



EXPLORING TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS, CHALLENGES, AND MOTIVATION IN CONDUCTING RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

This study explores teachers' perception, challenges, and motivations in conducting research that led the proponents to the improvement of School's Salik Suri Workplan for the succeeding school years. Respondents of the study are one-hundred forty-six (146) teachers from Tanza National Trade School with at least one year teaching experience and has no or one (1) year experience in conducting research. The researcher used Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods Research Design to explore both qualitative and quantitative sides of the study. The survey questionnaire used was a validated teacher-made instrument from the study of Ulla (2017). Twenty-five (25) questions from the questionnaire were about perceptions and challenges of teachers in conducting research. The researcher also conducted an interview to selected teachers. The interview focused only on their motivation to conduct research. Findings revealed that the respondents had positive perceptions in conducting research. Teacher respondents know the impacts and benefits of conducting research on the teaching – learning process. However, teacher respondents had challenges in conducting research due to lack of knowledge in research, time management, heavy teaching load and insufficient financial support from the institution. As for their motivation to conduct research, teacher respondents are motivated to conduct research for professional growth and development. Teacher researchers also need moral, emotional, and financial support from the school as a motivation to conduct research. Knowing teacher's perception, challenges, and motivations in conducting research especially the neophytes will help the policy makers and school administration to address the needs of teachers to preserve the research culture.

Keywords: *Perception, Challenges, Motivation, Research*

INTRODUCTION

Research is one of the challenges in ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) integration. According to Nguyen (2007), as compared to other nations in the world, East Asia is lagging in creating and promoting the basic level of regional and integration policy and harmonization in the field of Education to achieve common objectives and interests. In the ASEAN Integration last 2015, it was identified that there are five (5) important issues in education. These are the (a) ability to speak English, (b) quality of basic education, (c) competencies of graduates, (d) comparability of degrees, and (e) quality of teachers. Thus, the quality of teachers is outlying in terms of professional experience, academic qualification, and most importantly research.

“When a teacher knows whether and why the teaching is effective, I think the teacher will be a happier teacher, really.” According to Hairon Salleh (2014) on Policy & Leadership Studies Academic Group. No two persons are alike, which is the same with classroom. Problems existing in one classroom maybe different from others. This situation is an opportunity for teachers to look closely on the problems existing to resolve and make improvements (Salleh, 2014). Moreover, school leaders will be able to give support on teacher’s beliefs and assumptions on effective teaching strategies. This will also lead to innovations and as well as teacher’s professional development. According to Suskind (2016), conducting research is the key to teachers’ professional growth as they seek for new learnings. They become innovators and curriculum changers for the improvement of the education system. Teachers doing research can make students’ learning intensified as they start to listen, analyze and look deeper on what they can do more as a teacher – researcher on the four corners of classroom.

Conducting classroom research also gives the following benefits to teachers (Byrne, 2018): a) they may lead other teachers to new and evidence-based teaching strategies and innovations, b) classroom research is small-scale and can be done easily, c) it can be done inside the classroom and on your convenient, and d) they may also lead psychologists and other experts to new directions and learnings. Despite of having advantages and benefits in doing research, Anzaldo (2019) on their research study states that having those benefits on professional development, workloads and ancillary roles performed by teachers remain a hindrance on pursuing to conduct research. Sometimes teachers also feel intimidated on doing research as they perceived it to be exhaustive and complex (Salleh, 2014). According to Ospanova (2016), doing research helps teachers on professional development by becoming reflective thinkers and confident to solve problems quickly. Since teachers have the firsthand experiences on the problem existing inside the four corners of the classroom, they are the one who can give solutions to it. Aside from its impact on professional growth, many studies have shown that conducting research improves the quality of teaching and learning process (Ulla, 2017). Teachers are highly encouraged by the Department of Education and Commission on Higher Education to produce school-based research.

Though it is evident in the Philippines that teachers have challenges in conducting a research study, only few research has been conducted. While in other countries, they are focused on addressing these issues. In Bangladesh, Sarkar (2014) found out that the challenges in conducting research are collection of data, recruitment of participants and problems in using survey questionnaires. Due to limited time of teachers and heavy workloads, doing mentioned challenges hindered teachers to finish their research. While on the study of Zhou (2012), teachers have difficulty in understanding their own study, lack of trust on their institution, limited time and resources at the library, lack of guidance or knowledge on research methodology, and feel of pressure and frustration on the process of doing research. On the study of Tindowen, Guzman & Macanang (2019), they determined the difficulties of teachers on the process of conducting the research, such as on searching for literatures, presentation of results and collection of data. Aside from the process, other factors adding to hindrance on finishing a research paper are workload, anxiety and inadequate knowledge on writing a research paper.

On year 2016, the Department of Education has adopted the Basic Education Research Agenda (BERA). It promotes the conduct and utilization of basic education research in the Philippines to improve the quality of service of the department. Supervisors, school heads, teachers and even non-teaching personnel are encouraged to conduct research to address important issues in the education system of the country. (DepEd Order No. 39, s.2016). Being part of the Key Result Area (KRA) on Individual Performance Commitment and Review, conducting research became part of teacher's evaluation.

In the Division of Cavite Province, Seven Program Banners were introduced to address the demands of the Department of Education. One of the seven programs is Program Salik Suri. It was established to develop research studies relative to curriculum implementation, utilization of findings and policy formulations based on research specially within the division. With the support of the former and current principal of Tanza National Trade School, an organization was created to strengthen the culture of research within the institution. TNTS STARS (Strategic Technical Association of Researchers in School) was established and been developing researchers since 2015 through Project 3PART (3 Phase Action and Basic Research Training) which is an initiative of the current research coordinator and principal of the school.

Project 3PART is a training scheme with three phases that starts at the end of the school year to fully maximize the time of teachers during vacation. Phase 1 includes the seminar workshop of teachers, Phase 2 is the presentation of research proposals and lastly, Phase 3 is the presentation of final paper. At the end of each Phases, the researchers are expected to submit their outputs a week after. It was initially conducted last 2018 and was being done every year. However, doing research is not popular to teachers in school. Only few were accepting the challenge of conducting and finishing research. The ratio of produced research to the number of teachers is far from 1 is to 1 ratio. From the previous school years, research produced in the school does not go

beyond thirty considering that there are two-hundred sixty teachers on Tanza National Trade School.

According to Ulla (2018), teachers are uninterested and demotivated to conduct research despite of the high demand of the department to teachers. Factors such as workload and timetable are few of their reasons to ignore the good effects of conducting research on their professional growth. Knowing the perception, challenges, and motivation of teachers to do research will lead the proponents to the improvement of Project 3PART Workplan for the succeeding school years. Between the perception and challenges of teachers in conducting research is their motivation to finish the research. Thus, this study aims to fill the gaps on the literatures to provide additional study in this certain topic. Furthermore, this study also looks on the common perception and challenges of teachers from previous studies in conducting research.

Research Questions

The study aimed to explore teachers' perception, challenges, and motivations in conducting research. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the perceptions of teachers in conducting research?
2. What are the challenges encountered by the teachers in the conduct of research?
3. How do teachers get motivated to conduct research?

METHODOLOGY

Respondents of this study were randomly selected teachers from Tanza National Trade School, a Technical-Vocational School in the Division of Cavite Province. A total of one-hundred forty-eight (148) teacher-respondents from Junior and Senior high school were selected through simple random sampling.

The study used a Survey Questionnaire and Individual Written Interview. The Survey Questionnaire used was a validated teacher-made instrument from the study of Ulla (2017). Permission to use the survey questionnaire was given by the author. It is composed of twenty-five (25) questions, ten (10) items refer to the perception of teachers and fifteen (15) items are for the challenges of teachers in conducting research. All items in the questionnaire followed a 4-point Likert Scale format of Totally Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Totally Disagree. The survey questionnaire was made in a Google Form and was distributed online since the teachers were in skeletal workforce.

In Individual Written Interview, all respondents answered the questions. It focused on their motivation to conduct research. Interview questions were sent after

accomplishing the survey questionnaire through email due to health protocols and implementation of skeletal workforce.

For data gathering procedures, the researcher provided a permission letter to conduct the study. Another letter was secured to inform the head teachers and coordinators of each department on the conduct of the study. Upon the approval of the letter, researchers distributed the questionnaires to the teacher-respondents through their emails. After the retrieval of the questionnaire, the researchers tabulated and processed the data for the statistical analysis.

The present study used an explanatory sequential mixed methods design as it will explore the perception, challenges, and motivation of teachers in conducting research. This type of research design was used since on phase 1, quantitative data were collected through survey questionnaires. This study made use of frequency, weighted mean, and standard deviation to present the quantitative data. For phase 2, written interview was conducted to fully understand the responses of the respondents and to understand their motivations in conducting research. All responses through written interview were gathered and categorized into different themes and subthemes.

RESULTS

The survey questionnaire was divided into two parts, the first part is about the perception of teacher-respondents in conducting research. To quantify the result, percentages of totally agree and agree were combined against the percentages of totally disagree and disagree.

Table 1. Teacher-Respondents' Perceptions in Conducting Research.

Statements	Totally Agree / Agree	Totally Disagree / Disagree
1. Doing research is valuable to the teaching and learning process for me as a teacher.	100%	0%
2. Doing research is valuable to the teaching and learning process for my students.	99%	1%
3. Doing research will positively impact my students' learning.	99%	1%
4. Doing research project will positively impact my teaching.	99%	1%
5. I view myself as a teacher-researcher.	87%	13%
6. Doing research will develop and enhance my skills professionally.	99%	1%

7. Doing research encourages critical self-reflection.	98%	2%
8. Doing research engages teachers into a more systematic examination of instruction or teaching practice.	99%	1%
9. Doing research enables teachers to examine and explore classroom and school problems and their solutions.	99%	1%
10. Doing research helps teachers to acquire new knowledge for classroom teaching.	100%	0%

Table 2. Teacher-Respondents' Challenges in Conducting Research.

Statements	Totally Agree / Agree	Totally Disagree / Disagree
11. I do not have enough knowledge how to do action research.	56%	44%
12. I find doing research as time consuming.	48%	52%
13. I am so busy with my own teaching practice and personal life to do research.	64%	36%
14. I do not have much support from the school to do research.	16%	84%
15. I have no interest to do research at all.	22%	78%
16. I am not motivated to do research.	41%	59%
17. I have a low proficiency in English that hinders me to do research.	27%	73%
18. I do not see the importance of doing research in my professional life.	10%	90%
19. There is insufficient reference materials (journals, research books, research reports etc.) in the library or internet.	28%	72%
20. There is a shortage of training and seminar on research activities.	34%	66%
21. There is insufficient budget in the school to undertake research.	42%	58%
22. There is lack of recognitions to conducted research activities.	13%	87%

23. Heavy teaching load affects the practice of research.	78%	22%
24. There is lack of clear role of teachers in the school to conduct research.	36%	64%
25. Teacher's involvement in action research should be one criterion of promotion.	73%	27%

Table 3. Teacher Respondents' Motivation to Conduct Research

Themes	Sub-themes
Motivation	Work Promotion
	Solution-based
	Not Motivated
Support Needed	Seminars and Trainings
	Support from family and friends
	Financial Support

DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the percentage of teacher-respondents' perception in conducting research. It can be gleaned that majority of the teachers know that conducting research has a major role in teaching-learning process. They also believed that research could help them enhance and develop their skills professionally. Moreover, teachers also believe that doing research could also encourage critical self-reflection and engages them into a more systematic examination of instruction or teaching practice. However, there are still thirteen percent (13%) of the teacher-respondents cannot see themselves as a researcher. Overall, teachers have very positive perception in conducting research which is equivalent to an average of ninety-eight percent (98%).

Table 2 shows the teacher-respondents' challenges percentage in conducting research. Unlike on their perception which are all positive, teachers have different responses in challenges they are facing in conducting research. Teachers' major challenges in conducting research includes conflict with personal time (64%), teaching load (78%) and criteria for work promotion (73%). Teachers believe that conducting research will consume a lot of time that will affect their teaching practice and personal life. Heavy teaching load also affects their time to conduct research. Teachers also believe that conducting research is not part of the criterion for promotion. Meanwhile, teacher-respondents have contradicting response on several challenges such as knowledge in conducting research, time management, motivation, and budget. However, most of the teachers disagree on most of the challenges mentioned. Teachers still believe that these

are not challenges they encountered or will encounter in conducting research. Teachers believe that they can get support from the school (84%), have interest in conducting research (78%), and do not have low proficiency in English that hinders them to do research (73%). Teachers are also aware that there are plenty of resources that they can get from the internet and library (72%) and there are a lot of research seminars and trainings available (66%). Lastly, teachers know that there are several awards and recognitions they could receive if they conduct research (87%), and they know the clear role of teachers in the school to conduct research (64%).

Based on the findings, there were only few challenges faced by the teacher-respondents in conducting research studies and most of them were aware of the benefits of conducting research.

On the other hand, written interview findings pertaining to their motivation are presented in this part. When respondents were asked if they have experience in conducting research, most of the respondents answered “No” or “Not Yet” (63%). Most of them answered heavy teaching load, lack of self-confidence, some has no experience in conducting research because they are not yet done with their Masters’ Degree, and few answered that they were not interested at all. While thirty-seven percent (37%) of the teacher-respondents who answered yes is because they see it as an opportunity for work promotion and professional development, and to improve teaching-learning process.

When teacher-respondents asked their motivation to conduct research, most of them answered is work promotion, and professional or career growth (64%). While others gave more meaningful answer such as to give solutions on the problems encountered in the teaching-learning process (23%) and personal growth (10%). There were still few who answered they were not motivated at all.

For the last question on the interview, teacher-respondents were asked about the kind of support they need to do research. Most of the respondents answered technical support in conducting research which includes mentoring and attendance to research seminars and trainings (52%), others answered emotional, mental, and social support from family and colleagues (28%), and the rest answered financial support from the school (20%).

Conclusions

As a conclusion, (1) most of the teacher-respondents understood that conducting research plays a vital role on their professional development and on the teaching-learning process. Also, (2) teachers see heavy workload as a hindrance for them to be able to do research, and at the same time, conducting research was perceived as an additional workload for them. Lastly, (3) work promotion has a heavy impact on why teachers wanted to do research.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following are the recommendations of the researchers:

1. School research coordinator should submit research report to the school head and head teachers and make a request letter to lessen workload of teachers with research study for the school year;
2. Continue annual school-based research seminars and trainings to new teacher-researchers to help improve teaching-learning process;
3. Improve strategies on dissemination of information regarding upcoming seminars and trainings on research;
3. Extend technical assistance to new researchers through old and new researcher collaboration in a research study; and
4. Propose an Income Generating Project to support teachers financially on their research journey.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

For ethical considerations, identity and personal information of the teacher-respondents were kept confidential by the researchers. Furthermore, respondents of this study were on voluntary basis and consent letter were distributed among the participants.

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