



Exploring Research Challenges and Strategies: An In-Depth Study of Teachers' Experiences on Research Culture and Capabilities

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Introduction

Research writing involves intricacies that other teachers cannot understand. From the conceptualization, to writing, and publication, these processes have a detrimental effect which would encourage them to be research enthusiast. It can be noted as well the importance of resources, support, and the mentoring especially to the newbies.

Teachers' job is one of the most complex in the world (Day, 2023; Rawlings et al., 2023). They have multiple tasks to do aside from teaching as mentioned by Dar and Jan (2023). Hence, this leads them to have the lack of time to do research studies which would eventually help solve classroom problems (Montano et al., 2023). In the Philippines, teachers are mandated to come up with School-Based Action Research (SBAR), however, they still have least appreciation and understanding (Comon & Corpuz, 2024)

In addition, research writing can be daunting. Lack of internet connectivity and the resources will not motivate teachers to come up with more studies. They need journals where they can have the basis of the literatures as well as to see the immediacy of topics concerning their students' learning.

Furthermore, similar studies on teachers' challenges in research writing was noted (Heise et al., 2023; Huang & Chang, 2023). With this, some of them relied mainly on Artificial Intelligence (AI) such as the ChatGPT (Giglio & Costa, 2023; Katar et al., 2023). Although, there were ideas provided for clarity, however, overreliance leads teachers to have poor research studies (Bhushan, 2023). Majority of which are not eligible for publications in high indexed journals.

Similarly, their research studies ended to be snapped in the predatory journals. This increases the questions of trustworthiness and ethical standards. Through this research study, the researcher would like to provide a perspective to how these challenges can be associated to teachers' drive and engagement.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to determine the challenges and the factors as experienced by teachers in doing research studies. Specifically, it answered the following questions:

1. What are the challenges of teachers in doing research studies;
2. What factors can be associated with these challenges of teachers in doing research studies?
3. What research capability strategies should be implemented to strengthen research culture in the public schools?

Scope and Limitation

This study employing qualitative-phenomenology delved into challenges and factors as experienced by teachers in Region XII. The informants were teachers who served as the research coordinators in the elementary level. This study was conducted in the Schools Division Office of Tacurong, Sultan Kudarat, Cotabato, and Kidapawan City during the Second Semester of the School Year 2023-2024.

Research Design

A qualitative-phenomenology was carried out in this study. Qualitative is provides perspectives that research can be conducted in different contexts (Yan et al., 2023). It can be in narratology, case study, multiple case study, ethnography, and grounded theory. This means that there are no statistical tools needed to interpret the findings.

Meanwhile, a phenomenology focuses on the lived experiences of humans (Gagura, 2023). This means that meaning should be derived based on their discourse. In the same manner, this methodology is particular in making in-depth analysis of how these experiences provided meanings to people (Stolz, 2023).

Generally, this paper is qualitative since was not interpreted using numbers and statistics. The core ideas of this process are to provide the readers of how these challenges could be associated with the problems of teachers in coming up with research studies. Hence, the provisions of ideas manifested the crucial role of the approach in the interpretation of the research findings.

Informants

The informants of the study were taken from the Divisions of Cotabato, Kidapawan City, Tacurong, and Sultan Kudarat. They were the research coordinators of an elementary school. They were interviewed using the interview guide questions and were chosen using the purposive sampling (Junus et al., 2023).

Data Gathering Procedure

It was the duty of the researcher to ask permission from the authorities. A letter was sent to the Regional Director, to the Schools Division Superintendent, to the District Supervisor, and the School Principal. The approved letter was the basis for the conduct of the interview among the identified informants.

The informants were briefed about the study. They were provided enough information. To uphold the credibility of the research, the researcher codified their identities. This means that their names were changed to aliases.

A consent-to-participate form was provided to each of the informants. They were interviewed during their most convenient day and time. After the interview, a token of gratitude was given to them. Conversely, their responses were recorded and transcribed. The data analyst identified the significant themes.

Data Analysis

The recorded and transcribed data were marked. This provided clarity and easy access on the data. Thematic analysis was done to determine the significant themes from the responses. These statements indicated meanings based on the experiences of the informants (Shoufan, 2023).

Results and Discussions

Challenges of teachers in doing research studies

The first research question provides themes on the challenges of teachers in doing research studies. There are five organizing themes revealed from the responses.

Time Constraints. Teachers have a multitude of responsibilities beyond just conducting research. They are often tasked with preparing lesson plans, grading assignments, attending meetings, and engaging in professional development activities. Balancing these duties alongside research endeavors can be extremely challenging. With this, it can be inferred that their roles as teachers are not only situated within the contexts of teaching. Teachers need to juggle their time between teaching and the ancillaries assigned to them.

In one of the responses, it navigated the situation wherein a teacher cannot really focus in doing research.

“The common problems encountered in doing action research. First, the time constraints. Balancing research responsibilities with teaching demands are difficult or challenging to educators.” (Informant 1, Q1.1 L 1-5)

The need to balance their time leads to a challenge among teachers. In one of the informant’s responses:

“So, the problem that I encountered making the action research is the most difficult challenge is time constraint or balance time balancing time. So especially teachers, we have lots of things to do. Maintaining quality research and teaching commitment is often the most demanding aspect of action research.” (Informant 3, Q1.1, L 46-53)

This is also the context of the narrative of the next informant. According to her:

“The most difficult challenge for educators or teachers is to balance the time between research responsibilities and teaching demands maybe due to conflict of time and schedule.” (Informant 6, Q 1.1 L 105-109)

For Sato (2023) teachers are encouraged to engage in ongoing professional development to enhance their teaching skills and stay abreast of educational trends. Attending workshops, seminars, and training sessions further reduces the time available for research. Like anyone else, teachers have personal

commitments outside of work, such as family obligations or other personal pursuits. Balancing these commitments with professional responsibilities can leave little discretionary time for research (Ray, 2023).

Topic Selection. Teachers who do not have enough background in research often face this predicament. The selection of the topic should be based on the gaps and the problems. However, to those who lack this ability they often believe that research should only putting all words without giving emphasis on this matter. In fact, topic selection hampered teachers to come up with quality and timely paper.

This theme is in consonance with the statement of one of the informants. She stated that:

“For me, in conducting research, one problem that can impact the progress and success of the study is choosing the right topic. Because in selecting a research topic that is relevant and engaging is crucial for the success of the research.” (Informant 2, Q 1.1 L 29-34)

She further elaborated that:

“So, the most challenging aspect among common research problem is often choosing the right topic. This is because engaging the right topic a clear, feasible researchers must ensure that the topic is specific enough to focus yet broad enough to provide meaningful insights. Choosing the right topic requires considering available resources, time constraint and personal interest to ensure the research can be conducted successfully within the parameter.” (Informant 2, Q 1.2 L 35-45)

Teachers need to choose a topic that is manageable within their time and resource constraints (Lim, 2023). Topics that are too broad can become unmanageable, while topics that are too narrow may not provide enough material for comprehensive research. For a research project to be successful, teachers need to be genuinely interested in the topic. Finding a topic that aligns with their passions and professional interests, while also meeting academic requirements, can be difficult (Khan et al., 2023).

Data Objectivity. In some cases, interpretations can sometimes difficult for the researchers. Generating the implications need thorough understanding of how the data navigated within. Primarily, this entails that there are some data that are beyond the understanding of the researcher.

This experience is further expressed by one of the informants. She explained that:

“Maintaining objectivity, ensuring objectivity in data collection and analysis can be challenging. As a teacher, we may have personal biases or preferences that could influence their interpretations.” (Informant 7, Q 1.2 L 132-136)

Researchers must be aware of their own biases and ensure that these do not influence their interpretation of the data. This requires a high level of self-awareness and a commitment to objectivity, which can be difficult to maintain. Statistically significant results may not always be practically relevant or meaningful in the real-world context. Researchers need to discern the practical implications of their findings and not overstate the importance of statistically significant results (Aldoseri et al., 2023; Thibault et al., 2023).

Limited Resources. Research needs to be done extensively. With the availability of resources such as journals, e-books, internet connectivity, and the like can be of great help to researchers. However, the absence of these may also have a big impact on the interpretation and the deeper understanding of the researcher to the problem being investigated. Researchers need foremost the deeper knowledge of the intricacies of the problem.

Thus, it was shared during the interview that:

“The most difficult is the limited access to resources, resources such as funding, research materials and supportive infrastructure may hinder the progress and scope of action research projects.” (Informant 8, Q.2 L 141-145)

High-quality research often depends on access to comprehensive and relevant data. Limited resources can hinder access to necessary databases, journals, and other academic resources that require subscriptions or purchase. Without access to these resources, researchers might struggle to build a solid foundation of existing knowledge and literature for their studies as stated in the findings of Santika et al. (2023).

Research Interests. Not all teachers have shown interest towards research. There are those who have negative perspectives about it. For them, it is difficult since many of them lack the drive and the motivation to do so. Another, their experiences and their backgrounds on research was too weak for them to love its significance in the parlance of teaching. Teachers who love research can expand horizons and find solace in it.

To support, an informant shared that:

“Sustaining Momentum. Maintaining motivation and momentum throughout the action research process over an extended period can be challenging, especially amidst competing demands and priorities.” (Informant 11, Q 1.2 L 196-200)

Research is a demanding and time-consuming endeavor that requires sustained effort and commitment. Without genuine interest in the research topic, it can be difficult for teachers to stay motivated and engaged throughout the research process. This lack of motivation can lead to lower quality work and incomplete projects (Bom, 2023).

Challenges of teachers in doing research studies

Global Theme	Organizing Themes	Basic Themes
Roadblocks in Developing Research Studies	Time constraints	Teachers do not have an ample time in doing research.
	Topic Selection	Teachers can hardly figure out the topic which needed to be explored.
	Data Objectivity	Teachers' ability to interpret the data is a challenge.
	Limited Resources	Teachers cannot work well when resources are not available.
	Research Interests	Teachers' interest hampers them to conduct research studies.

Factors associated with the challenges of teachers in doing research studies

The second research question provides data on the factors associated with the challenges of teachers in doing research studies. Lack of experience, lack of guidance, and limited time are the organizing themes which came out from the responses.

Lack of Guidance. Many teachers may not have received formal training in research methods during their education. Without proper guidance, they may struggle with fundamental aspects of research design, data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Conducting research can be intimidating, especially for those who are inexperienced. Lack of guidance can lead to uncertainty and lack of confidence in their ability to carry out research effectively, potentially discouraging teachers from even starting.

During the course of the interview, an informant shared that:

“So, the reasons behind these difficulties are access to support. So, there are limited mentorship, collaboration opportunities and institutional support within the research efforts. So, the slow progress, it can affect by balancing teaching and research responsibilities will slow down the progress of research projects.” (Informant 8, Q 2.1, 2.2 L 101-109)

Crafting a solid research question, choosing the right methodology, and designing a study that can effectively address the research question are complex tasks (Akhavan & Jalali, 2023). Guidance from experienced researchers or mentors is crucial in this stage to avoid common pitfalls and ensure the research is well-structured. Guidance can help teachers identify and utilize available resources more effectively. This includes knowing which databases to search for literature, how to use research software, and where to find funding opportunities (Sauer & Seuring, 2023).

Limited Time. Time is crucial when doing research. With the complex and dynamic tasks vested upon teachers, they could not handle anymore the demands of time. As teachers, they do not only do teaching but they need to submit reports. These work demands can lessen the motivation of teachers to engage into research. Majority of the informants shared the same fate.

One of them confirmed this by saying that:

“For me is limited time. Teachers have demanding schedule filled with teaching responsibilities leaving little time for research activities.” (Informant 3, Q 2.1 L 39-41)

The same feeling was shared by an informant because of the demand of the teaching profession.

“So, I think is the limited time teachers have demanding schedules filled with teaching responsibilities leaving little time for research activities.” (Informant 4, Q 2.1 L 63-66)

In the same vein,

“Okay. Limited time. Teachers have demanding schedules filled with teaching responsibilities, leaving little time for research activities.” (Informant 5, Q 2.1 L 70-73)

At one point, an informant revealed that:

“Due to limited time, teachers have demanding schedules filled with teaching responsibilities, including the auxiliary responsibilities, ancillary rather, ancillary activities that is being placed on the shoulders of the teachers, leaving little time for research activities that is being placed on the shoulders of the teachers, leaving little time for research activities.” (Informant 6, Q 2.1 L 78-86)

The work demand has been the culprit according to the informant. She stressed that:

“Factors that contribute to the challenges teachers face in conducting research, limited time because teachers have demanding schedules.” (Informant 7, Q 2.1 L 91-94)

Limited time is a significant factor associated with the challenges faced by teachers in conducting research. Teachers typically have extensive teaching responsibilities, including preparing lesson plans, delivering lectures, and engaging with students. These duties take up a substantial portion of their workday, leaving little time for research activities. In addition to teaching and grading, teachers are often required to participate in meetings, complete administrative paperwork, and fulfill other bureaucratic responsibilities (Mijwil et al., 2023). These tasks can be time-consuming and detract from the time available for research (Cotton et al., 2024).

Factors associated with the challenges of teachers in doing research studies

Global Theme	Organizing Themes	Basic Themes
Components with the Challenges in doing Research Studies	Lack of guidance	There are teachers who badly needed the guidance to come up with research studies.
	Limited Time	Teachers have multiple tasks as well as face the difficulties in juggling time to teaching and researching.

Research capability strategies to be implemented in strengthening research culture in the public schools

The last research question divulges the research capability strategies to be implemented in strengthening research culture in the public schools.

Mentorship. Mentorship provides teachers with the guidance and support they need to navigate the complexities of conducting research. Experienced mentors can help less experienced teachers with various aspects of research. Mentors can help teachers identify relevant and impactful research questions that align with their interests and the needs of their students. Having a mentor provides reassurance and boosts the confidence of teachers who may feel unsure about their research abilities. Regular feedback and encouragement from mentors can help teachers overcome self-doubt and stay motivated throughout their research projects.

In line with this, an informant shared that:

“By providing training and mentorship opportunities, educators can enhance the research skills and confidence, leading to increased participation in research activities.” (Informant 4, Q 3.2 L 66-70)

This is also within the message of an informant. She said that:

“Professional development and mentorships by providing trainings and mentorship opportunities. Educators can enhance their research skills and confidence, leading to increased participation in research activities.” (Informant 7, Q 3.2 L 102-106)

Implementing a formal mentorship program signals institutional support for research (Asampong et al., 2023). It shows that the school values research and is willing to invest in developing its teachers' research capabilities. This can lead to a more research-oriented culture within the school (Owan et al., 2024).

Recognition and Incentives. Teachers will become motivated when efforts in research are recognized. Coupled with incentives, they could double their time to become research-oriented individuals. By giving teacher due credit to their accomplishments, they will become self-driven to make expand their horizons in research. Providing them with incentives will awaken their interests since process in research also needs money for them to gather the data. One of the best examples is the provision of reciprocity to informants after the course of the interview.

As mentioned,

“So, to help researchers captivated with research is to give recognition and incentive, recognize and rewards teachers who can fulfill activities and professional advancement opportunities. Research grant incentives offering funding and recognition for research, knowledge sharing, and collective problem-solving allowing educators to leverage each other's expertise and high-quality research.” (Informant 2, Q 3.2, 3.3 L 39-48)

In line with this, an informant also stated that:

“Recognize and reward teachers who engage in research activities through awards, honors, or professional advancement opportunities.” (Informant 11, Q 3.1 L 164-167)

Recognizing teachers' research efforts with awards and certificates can boost their morale and motivate them to continue their research endeavors (Kadikilo et al., 2023). Offering professional development credits for research activities can serve as formal recognition of teachers' efforts and contribute to their career advancement. Financial rewards can serve as strong motivators for teachers to engage in research. These can help cover research-related expenses or provide personal benefits (Lindgreen et al., 2023; Fussy, 2024).

Research Trainings. Research skills can be honed to training teachers to be unleash their full potentials. Acknowledging their weaknesses will enable them to listen to experts from the field who would help them to master their craft. Trainings will uncover the hidden skills that teachers have to engage into research. They will be able to understand that teaching is not only the factor that improve them being as teachers but also through research.

Informants shared the common theme on the importance of research training for teachers. In one of the interviews conducted, an informant stated that:

“To help researchers get hooked with research, as the research coordinator, I could suggest to offer training and resources. Provide researchers with access to training workshops, online resources, and literature relevant to their research interests. Equipping researchers with the necessary skills and knowledge can help them overcome barriers and feel more prepared to tackle research challenges.” (Informant 12, Q 3.1 L 173-182)

Informant 13 shared the same thought.

“First, the professional development. offer training programs and workshops on research methodologies, data analysis techniques, and academic writing to enhance teachers' research skills.” (Informant 13, Q 3.1 L 198-202)

This corroborates to the statement of Informant 14.

“Okay, so one that is the professional development and mentorship. By providing training and mentorship opportunities, educators can enhance their research skills and confidence, leading to increased participation in research activities.” (Informant 14, Q 3.2 L 225-230)

Providing ongoing professional development and training for teachers and administrators is crucial (Martin et al., 2023). This includes workshops, seminars, and courses on research methodologies, data analysis, and integrating research into teaching practices. Empowering educators with the skills and knowledge to conduct and apply research fosters a culture of inquiry and evidence-based practice (Palmares & Panizal, 2023).

Research capability strategies to be implemented in strengthening research culture in the public schools

Global Theme	Organizing Themes	Basic Themes
Schemes to strengthen the Research Culture	Mentorship	Teachers need experts to help them become researchers.
	Recognition and Incentive	Teachers need to be recognized and provided with incentives.
	Research Trainings	Teachers' need to be developed through research capability activities.

Implications for Practice

Challenges has been part and parcel to become a good researcher. Teachers can see the different facets that need proper improvement. As they navigate research, teachers have to overcome those things by nurturing their full potentials and take part in building learners to become the best version of themselves.

The dire need to influence teachers towards research has called for a louder voice. This means that teachers are not just confined within teaching but also use their prowess in research to navigate classroom and societal problems. Through this, they can empower themselves to take part in nation-building.

Similarly, teachers need mentors who have deeper experience in research. These people can serve as their partners in searching for gaps as well as problems that need to be explored. Also, they will be taught on how to use the online world in expanding their horizons and perspectives especially in searching for information.

Finally, teachers need to be the catalyst for change. Through research, they can discover innovations that will free their learners from the bondage of problems that have curtailed their learnings. Teachers are the partners of these students to change the culture of teaching through the aid of research.

Implications for Future Research

Studying teachers' experiences with research culture and capabilities is a rich area that offers insights into enhancing educational practices and professional development. Explore the specific professional development needs of teachers related to research skills and methodologies. Identify gaps in existing training programs and develop interventions to enhance teachers' research capabilities, including workshops, online courses, and collaborative research projects.

There is a need to Examine the influence of cultural factors on teachers' attitudes towards research. Compare experiences across different cultural contexts to identify common challenges and effective strategies for promoting a research-informed teaching practice. At one hand, investigate

strategies for integrating research findings into classroom practice. Explore how teachers navigate the process of translating research into actionable strategies and overcoming barriers such as lack of time, relevance of research findings, and conflicting pedagogical approaches.

On the other hand, empower teachers to take ownership of their professional development and research agendas that influences their attitudes towards research and their capacity to contribute to educational scholarship. This can be done by identifying policy levers, incentives, and support mechanisms that can foster a conducive environment for teachers to engage in research and contribute to evidence-based education practices.

Concluding Remarks

The challenges faced by teachers in conducting research studies are multifaceted and require careful consideration to support their engagement in scholarly activities. Time constraints, topic selection, limited resources, and varying levels of research interest present significant barriers that can hinder teachers' ability to contribute to the advancement of educational knowledge.

Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort from educational institutions, policymakers, and professional organizations. Providing structured mentorship programs, resources, and professional development opportunities can empower teachers with the knowledge and skills needed to engage in research effectively. Moreover, allocating dedicated time and recognizing the importance of research as a core component of professional practice can signal institutional support for teachers' scholarly endeavors.

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Part III: Interview Guide Questions

Research Questions	Interview Questions	Probing Questions
1. What are the challenges faced by teachers in doing research studies?	What problems do you encounter in doing action research?	Which of these is the most difficult? Why?
2. What factors can be associated with these challenges of teachers in doing research studies?	What do you think are the reasons behind these difficulties?	How did it affect the development of the research?
3. What research capability strategies should be implemented to strengthen research culture in the public schools?	What can you suggest to help researchers get hooked with research?	Which of these can have an impact? Why?