



Research Skills and Competencies of the Public Elementary School Teachers: Input for Research Capacity Building Program

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ABSTRACT

"Teachers play a crucial role in promoting literacy in various contexts, both within the classroom and in society at large" (Afolabi, 2022). To meet the evolving learning needs of students, teachers must continually update their knowledge and skills to keep pace with technological advancements. The study aimed to determine the research skills and competencies of the Public Elementary School Teachers in Santa Lucia District of the Schools Division of Ilocos Sur, and the findings served as a basis for a Research Capacity Building Program (RCBP). The descriptive-correlational and developmental research design were employed to interpret the results of the study. Respondents were the 128 teachers of Sta. Lucia District. Total enumeration was employed. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, means and Pearson Product Moment Coefficient Correlation were utilized to quantify and analyze the data. The following are the salient findings: most of respondents age bracket belonged 37-44. Majority of them were females, with MA units, Teacher III and attended seminars, conferences and trainings locally. The level of research competent on knowledge of the teachers in the Public elementary School Teachers in Sta. Lucia District was described as moderate with an overall mean of 3.00 while their level of research skills was described as moderately skillful with an overall mean of 2.94. There was no significant relationship between the following profiles of respondents on age ($r=0.373$, $p=0.000$), sex ($r=-0.128$, $p=0.149$), highest educational attainment ($r=-0.091$, $p=0.309$) and seminars, conferences, trainings attended ($r=0.016$, $p=0.857$) in their research competence except for the teaching position ($r=-0.180$, $p=0.0420$) revealing that there was a significant relationship at .05 level of significant. However, there was no significant relationship between the profile of the respondents on the following profiles: sex ($r=-0.171$, $p=.053$), highest educational attainment ($r=-0.102$, $p=0.251$), teaching position ($r=-0.176$, $p=0.051$) and seminars, conferences and trainings ($r=0.016$, $p=0.235$) and their research skills except for sex ($r=0.030$, $p=.001$) seen as significant related to teachers' research skills. Based from the results of the study the following conclusions were drawn: the profile of respondents manifest different profile variables in terms of age, sex, highest educational attainment, position and research seminars, conferences and trainings attended; the level of research competencies on knowledge of the public elementary school teachers in Sta. Lucia District is moderate; in terms of the level of research skills of the teachers, they were moderately skillful; age positively impacts research skills of teachers, emphasizing the role of experiences other factors like sex, highest educational attainment, teaching position and seminars, conferences and trainings attended have no significant impact on research skills; age, sex and educational level do not affect research competence among the Santa Lucia teachers; teaching position has a significant relationship while seminars, conferences, and trainings attended do not have impact on research competence on knowledge; the research capacity building program for Sta. Lucia District Teachers is valid and timely but considers its functionality. Based on the findings and conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are hereby offered: Submit the formulated Research Capacity Building Program to the Department of Education through Sta. Lucia District authorities with the permission of the Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College, Graduate School Tagudin Campus for approval and use in the District. Such result of the study may be disseminated to the Public School Teachers in Sta. Lucia District and tailor training programs between Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College Graduate School, Tagudin Campus and Department of Education- Sta. Lucia District in the form of Extension program to address variations in research competencies on knowledge and skills across different areas, ensuring targeted support to fill specific skill gaps. The Department of Education through Santa Lucia District may promote a research-driven culture by providing continuous support and training for all teachers, regardless of age, gender, education level, or seminar attendance, to enhance their research skills. It is suggested that Santa Lucia District may design research-focused programs specifically for teachers in certain positions, considering the significant relationship between teaching position and research competence. Consider the functionality of the research capacity building program for teachers in the Santa Lucia District to maximize its effectiveness and practicality, while ensuring its validity and timeliness.

Keywords: Level of Research Competencies, Skills, Teachers, Research Capacity Building Program.

Introduction

Teachers were essential in fostering literacy in a variety of settings, both within the classroom and in society at large. To effectively fulfill this role, teachers needed to possess extensive subject knowledge. However, in the 21st century, students' learning needs had evolved, with a greater emphasis on technology that surpassed the expertise of many teachers. Therefore, teachers had to continually update their own knowledge and skills to keep pace with their learners. This shift in education has resulted in a focus on knowledge-based outcomes, leading to improvements and research-based advancements in teaching and learning. As a teacher, conducting research is crucial to ensure that classroom strategies and methods effectively promote student learning

and achievement. Ongoing evaluation and adaptation of instructional practices are necessary to meet the changing needs of students. Furthermore, teacher research contributes to the broader educational community by generating new insights and knowledge that can inform policy and practice. This research-driven approach aims to enhance the overall quality of education and facilitate academic and personal growth. Research is a vital conduit for the Department of Education to fulfill its commitment to quality education. It enables rigorous examination, critical analysis, and evidence-based decision-making, leading to the refinement and enhancement of teaching methods, instructional materials, and learning environments. Research empowers educators to cater to diverse learner needs, promoting inclusivity and equity in the educational system. Ultimately, research acts as a driving force propelling the Department of Education toward its mission of providing quality education to all Filipinos. By embracing research as a crucial part of its mandate, the department aims to bridge the gap between knowledge and practice, ensuring that education remains a powerful tool for individual growth, societal advancement, and national development. Supporting teachers in developing their research skills and self-confidence empowers them to enhance education. By providing guidance, resources, and mentorship, educators navigate the research process with enthusiasm, overcoming challenges and embracing research for professional growth and the advancement of the education system. Developing research skills and competencies empowers teachers to improve educational practice and policy in the Philippines, benefiting their students' education. DepEd actively promotes a research culture among all levels of employees to support evidence-based decision-making, policy formulation, and program development. The Schools Division Research Committee (SDRC) of SDO Ilocos Sur unveiled the 2020 edition of the Research Manual, supervised by the Schools Governance and Operations Division (SGOD) Planning and Research Unit (PRU). This manual served as a valuable resource, offering guidance for conducting basic education research within the division. It aligned with research requirements set by DepEd BERA and DepEd Region I BERA, promoting collaboration among districts, schools, teachers, and eligible employees to enhance policies and practices. Despite the Department of Education's guidelines, a teacher-researcher in the District identified substantial deficiencies in knowledge, competencies, skills, and attitudes towards research. To address this, a research paper was crafted to strengthen and enhance teachers' research activities in Sta. Lucia district. The primary aim was to empower educators and cultivate a greater enthusiasm for research among teachers. The output of this research paper served as a reference point for the development of a comprehensive Research Capacity Building Program tailored specifically for teachers in Sta. Lucia District for School Year 2022-2023.

Statement of the Problem

The study aimed to determine the research skills and competencies knowledge of the Public Elementary School Teachers in Santa Lucia District of the Schools Division of Ilocos Sur, and the findings served as input for a Research Capacity Building Program. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following sub-problems. 1. What is the profile of teachers along: age; sex; highest educational attainment; position; and research seminars, conferences and trainings attended? 2. What is the level of research skills of the respondents? 3. What is the level of research competencies on knowledge of the respondents? 4. Is there a significant relationship between the profile of respondents and their research skills? 5. Is there a significant relationship between the profile of respondents and their research competencies on knowledge? 6. What program may be developed to enhance the research skills and competencies on knowledge of the respondents? 7. What is the level of acceptability of the Research Capacity Building Program?

Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study aimed to determine the research skills and competencies on knowledge of 128 public primary teachers in Santa Lucia District, Schools Division of Ilocos Sur, during the School Year 2022-2023. The findings served as an input for the development of a Research Capacity Building Program. The study focused on assessing the profile of respondents, level of research competencies on knowledge and skills of the respondents. Five school heads were involved as evaluators of the Research Capacity Building Program.

Research Design

The study utilized a descriptive-correlational-developmental research design. In this research study, the design was employed to describe the profile and level of research competencies and skills among Public Elementary School Teachers in Sta. Lucia District of the Schools Division of Ilocos Sur. Furthermore, correlation analysis was also employed to examine the significant relationship between the respondents' profile and their research competencies, and significant relationship between the profile and research skills. Additionally, the developmental research design was used in formulating the Research Capacity Building Program as a benchmark based on the study's results. The Research Capacity Building Program is an enhancement program for teachers aimed at increasing their research skills and competencies in research at the Public Elementary Schools of Santa Lucia District. It strengthens the process of developing individuals, institutions, and societies' abilities, both individually and collectively, to effectively, efficiently, and sustainably perform research. The program includes training and mentorship.

Population and Locale of the Study

The study included a total of 135 Public Elementary School Teachers from Sta. Lucia District of the Schools Division of Ilocos Sur. However, there were only 128 who actually answered the questionnaire as respondents, ensuring a high response rate of 95%.

Results and Discussions

For age distribution among the respondents, there were 49 or 38.3 percent belonged to the 37-44 age bracket; 26 or 20.3 percent belonged to the 29-36 age bracket; 21 or 16.4 percent belonged to the 45-52 age bracket; 17 or 13.3 percent belonged to the age bracket of 21-28 percent; 15 or 11.7 percent belonged to the age bracket of 53-60 and no one of them belonged to the age bracket of 61-65. The finding implies that majority of the respondents belonged to the age bracket of 37-44. This also implies that the respondents are still in their prime careers and they still have the opportunity to venture in research activities. The finding corroborates with the study of Vilorio, *et.al.* (2017) stating that the age of respondents ranged from 37-44 years they are at the height of their career as educators, capable of doing their jobs. For the highest educational attainment, most of the respondents garnered 101 or 78.9 percent with Master's units, 14 or 10.9 percent of them were MA graduates, 12 or 9.4 percent were MA with Ed/PhD units; and 1 or 8 percent was an EdD/PhD. The finding implies that majority of the respondents were with MA units. They are pursuing their professional education through enrolling their respective master's degrees. However, Master's degree or Doctorate degree is not a requirement for teachers to qualify them to teach in the elementary level. They likewise, wanted to be promoted because if one has higher educational attainment, there are more opportunities for promotion. As to teaching position, there were 73 or 57.03 percent of the respondents who were handling a Teacher III position; 28 or 21.88 percent were Teacher I, 15 or 11.72 percent were Teacher II; 11 or 8.59 percent were Master Teacher I and 1 or .78 percent was a Master Teacher II. The findings imply that majority of the respondents were Teacher III. Further, the result was related to the educational attainment whereby majority of the respondents earned their MA units and their number of years in teaching had already sufficed their promotion for the position of Teacher III (DepEd Guidelines in Reclassification of Teachers). Baer, *et.al* (2017) found in their study that most of the respondents were Teacher III with an average of ten years in teaching.

Along training, conference and seminars attended relative to research, 119 or 92.97 percent attended local training, conference and seminars, 7 or 5.47 percent of them attended regional and 2 or 1.56 percent attended national and no one attended international level. On these results, it can be gleaned that most of the respondents attended local training, conference and seminars in research. Many of them have no chance to attend international research trainings, conferences, and seminars.

Level of Research Skills of Teachers

Thus, in order to develop research skills, one must conduct or engage in research on his or her own. He /She can write a research paper specifically its parts. There is a need to develop and hone the research skills of the respondents. Such problems in the classroom or school that the teachers encounter must be addressed which is a collaborative effort between the teachers and heads of the school. Through this study, it is imperative to formulate a Research Capacity Building Program in order to develop research culture: the development of writing and research skills among the teachers in the district, likewise empowering the research skills of teachers.

Level of Research Competencies on Knowledge of Teachers.

On the level of research competencies on knowledge. Further, the table reflects that the indicator "I know how to determine subjects and draw participants for my study" got the highest mean value of 3.08 described as "Moderately Competent." However, the indicator "I know the critical skills needed to read and summarize the contents of the literature" got the lowest mean value of 2.93 described as "Moderately Competent." All the indicators on the level of competence of the respondents were classified as "Moderately Competent", with an overall mean value of 3.00 described as "Moderately Competent." The result of the study implies that the respondents demonstrate moderately competent level of research competencies on knowledge; although few of them in the district were knowledgeable on research endeavor but generally the respondents were not knowledgeable on research activities namely: choosing a research topic, /research problem, literature review, formulation of objectives, research questions, and hypotheses, research design, organization and presentation of data.

Significant Relationship between Profile and Research Skills of Sta. Lucia District Teachers

These results highlight the importance of experience and accumulated knowledge over time in fostering better research abilities among educators. However, the study indicates that the other profile variables, namely Sex, Highest Educational Attainment, Teaching Position, and Number of seminars Attended, do not exhibit a significant relationship with research skills among the teachers. This suggests that factors such as sex, educational qualifications, teaching position, and the number of seminars attended do not significantly influence the research skills of teachers in this particular district.

Significant Relationship between profile and research competence on knowledge of Sta. Lucia District Teachers, the results of a study investigating the relationship between different profiles of the respondents and their research competence. The findings suggest no significant relationship between age and research competence among teachers in the Sta. Lucia District ($r = 0.373$, $p = 0.000$). This implies that teachers' age does not play a determining role in their research competence, indicating similar levels of research competence regardless of age. Similarly, the study findings indicate no significant relationships between sex ($r = -0.128$, $p = 0.149$) and highest educational attainment ($r = -0.091$, $p = 0.309$) with research competence. This suggests that neither gender nor educational level significantly influences research competence among teachers, indicating that these profile factors may not affect research competence.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based from the findings, the following conclusions were drawn: 1. The profile of the public elementary school teachers in Sta. Lucia District manifest different profile variables. 2. The teachers in the public elementary school of Sta. Lucia, can still manifest higher skills in their level of research. 3. The teachers can still improve their level of research competencies. 4. Age positively impacts research skills in teachers from the Sta. Lucia District, emphasizing the role of experience. 5. Teaching position has a significant relationship. Other variables mentioned in the study does not show impact on research competence. 6. The Research Capacity Building Program for Sta. Lucia Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are hereby offered: The formulated Research Capacity Building Program maybe presented to the Department of Education through Sta. Lucia District. The result of the study and the developed training program may be disseminated to the Public-School Teachers in Sta. Lucia District. Teachers should engage in professional development, collaborate with other educators, practice research in the classroom, and stay informed with educational research. It is suggested that the District may design research-focused programs specifically for all teachers. Consider the functionality of the research capacity building program for teachers to maximize its effectiveness and practicality, thus preserving its validity and timeliness.

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