



TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES ON TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE OF SCHOOL HEADS: BASES FOR PROGRAM RECOMMENDATION

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the experiences, challenges and coping strategies of teachers on the technical assistance provided by school heads using a qualitative research design. Data were gathered through in-depth responses from selected participants and analyzed thematically to identify key patterns and insights. The findings revealed that technical assistance significantly enhances teachers' instructional competence, lesson planning, and classroom management through structured guidance, constructive feedback, and supportive leadership. Teachers also emphasized that reflective practice and continuous mentoring contributed to their professional growth, confidence, and instructional effectiveness. The study also identified several challenges, including limited time for coaching and follow-up, heavy workload, resource constraints, and difficulties in adapting feedback to classroom realities. Despite these challenges, teachers demonstrated resilience by employing coping strategies such as openness to feedback, reflective practice, collaboration with colleagues, seeking professional development, and maintaining clear communication and documentation. It is recommended that schools strengthen their coaching and mentoring systems.

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Keywords: *teachers experiences, technical assistance*

INTRODUCTION

School leadership continues to be a significant factor in improving teaching effectiveness and promoting positive student learning outcomes. In recent years, greater emphasis has been placed on the duty of school heads as academic leaders rather than solely as administrators. One of the key responsibilities associated with instructional leadership focuses on supporting teachers through technical help. Technical assistance includes instructional supervision, mentoring, coaching, classroom observation, constructive feedback, and support for professional development. These practices are designed to strengthen teachers' instructional competencies and improve classroom practices (Hallinger, 2020).

The evolving educational landscape has increased the complexity of teachers' roles. Teachers are expected to respond to curriculum changes, integrate digital technologies, address diverse learners' needs, and maintain high standards of accountability. These demands highlight the importance of continuous and relevant technical assistance from school heads. Research indicates that when school leaders actively support teachers through structured technical assistance, teachers are more likely to engage in reflective practice and demonstrate improved instructional performance (Gumus et al., 2021). Effective technical assistance also contributes to a collaborative school culture where teachers feel supported and valued.

Despite its recognized importance, technical assistance practices are not consistently implemented across schools. School heads often face challenges such as heavy administrative

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workloads, limited time for instructional supervision, and insufficient training in providing instructional support. Consequently, teachers experience technical assistance in varied ways. Some teachers perceive it as helpful and developmental, while others experience it as irregular, inadequate, or focused more on compliance than professional growth. These experiences may influence teachers' motivation, confidence, and willingness to improve their teaching practices (Liu & Hallinger, 2020).

Understanding teachers' experiences is essential in evaluating the effectiveness of technical assistance practices. Teachers, as direct recipients of instructional support, offer valuable insights into how school heads' leadership practices are enacted in real classroom settings. Recent studies emphasize the importance of incorporating teachers' perspectives to gain a more comprehensive understanding of instructional leadership and its impact on teaching and learning (Nguyen et al., 2022).

The researcher conducted this study to give voice to teachers and address the limited empirical evidence focusing on their experiences and challenges regarding the technical assistance practices of school heads. By examining teachers' perspectives, the researcher aims to identify both effective practices and existing gaps in technical assistance. The outcomes of this research may benefit school heads refine their leadership approaches, guide the development of targeted leadership training programs, and contribute to building a more supportive and responsive instructional environments that ultimately enhance teaching and learning in schools.

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Methodology

This chapter outlines the research design, participants, data collection procedures, research instruments, instrument validation, and methods of data analysis.

Research Method

This study used a qualitative research approach as it sought to explore and gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences and challenges of teachers in receiving technical assistance from school heads. Qualitative research is best suited for investigating human experiences, meanings, and perceptions, as it focuses on understanding how individuals interpret their lived experiences within a particular context (John W. Creswell & Cheryl N. Poth, 2023).

Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design explains that qualitative research allows researchers to examine complex social phenomena by focusing on the perspectives and experiences of participants, making it appropriate for studies that seek in-depth insights into experiences and challenges. It enables the researcher to collect detailed information through interviews and observations, which are important in understanding the actual conditions within classrooms.

Research Design

This study utilized a qualitative phenomenological research design. Phenomenology focuses on understanding the lived experiences of individuals and how they make meaning of a particular phenomenon, emphasizing the interpretation of participants' perceptions and experiences within their context (John W. Creswell & Cheryl N. Poth, 2023).

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In this study, the phenomenon is the technical assistance practices provided by school heads, and the focus is on how teachers experience and perceive these practices. The qualitative approach is appropriate because it allows for in-depth analysis of teachers' voices, beliefs, and feelings about technical assistance, which cannot be adequately captured through quantitative measures. Qualitative research emphasizes understanding participants' perspectives and the meanings they attach to their experiences within a specific context (Sharan B. Merriam & Elizabeth J. Tisdell, 2022).

Participants of the Study

The participants of the study were ten (10) selected teachers in the District of Barotac Viejo, Province of Iloilo. These teachers had experienced technical assistance practices from their school heads. Teachers were chosen because they are the primary recipients of technical assistance and have direct experience with how school heads support instructional improvement. The study will include teachers from various grade levels and learning areas to secure a wide range of perspectives and experiences.

Sampling Procedure

The study used purposive sampling to choose participants who could provide rich and relevant information about the phenomenon being examined. Purposive sampling is often used in qualitative research because it enables the researcher to deliberately choose individuals who have specific knowledge or relevant experiences related to the research topic. This approach ensures that participants are well-positioned to provide detailed and meaningful insights aligned with the objectives of the study (John W. Creswell & Cheryl N. Poth, 2023).

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This method ensures that the data collected are meaningful and directly connected to the research questions.

The criteria for selecting participants included:

1. Teachers with at least two (2) years of teaching experience;
2. Teachers with direct technical assistance from their school heads; and
3. Teachers who are willing to participate and share their experiences openly.

Research Instrument

The main instrument used in this study was a semi-structured interview guide. A semi-structured interview is a commonly used qualitative research instrument that consists of open-ended questions designed to collect detailed and meaningful information from participants while allowing flexibility for follow-up questions and clarification. This type of interview enables the & Poth, 2023).

This instrument was relevant to this study because researcher to explore participants' experiences in detail while maintaining focus on the research objectives (Creswell

it enabled teachers to express their experiences and challenges regarding technical assistance practices in their own words. Moreover, it enabled the researcher to study deeper meanings, perceptions, and personal insights that cannot be captured through standardized questionnaires.

The interview guide was composed of four parts: background information, experiences in technical assistance, challenges encountered, and recommendations for improvement. The questions were based on the research objectives and conceptual framework of the study.

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The interview guide was validated by experts in educational leadership and research methodology to ensure its validity, relevance, and alignment with the research objectives.

Data Gathering Procedure

The data gathering procedure in this study followed a systematic and ethical process. First, permission was secured from the school authorities, and participants were chosen using purposive sampling based on specific criteria. The selected teachers were given information about the purpose of the study and were oriented regarding the process to ensure they understood their roles and rights as participants.

Prior to conducting the interviews, consent was secured from each participant, emphasizing confidentiality, willing participation, and the option to leave the study at any point. Semi-structured interviews were then conducted using the prepared interview guide. The interviews were recorded with the participants' consent to ensure accuracy and completeness of data.

After the interviews, the recorded data were transcribed verbatim and reviewed for clarity. All data were securely stored, with participants' identities safeguarded using pseudonyms. Finally, the data were examined using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns related to teachers' experiences and challenges in technical assistance practices.

Data Analysis

The data gathered from the semi-structured interviews were examined using thematic analysis, which is a widely accepted method for analyzing qualitative data. Thematic analysis

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is used to identify, analyze, and report patterns or themes within qualitative data, allowing researchers to interpret participants' meanings and experiences in a systematic way (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

Thematic analysis is appropriate for this study because it enables the researcher to identify, examine, and interpret recurring patterns and themes that emerge from teachers' experiences and challenges related to technical assistance practices. The process allowed the researcher to gain insight into teachers' perceptions about technical assistance and the difficulties they face.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study revealed that technical assistance provided by school heads plays a significant part in enhancing teachers' instructional practices. Participants consistently reported that instructional guidance and lesson planning support helped them design effective lessons, select appropriate teaching strategies, and better address learners' needs. Regular classroom observations, followed by constructive feedback, further strengthened their teaching delivery.

Moreover, constructive feedback and reflective practice emerged as important elements in teachers' professional growth. Teachers valued feedback as it helped them identify their strengths and areas for improvement, encouraging them to evaluate and improve their teaching approaches.

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The findings also highlighted the importance of supportive and encouraging leadership, which fostered confidence, motivation, and a positive working environment among teachers. School heads who provided guidance in a respectful and non-threatening manner were perceived as effective in promoting teacher development.

However, several challenges were identified, including limited time for coaching and follow-up, heavy workload and competing responsibilities, resource limitations, and difficulty in adapting feedback to classroom realities. These challenges sometimes hinder the effective implementation of technical assistance.

To address these obstacles, teachers employed strategies such as openness to feedback, reflective practice, collaboration with colleagues, seeking additional professional development, and maintaining clear communication and documentation. These coping mechanisms enabled teachers to gradually improve their instructional practices despite constraints.

Conclusion

The findings of the study offer several significant insights:

Structured instructional guidance and lesson planning assistance significantly enhance teachers' instructional competence and confidence.

Constructive feedback fosters reflective practice, a key component of professional growth. By receiving detailed, supportive feedback, teachers can identify their strengths and areas for improvement, which encourages continuous learning and adaptation of instructional methods.

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Supportive leadership cultivates a positive professional environment where teachers feel valued, motivated, and empowered to implement new strategies.

Limited time for technical assistance can impede the effectiveness of coaching and mentoring.

High workload and multiple responsibilities can create barriers to the effective implementation of technical assistance.

Limited resources and delayed access to technical support can hinder the implementation of suggested instructional strategies.

Adapting feedback requires skill, patience, and contextual awareness. Teachers must consider learner behaviors, classroom dynamics, and available resources when applying recommendations.

Being open to feedback and engaging in reflective practice allows teachers to internalize suggestions, critically evaluate their instructional methods, and make necessary adjustments.

Collaboration and peer support provide teachers with additional perspectives and strategies, which enhance problem-solving when facing technical challenges.

Proactively seeking additional resources and professional development allows teachers to fill gaps that technical assistance alone may not address.

Clear communication and proper documentation help teachers effectively report challenges and track resolutions. This strategy improves accountability and ensures that technical assistance is timely, targeted, and documented for future reference.

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Technical assistance is most effective when it is continuous, structured, and collaborative. One-time feedback is not sufficient; sustained mentoring and follow-up are necessary to ensure meaningful improvement in teaching practices.

Reflection is a critical bridge between feedback and improvement. Teachers who actively reflect on feedback are more likely to internalize suggestions and apply them effectively in their classrooms.

The quality of leadership significantly influences teacher development. Supportive, encouraging, and non-judgmental leadership fosters teacher confidence, while rigid or time-constrained approaches may limit the impact of technical assistance.

Context matters in the implementation of feedback. Teachers face diverse classroom realities, and not all recommendations are immediately applicable. This highlights the need for context-sensitive and flexible technical assistance.

Workload and time constraints remain major barriers to the effective use of technical assistance. Without sufficient time and manageable responsibilities, even well-delivered guidance may not be fully implemented.

Collaboration strengthens professional growth. Teachers benefit greatly from peer support, shared experiences, and participation in professional learning communities such as LAC sessions.

Teachers demonstrate resilience and adaptability. Despite challenges, they actively seek solutions through self-learning, collaboration, and open communication, showing strong professional commitment.

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