among teachers, administrators, and other staff, leading to more effective change within the school environment (Mertler, 2017).

Action research also cultivates a sense of community within schools. As teachers share experiences and strategies, they build a supportive network that promotes collective learning and offers encouragement. This community fosters a positive school culture, boosting teacher morale and maintaining motivation, even during challenging times (Berg, 2016).

Moreover, action research promotes shared responsibility for school improvement. Teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders are invested in the research outcomes, strengthening their collective commitment to addressing school challenges. By collaborating to identify issues, implement solutions, and evaluate results, everyone contributes to creating a better educational environment for students, promoting shared accountability and improving the overall school climate (Berg, 2016; Mertler, 2017).

In Ethiopia, the Ministry of Education (MoE) introduced the General Education Quality Improvement Program (GEQIP) in 2007, which encompasses the Teachers Development Program (TDP) and School Improvement Program (SIP). These initiatives aim to encourage teachers to engage in action research as part of their professional development. However, despite these efforts, studies reveal limited teacher participation in action research. Research by Birhanu (2011), Abie et al. (2022), and Temtime and Desta (2014) indicates that action research in Ethiopian education is still in its early stages, with only a small percentage of research topics addressing this area.

Studies have identified significant barriers preventing teachers in Ethiopia from engaging in action research. Key challenges include budget constraints, lack of interest and motivation, insufficient collaboration among teachers, knowledge and skill gaps, and unclear criteria for conducting action research in schools (Abie et al., 2022;

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Temtime & Desta, 2014). Additional factors such as a lack of financial support, inadequate encouragement and morale, insufficient practical training, limited theoretical knowledge, and low confidence further hinder participation. The absence of continuous, updated, and adequate training, as well as follow-up mechanisms and deficiencies in essential resources like stationary materials, exacerbate the problem. Similarly, Firdissa (2010) points out that action research is often perceived as the domain of professional researchers, deterring teachers from involvement. Other challenges include inadequate policies linking teaching and research, low staff empowerment, and a lack of recognition and motivation. Together, these multifaceted obstacles significantly limit the engagement of Ethiopian teachers in action research.

Despite the Ethiopian Ministry of Education's emphasis on action research, its classroom implementation remains minimal due to systemic, organizational, and personal challenges. Overcoming these barriers is essential to improving professional development and educational outcomes in Ethiopia.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The need for this research arose from the challenges encountered by the researchers while supervising Post Graduate Diploma in Teaching (PGDT) students' action research projects in both regular and summer programs. These challenges provided insight into the current state of secondary school teachers' engagement in action research.

As instructors of the "Action Research" course in the PGDT program, the researchers guided students through the theoretical aspects of the course in the classroom and supervised the practical component during their practicum in secondary schools. Regular and summer PGDT students relied on senior secondary school teachers for mentorship and scaffolding in conducting their action research projects. However, several issues became evident: **Lack of Support:** Student teachers reported that secondary school teachers did not provide adequate guidance on how to implement action research in their classrooms; **Reluctance to Share:** Despite claiming to have conducted action research on various topics, school teachers were unwilling to share their reports with student teachers.

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These observations raised questions about the actual engagement of secondary school teachers in action research. While action research is recognized as a practical tool for addressing classroom challenges and improving teaching practices, its implementation appears limited.

The literature highlights several persistent challenges in Ethiopian classrooms. For instance, Frost and Little (2014) documented a mismatch between the intended student-centered pedagogy and the teacher-centered methods predominantly employed. In their study, student-centered activities accounted for only 10.7% of class time, contrary to the 30% recommended in the curriculum framework. Teacher-centered approaches occupied 70% of class time, with 14.7% of time wasted due to off-task behavior during mathematics lessons. Similarly, Barnes et al. (2018) reported the pervasive use of teacher-centered methods in language instruction in primary schools.

The Science and Mathematics Education of Ethiopia (SMASEE, 2011) study also revealed deficiencies among mathematics and science teachers, including inadequate facilitation skills for group discussions, lack of demonstration techniques, poor lesson planning, and insufficient content mastery (Belay et al., (2016).

Despite these well-documented issues, there is little evidence of secondary school teachers in the technology villages of Hawassa University actively engaging in action research to address practical challenges in their classrooms. Specifically, no studies have investigated the extent of secondary school teachers' involvement in action research within the technology villages of Hawassa University.

Given these gaps, this study seeks to assess the current status of secondary school teachers' engagement in action research, focusing on the technology villages of Hawassa University.

Research Questions

Based on the gaps identified, this research sought to answer the following key questions:

1. How do secondary school teachers perceive the importance of action research in solving practical classroom problems?

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2. To what extent are secondary school teachers engaged in action research practices?
3. What factors hinder secondary school teachers' engagement in action research?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

Major Objective

The primary objective of this research was to assess the status of secondary school teachers' engagement in action research.

Specific Objectives

This research specifically aimed to:

1. Assess secondary school teachers' perceptions of action research.
2. Investigate the processes they follow when conducting action research.
3. Identify the types of action research secondary school teachers are engaged in.
4. Identify the factors hindering teachers' engagement in action research.

1.4. Significance of the Study

To equip teachers with the skills necessary for action research and reflective practice, these concepts are integrated into their initial training. Furthermore, institutions such as Hawassa University have implemented a series of training programs to promote the adoption of action research among teachers. In this context, it becomes essential to evaluate the extent of teachers' engagement in action research and its impact on their professional practices. The findings of this study are expected to be significant for various stakeholders. For Teacher Education Institutes, the insights will highlight the measures needed to encourage and support teachers' participation in action research. Additionally, the Regional Education Bureau, Zone Education Office, and Woreda Education Office can use the findings to identify areas requiring intervention and support to enhance action research practices among teachers.

1.5. Delimitation of the Study

This research was conducted in a single secondary school within the technology

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villages of Hawassa University. The study focused exclusively on the engagement of secondary school teachers in action research.

2. Research Design and Methodology

2.1. Research Design

A qualitative research method was employed for its ability to provide an in-depth exploration of the research problem. According to McMillan and Schumacher (1993), qualitative research is "primarily an inductive process of organizing data into categories and identifying patterns (relationships among categories)." Casewell (1998) further defines qualitative research as “an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem.” This methodology builds complex, holistic pictures, analyzes words, and offers a detailed view of the phenomenon in its natural setting.

Given the study's objectives, a single-case research design was selected. This approach allowed the researchers to examine a representative secondary school to understand broader trends in other similar schools. A case study is a qualitative descriptive research method that examines a particular event, program, or activity within its natural context and is grounded in rich, varied sources of information (Yin, 2003; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006).

The research was conducted at Tabor Secondary School, chosen for its representativeness of other secondary schools in the technology village. Tabor Secondary School is the oldest and most populous school in the Hawassa City Administration. It has the most experienced teachers compared to other schools in the region, making it a valuable case for understanding the engagement of teachers in action research. Despite their rich teaching experience, teachers at Tabor Secondary School were reportedly unable to scaffold student teachers during their action research projects, making the school a typical case for investigation.

2.2. Sources of Data

Data were collected from teachers, school principals, and documents related to action research.

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Population, Sample Size, and Sampling Techniques

2.3. Population of the Study

The Hawassa Technology Village comprises six woredas and one city administration, with a total of 34 secondary schools. Teachers and school leaders from these schools constituted the population of the study.

2.4.Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

This study employed a single-case study design. One secondary school, deemed representative of other secondary schools, was purposefully selected to achieve the research objectives.

2.5.Instruments of Data Collection

Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers and school principals to gather qualitative data. This method allowed the researcher to gain detailed insights into participants' perceptions and views. The interview guide included questions aligned with the study's basic research questions, encouraging interviewees to elaborate on their responses. This approach facilitated a deeper understanding of the reasons underlying observed practices and challenges.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Focus group discussions were held with teachers, lasting approximately two hours and conducted in Amharic to ensure participants felt comfortable expressing their views. FGDs provided rich, diverse, and collaborative insights, allowing participants to discuss issues collectively and articulate areas of consensus or variation. This method was chosen for its ability to elicit well-rounded and nuanced data from a group setting.

2.6.Document Analysis

Documents related to action research, such as proposals, reports, portfolios, and minutes, were analyzed. This process corroborated claims made by teachers and principals, ensuring reliability and validity in the findings.

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Data Management and Analysis

The data collected through interviews, FGDs, and document analysis were synthesized and analyzed qualitatively. Data from each source were triangulated to ensure comprehensive and consistent findings.

3. Data Presentation and Analysis

3.1.Research Site and participants

The research was conducted at Hawassa Tabor Secondary School, located in Hawassa town. The study involved ten secondary school teachers (seven male and three female) who participated in a focus group discussion (FGD). These teachers represented various subjects, including Biology, Chemistry, Amharic, English, Geography, Civics, Physics, Sidamu Affoo, and Mathematics. The participants were selected based on their willingness to contribute to the research.

Additionally, two school principals—the academic vice principal and the administrative vice principal—were interviewed regarding teachers' engagement in action research and the support provided to them by the school.

3.2.Views of Secondary School Teachers towards Action Research

The perspectives of secondary school teachers regarding the nature and importance of action research significantly affect their engagement in the process. Teachers who believe that they can independently conduct action research and see its potential to improve their practice are more likely to overcome challenges and remain committed to the process. Based on this premise, participants were asked during a focus group discussion (FGD) about their views on action research.

The participants agreed that action research is crucial for improving their practice. During the discussion, T5 remarked:

"Action research helps teachers solve the problems they face during teaching. Engaging in action research makes teachers alert to all the issues they encounter in their classrooms, prompting them to identify the causes and find solutions."

Most participants shared T5's sentiment, emphasizing that teachers who engage in action research read diverse materials on their research topics, engage in discussions

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with colleagues and experts, and enrich their competencies. Supporting this view, T3 stated:

"Action research develops teachers' capacity to manage problems. It transforms challenges into learning opportunities."

Similarly, T8 added:

"Action research enables teachers to relate classroom problems with their potential causes and equips them to address these causes. It fosters problem-solvers rather than complainers."

The unanimous consensus among participants highlights that secondary school teachers hold a positive view of action research.

Action research involves systematic steps, including:

- **Reflection**: Reviewing one's own practice to identify areas of improvement.
- **Problem Identification**: Diagnosing an issue to be addressed.
- **Action Planning**: Developing alternative courses of action.
- **Action Taking**: Implementing the plan.
- **Observation**: Collecting and analyzing data to assess the effectiveness of actions.
- **Reflection**: Evaluating outcomes and refining future actions.
- **Implementing New Practices**: Integrating successful outcomes into regular pedagogy.

Reflection on Practice

Reflection is critical to identifying problems for action research. Teachers' reflection can be categorized into three types:

- **Reflection for Action**: Anticipating potential classroom scenarios and planning accordingly.
- **Reflection in Action**: Assessing teaching practices during the lesson.
- **Reflection on Action**: Evaluating the effectiveness of completed lessons.

During the FGD, most teachers admitted to neglecting "reflection for action." For instance, T10 stated:

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"With my extensive teaching experience, I rarely plan in detail. The weekly plans prepared for office use are insufficient and don't influence my teaching."

Similarly, T5 confessed:

"Sometimes, I'm unsure where I left off in my lesson. I rely on students to remind me and continue from the textbook."

Regarding "reflection in action," participants unanimously agreed they lacked the practice, attributing this to insufficient pre-lesson planning. T10 explained:

"I focus on covering textbook content due to time constraints, leaving no room for evaluating lessons during class."

"Reflection on action," while acknowledged, was informal and inconsistent. T2 remarked:

"I occasionally think about past lessons while preparing new ones but don't formally evaluate them."

From these discussions, it is evident that teachers are not effectively utilizing reflection to identify problems for action research.

Problem Identification

Teachers acknowledged that while they discussed classroom issues with colleagues, these discussions rarely aimed to frame problems as researchable questions. Instead, conversations focused on identifying weaknesses in students or administrative practices. T3 noted:

"I discuss classroom problems with colleagues to compare experiences, but I don't transform these discussions into researchable problems."

Action Planning and Implementation

Most FGD participants admitted to not preparing structured action plans for their research. T7 and T3, however, claimed to have done so, incorporating timeframes and materials into their plans.

Nevertheless, the majority of teachers lacked robust planning, hindering their ability to implement interventions systematically.

Observation and Data Collection

Participants reported limited use of systematic observation and data collection to evaluate the effects of their actions. Even those who prepared plans, such as T3 and

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T7, admitted that their reflections were subjective and lacked empirical evidence.

Training on Action Research

Teachers highlighted inadequacies in training programs, which were often theoretical rather than practical. T4 recounted:

"Training sessions included action research as one topic among many, with little practical application."

Additionally, training was limited to specific subjects like Mathematics, Science, and Language, neglecting other disciplines such as Geography and Civics.

3.3. Factors Hindering Teachers' Engagement in Action Research

Key barriers included:

- **Budget Constraints**: Limited financial support for action research.
- **Time Constraints**: Teachers prioritized private tutoring for additional income over research.
- **Insufficient Training**: A lack of practical, need-based training on action research methods.
- **Lack of Institutional Support**: Minimal resources and absence of incentives like promotions or awards.

School principals acknowledged these challenges, noting that while they encouraged action research, insufficient follow-up and financial support hampered its success. They also emphasized that teachers often conducted research to meet administrative requirements rather than improve their practices.

3.4. Document Analysis

Some documents were found in the school, and the research was conducted by groups of teachers. The teachers reported that they undertook the research because they were instructed to do so.

Topics for the research were assigned, and the groups of teachers were organized by the school. Each group member contributed to the proposal based on their individual capacity. However, the selected problems did not represent the school's overarching issues. Additionally, the groups consisted of teachers from different subject areas, which meant that the identified problems were not

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specific to any particular subject area. This indicates a challenge in properly identifying relevant research problems.

The data for the research was collected from both teachers and students, which violates the standard procedures for conducting action research. While the research included an action plan, an implementation phase, and an evaluation phase, the results were not implemented to address or improve the identified problems effectively.

4. Discussion, conclusion, and recommendation

4.1. Discussion

The findings of this study align with the broader literature on action research, emphasizing its potential for professional development and its underutilization among Ethiopian teachers. Action research, as described by Mills (2000), is a systematic and iterative process that empowers educators to reflect on and refine their practices. Despite its benefits—such as fostering reflective practice, promoting collaboration, and improving teaching effectiveness (Avalos, 2011; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009)—its implementation among secondary school teachers in Ethiopia remains limited.

A critical challenge identified in this study is the inadequacy of reflective practices. While Schön (1983) and Mertler (2017) underscore the importance of reflection in action research, Ethiopian teachers predominantly engage in informal and inconsistent reflective activities. Teachers admitted to neglecting "reflection for action" and "reflection in action," which are essential components of the iterative cycle of observation, action, and refinement (Kempis, 1994). This limitation hinders their ability to systematically identify and address classroom challenges, undermining the core principles of action research.

Empirical evidence also highlights systemic and institutional barriers that inhibit teachers' engagement in action research. Abie et al. (2022) and Temtime & Desta (2014) identify key obstacles such as budget constraints, insufficient collaboration among teachers, unclear criteria for conducting action research, and gaps in knowledge and skills. These barriers are consistent with the findings of this study, which revealed a lack

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of financial support, limited training opportunities, and minimal institutional encouragement. Participants noted that existing training programs were predominantly theoretical and lacked practical relevance, a concern echoed in both this study and the works of Abie et al. (2022) and Temtime & Desta (2014).

The superficial implementation of action research in Ethiopian schools further diminishes its potential. Document analysis revealed that topics were often assigned by administrators rather than emerging from teachers' classroom experiences, leading to research that lacked contextual relevance. Additionally, the practice of grouping teachers from unrelated subject areas undermined the focus and effectiveness of these initiatives. This top-down approach contradicts the essence of action research, which should be teacher-driven and context-specific (Richard, 2000).

Another significant finding is the perception of action research as an administrative obligation rather than a professional development tool. Teachers often conducted research to fulfill requirements rather than to address genuine classroom challenges. This lack of intrinsic motivation, coupled with inadequate recognition and incentives, aligns with the observations of Zeichner and Liston (1996) and Temtime & Desta (2014), who highlight the importance of morale and motivation in sustaining engagement.

Disparities in training opportunities across disciplines further exacerbate the issue. While action research training programs in Ethiopia prioritize Mathematics, Science, and Language educators, teachers from subjects such as Geography and Civics are often excluded. This inequity limits the reach of action research and marginalizes educators in less prioritized disciplines, reflecting the systemic challenges outlined by Hargreaves (2004) and corroborated by Abie et al. (2022).

Despite these challenges, the study found that teachers recognize the value of action research in addressing classroom problems and improving their practices. Participants acknowledged that engaging in action research enhances problem-solving skills and fosters professional growth. This positive perspective mirrors findings by Berg (2016) and Mertler (2017), which emphasize action research as a tool for empowerment, autonomy, and job satisfaction. However, as both this study and

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the works of Abie et al. (2022) and Temtime & Desta (2014) highlight, systemic, organizational, and personal barriers significantly impede its broader adoption.

In conclusion, addressing the challenges identified in this study is crucial for fostering meaningful engagement in action research among Ethiopian teachers. Policies should prioritize teacher-driven initiatives, equitable training opportunities, and recognition mechanisms to motivate and sustain participation. Addressing budgetary, training, and institutional challenges—such as those outlined by Abie et al. (2022) and Temtime & Desta (2014)—is critical to unlocking the full potential of action research. By fostering a culture of reflective practice, collaboration, and teacher autonomy, Ethiopian educators can leverage action research to enhance professional growth and improve student outcomes.

4.2. Conclusions

This study highlights the significant potential of action research as a tool for professional development and educational improvement among Ethiopian secondary school teachers. Despite its recognized benefits—such as fostering reflective practice, promoting collaboration, and enhancing teaching effectiveness—its implementation remains limited due to systemic, institutional, and personal barriers. These challenges include inadequate training, budgetary constraints, limited collaboration, and the perception of action research as an administrative obligation rather than a meaningful professional activity.

The findings underscore the critical need for targeted interventions to address these barriers. Professional development programs must move beyond theoretical frameworks to provide practical, need-based training that equips teachers with the skills to conduct research effectively. Equitable training opportunities across disciplines, coupled with institutional support and recognition mechanisms, can motivate and sustain teacher engagement in action research. Furthermore, fostering a culture of reflection and collaboration is essential to ensure that action research becomes a teacher-driven and context-specific practice.

The works of Abie et al. (2022) and Temtime & Desta (2014) reinforce the need for systemic reforms, particularly in addressing resource limitations and creating

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a supportive environment for educators. By prioritizing teacher autonomy and professional empowerment, policymakers can unlock the latent potential of action research to transform educational practices and improve student outcomes in Ethiopia.

Ultimately, creating a sustainable framework for action research requires a collaborative effort among teachers, administrators, and policymakers. By addressing the challenges identified in this study, Ethiopian schools can harness the power of action research to foster continuous professional growth, enhance teaching effectiveness, and meet the evolving needs of their students.

4.3.Implications

The findings of this study have several important implications for improving secondary school teachers' engagement in action research. These implications suggest that a combination of internal teacher efforts and external support from school leadership, education offices, and higher institutions is crucial for enhancing the effectiveness and participation in action research.

Implications for Schools

Schools must allocate financial resources to support action research activities. This will encourage teachers to prioritize action research and be more motivated to engage in it. Additionally, technical support should be provided, which can be achieved through expert consultations, workshops, and professional development sessions. This support will help teachers better understand the procedures and benefits of action research.

Schools need to establish mechanisms to recognize and reward teachers who actively participate in action research. Recognition can come in the form of awards, public acknowledgment, or career advancement opportunities, which will further motivate teachers to engage in such practices.

Schools should foster a culture of collaboration by creating opportunities for teachers to engage in discussions and share their action research experiences. Collaboration with colleagues, administrators, and experts will help teachers develop more meaningful research questions and solutions to classroom challenges.

Implications for Teachers

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Teachers must develop the habit of reflecting on their teaching practices. Reflection should become an integral part of their daily routine before, during, and after lessons. This reflection can lead to better problem identification and more effective action research topics. Teachers must also take the initiative to gather information, interact with colleagues, and expand their knowledge on research topics to enhance their action research endeavors.

Teachers should view action research as an opportunity for professional growth rather than as a task for financial gain or recognition. By focusing on continuous improvement and problem-solving, teachers can create more meaningful and impactful action research.

Implications for Education Offices

Education offices should allocate additional funds to support action research initiatives at the school level. This includes providing financial resources for teachers to carry out their research and creating opportunities for professional development and capacity-building programs.

Education offices must develop policies that facilitate the implementation of action research in schools. This includes providing training, creating incentives, and ensuring teachers have access to necessary resources. Partnerships with nearby universities and colleges can also be established to offer technical assistance and expert guidance on action research.

Education offices should work with schools to institutionalize recognition mechanisms for teachers who engage in action research. These could include professional development opportunities, promotions, or even certificates of achievement that acknowledge teachers' commitment to improving their practice through research.

By addressing these implications, schools, teachers, and education offices can create an environment that encourages and supports action research, ultimately leading to more effective teaching practices and better student outcomes.

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