

Competencies of Teachers in Zambales, Philippines, in Conducting Action Research: Basis for Action Plan

Arnel S. Miraflor, EdD, PhD

College of Teacher Education President Ramon Magsaysay State University- Sta. Cruz Campus,
Zambales 2213, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

Much district educators dislike research, so they don't conduct it. Because of this, the researcher decided to investigate the causes. In response, this study evaluated Sta. district educators' research skills in Sta. Cruz, Zambales. The research was descriptive correlational. Specifically, a descriptive research approach was used to examine multiple factors. Furthermore, teachers and administrators were informed of the study's purpose and methods. The study used a validated self-administered questionnaire. Despite these efforts, some teachers cannot do classroom action research. The results show that some educators do not engage in school action research, some are unable to create clear, detailed, quantifiable, attainable, and goal-oriented objectives, and some are skeptical about its benefits and view it as difficult. Additionally, district teachers struggle to get action research books and in-text citations. For future improvements, research should include a broader range of teacher performance characteristics.

Keywords: Competency, capability, ability, mentoring skills, research attitude.

BACKGROUND

Research competency is the ability to undertake high-quality research (Salom, 2013). In addition to comprehension is characterized as the "capacity to perform data collection, encompassing the planning and selection of suitable data collection tools or instruments, the identification of an appropriate method for data interpretation and manipulation, and the application of a relevant statistical tool for significance testing." Such competence can develop over time through continuous and pertinent capacity-building programs

(Manongsong et al., 2018). It also requires the ongoing use of acquired knowledge and skills to produce research outcomes and foster innovation. When moving forward, you need to think about things like your own motivation, your feelings about it, and other abilities that are necessary for doing the hard and time-consuming research process. There is additional pressure to do well to meet the needs and expectations of an academic career. These are usually measured by the amount of research funding, research collaboration, the quality and quantity of publications, and citation rates (Dowsett, 2020; Macfarlane, 2017). In this setting, academics who are more educated and trained would greatly help meet these needs and expectations (Altbach et al., 2010; Christensen et al., 2020; Leathwood & Read, 2013). Because of this, stakeholders' expectations of what doctorate education should do have expanded. The focus has shifted from writing theses to making graduates who are very good at research and publication.

Nonetheless, as the researcher noted, numerous educators in the district lack an inclination towards research, resulting in a significant number not engaging in research activities. So, the researcher chose to run this study to find out why.

Objectives of the study

This study was guided by one main objective to determine the research capability of teachers in the district of Sta. Cruz, Zambales.

Methods

This investigation utilized the descriptive quantitative technique. The descriptive survey enables the researcher to examine the variables in their existing state. Mugenda & Mugenda (2008) characterize a descriptive survey as a research methodology that systematically and accurately delineates the features or behaviour of a certain community.

Participants

The participants in this research were selected from 156 elementary, junior and senior high school teachers of Sta. Cruz District was randomly selected.

Data Collection

The researcher created a set of survey questions to collect data necessary for the research, which were then given to chosen teacher-participants. A group of 156 teachers, from elementary to senior high school, was randomly selected to complete a set of questionnaires. Teachers and school administrators were told what the study was about and how it would be done. The research instrument utilized was a validated self-administered questionnaire. The initial part of the questionnaire has questions about the respondents' profiles. The second half has questions about how well the people who answered can write research.

Result and Discussion Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Teacher-Respondents According to their Profile

For the age profile, out of 156 teacher respondents, there are sixty-three (63) or 40% are in the age of 36 to 45 years old. There are ten (10) or 6% who are below 25 years old. This reveals that many teachers spend most of their lives teaching instead of finding another job.

For the sex profile, out of 156 teacher respondents, there are one hundred thirty-eight (138) or 88% are female, while there are eighteen (18) or 12% male. This implies that women engage in the teaching profession on the premise of having the ability to show more care, passion, and understanding among the children compared to men. Their motherly instinct gives them the chance to excel in the teaching services.

For the civil status profile, out of 156 teacher respondents, thirty-five (35) or 22% are single, one hundred twelve (112) or 72% are married, and nine (9) or 6% are widows or widowers.

For educational qualification profile, out of 156 teacher-respondents, thirty-five (35) or 22% are master's degree holders, sixty-five (65) or 42% are with Master's units, and fifty-two (52) or 33% are bachelor's degree. Those people who have finished graduate degree programs tend to perform better in their duties because they have become more adjusted to different situations, knowledgeable with their functions and on the technical know-how of their respective jobs, have developed self-esteem and confidence, and become aware of self-esteem the importance of communication and good human relationships in the organization (Shiri et al., 2023).

Also, his information indicates that the profile of teachers' educational attainment qualifies and conforms to Department Order s, 2016-03, which highlights those who meet the minimum requirements and are qualified to practice teaching under Republic Act 7836, as well as those performing functions in support of education, such as standard setting, policy and program formulation, research, and sector of monitoring and evaluation.

As research has expanded on this legal basis, it is predicted that teachers will acquire it and students will use it in the classroom, as this is already a way of life (Gutierrez, 2024)

For the position profile, there are 78 (50%) teacher I, 48 (31%) teacher II, 28 (18%) teacher III, and 2 (1%) master teacher.

For the length of service profile, there are thirty-seven (37) or 24% belong to teachers who are teaching for fifteen to nineteen (1519) years or 24% while there are twenty-one (21) or 13% belong to teachers who are teaching for 10-14 years.

According to Graham et al. (2020), the outcomes of this study indicate that beginning instructors perform as well as or better than teachers with more years of experience, but that overall teaching quality might be improved. Enhanced support and professional development are required to increase the quality of teaching for all teachers, not just those at the beginning of their careers.

According to the findings of Amalia & Saraswati (2018), which demonstrated that teacher competency influenced performance and that certification was a moderating variable.

Table 1 Summary of Teacher-Participants in Writing Research

No.	Summary of Teacher-Participants in Writing Research	WM	QI
1	Research Capability	2.78	A
2	Action Planning Skills	2.81	C
3	Attitude	2.88	A
4	Mentoring Skills	2.77	A
5	Motivation	2.72	A
General Weighted Mean		2.79	A

Summary of Teacher-Participants in Writing Research

Table 1 shows the summary of teacher participants in writing research. This shows that the research capability of teachers has a weighted average of 2.78, with a qualitative interpretation of “agree”; for action planning skills, the weighted average is 2.81, “capable”. For attitude, the weighted average is 2.88, with a qualitative interpretation of “agree”; for mentoring skills, it shows that the weighted average is 2.77, with a qualitative interpretation of “agree: and for motivation, the average interpretation is 2.72, “agree”.

Perception of Teacher-Participants towards Research Capability in Writing Research

The perception of teacher-participants towards research capability in writing research. Based on the results, some teachers lack the knowledge and skills to conduct action research in their classrooms. Moreover, this also shows that some teachers do not undertake action research in their respective schools.

Even if the teachers were good at their jobs and were interested in their research, they had too many responsibilities to do. It is crucial to underscore the significance of research proficiency and involvement for educational enhancement, as it reveals the present condition of teachers' research capabilities and establishes the foundation for a focused Research Development Plan (Comon & Corpuz, 2024).

Perception of Teacher-Participants towards Research Capability in Writing Research

In research capability, the results show that respondents are “capable”. This reveals that some teachers in the district cannot create clear, detailed, quantifiable, achievable, and goal-aligned objectives. This lends credence to the findings of Caingcoy (2020), who stated that educators possessed a limited capacity for carrying out research. In addition, there is evidence that they can act as a guide or an instructor to others.

Also, based on the study of Perez et al. (2022), teacher-respondents are capable in doing research.

Perception of Teacher-Participants towards Attitude

The perception of teacher participants towards attitude on action research has a result where it shows that some teacher-participants do not believe that conducting action research will be beneficial to them, and some participants do not believe that conducting action research is a difficult task.

This supports the study of Caingcoy (2020) which states that teachers were motivated to write research, had a high level of difficulties in the research processes, and had a slight capability of conducting research. Additionally, there is evidence that they have the potential to serve as a mentor.

For the Perception of the teacher-participants towards mentoring skills. The results reveal that some participants are not interested in learning from their mentors.

This supports the study of Caingcoy (2020), which states that teachers were motivated to write research, had a high level of difficulties in the research processes, and had a slight capability of conducting research. Additionally, there is evidence that they have the potential to serve as a mentor.

Perception of Teacher-Participants towards Mentoring Skills

The result reveals that some participants do not have an interest in asking help from other teachers who are more knowledgeable in research.

However, the instructors were burdened with an excessive number of coordinatorship, regardless of their proficiency in their professions and their enthusiasm for their research.

It is imperative to emphasize the importance of research proficiency and engagement in the context of educational improvement, as it reveals the current state of teachers' research capabilities and lays the groundwork for a targeted Research Development Plan (Comon & Corpuz, 20 24).

Perception of Teacher-Participants towards Research Ability

The perception of teacher-participants towards research ability reveals that some participants have difficulty in looking for appropriate literature on their study topic. They lack the skill in finding literature or in-text citations.

According to Caingcoy (2020), teachers had a moderate capability of action planning, a slight capability of conducting research, and a neutral attitude towards research. Furthermore, teachers were motivated to write research, had a high level of difficulty in the research processes, and had a slight capability to conduct research. Additionally, there is evidence that they have the potential to serve as a mentor.

Perception of Teacher-Participants towards Action Planning Skills

Results show that some teachers are “capable” in action planning skills. This reveals that some teacher-participants in the district have difficulty identifying the materials and resources to use in conducting action research.

According to Caingcoy (2020), teachers had a moderate capability of action planning, a slight capability of conducting research, and a neutral attitude towards research. Furthermore, teachers were motivated to write research, had a high level of difficulty in the research process, and had a slight capability to conduct research. Additionally, there is evidence that they have the potential to serve as a mentor.

Test of Differences on the Perception of Teachers on the Research Competency of Teachers in the District

Table 2 Analysis of Variance to test Differences on the Perception of Teachers on the Research Competency of Teachers in the District

Source of Variation Between	<u>SS</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>P-value</u>	<u>F crit</u>
Groups Within	0.1172	6	0.019	1.462	0.207	2.26
Groups	0.774	58	0.013			
Total	0.892	64				

Table 2 shows the Analysis of Variance to test differences in the perception of Teachers to Research Competency of Teachers in the District. Since the computed F-value of 1.46257 is less than (<) the F critical value of 2.26 at 0.05 Alpha Level of Significance, the Null Hypothesis is accepted, hence there is no significant difference.

Table 3 Pearson Correlation coefficient to Test the Relationship Between Teachers' Capability and Teachers' Ability in Conducting Research

Normality Test (Shapiro-Wilk)	W .957	P .434	Effect Size 0.1008
	Teachers Capability	Teachers Ability	p
Teachers Capability	1		0.58
Teachers Ability	0.187026	1	

Table 3 shows the Pearson correlation coefficient, which was computed to assess the significant relationship between teachers' research capability and their ability to conduct research. Based on the result, there was no correlation between the two variables, $r = 0.187$, $p = .58$. Using the Normality test, the test statistic W equals 0.9571, which is in the 95% region of acceptance.

Results of the indicated that there is no significant relationship between teachers' research capability and teachers' ability in conducting research. The observed effect size d is medium, 0.1008. This indicates that the magnitude of the difference between the average of the differences and the expected average of the differences is very small. The findings suggest that the teachers-participants' research capability has a weak relationship with teachers' ability in conducting research.

CONCLUSION

The researcher arrived at the following conclusions based on the collected data:

1. Most of the teachers who took part are married women in their 40s who have acquired master's degrees, are teachers 1, and have been teaching for 15 to 19 years.
2. Some teachers cannot do action research in the classroom. The findings indicate that certain educators do not engage in school action research; some teachers within the district are unable to formulate clear, detailed, quantifiable, attainable, and goal-oriented objectives; some teacher-participants are skeptical about the benefits of action research, while others perceive it as a challenging endeavor; additionally, some participants lack interest in learning from their mentors and are reluctant to seek assistance from more experienced colleagues. Teachers in the district have problems getting to action research materials, like books and in-text citations.

3. When respondents were categorized by research competency, there was no significant difference in how they perceived teachers' abilities to do action research.
4. There is no significant relationship between teachers' perceptions of their research proficiency in action research writing and their actual research capabilities.

RECOMMENDATION

The researcher strongly suggests the following:

1. Research and development initiatives, such as school-based research conferences and training to improve skills, must be done.
2. It is suggested that future studies look at more factors that could affect how well teachers do their jobs. These factors encompass employment satisfaction, work discipline, remuneration, and motivation. This would be a step toward doing more research. A further study is expected to refine its research subject, potentially encompassing public schools, private schools, and various other educational institutions. This decision seeks to achieve a greater number of objectives and outcomes that are more representative of the full scope.
3. When choosing and hiring research teachers for the senior high school program, you should look at their degree of education, whether they have attended seminars and training on research and development, and whether they have worked in research jobs before.

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