



Public School Teachers' Attitude towards Action Research in Magsaysay, Occidental Mindoro

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Author MYADR designed the study, performed the statistical analysis, wrote the protocol and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Author EGR managed the analyses of the study and the literature searches. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

This descriptive research study was conducted to determine the self-efficacy of the public school teachers in conducting action research; their attitude towards action research and identify the possible factors that hindered teachers from doing action research & their influence level. The study was conducted in the different public schools in Magsaysay, Occidental Mindoro from May to July 2016. The public school teachers from the Department of Education-Magsaysay District were purposively selected as the respondents of the study. The study adopted and modified the Attitudes toward Research (ATR) scale and self-efficacy test to suit the needs of the research objectives. Descriptive statistics such as mean, frequency and percentage were used to describe and quantify the variables. The result shows that the public school teachers in Magsaysay, Occidental Mindoro have an "average" level of research self-efficacy. They tend to hold "positive" attitudes toward research. The "very high" influential factors that hindered teachers from doing action research were work over-load which leaves little time or no time for conducting research, lack of practical training/experience in how to do action research and lack of research centres and research specialist in school or division.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Action research is "the study of a social situation to improve the quality of action within it [1]. Along these lines, teacher research in education is mainly concerned about the improvement of the teachers' practice rather than the production of knowledge itself.

To realize this, research is considered to be a prominent key which is essential to the opening of new doors in education (Courtney, 1965 as cited in Tentima & Desta, 2014).

Further, there has been a shift in the role of teachers and now they are expected to explore the solution, by themselves, to their immediate classroom problems through action research. They are also expected to involve in scientific investigations through rigorous research methods [2].

McNiff and Whitehead [3] reiterated the need for research-based professionalism because studies conducted in academic research although they may be significant for the teacher, they may not be applicable for immediate application.

Several studies have been conducted on action research and the impact on the development of teaching professionalism. Findings show that action research has improved the level of teaching professionalism - teachers become more reflective, increase their skills of analysing and solving problems and even foster a close relationship among colleagues [4].

As Hancock (1997) said, teachers, shy away from seeing themselves as researchers & they are reluctant to write about their teaching practice, & promising step is not observed in facilitating conditions to conduct educational research at this level.

However, teachers are obliged to conduct action research for their professional growth & also the promotion to the next professional career is based on teaching & research outcomes. For Master Teacher, action research is also part of their Key Performance Areas in their Performance Rating.

As Seyoum [5] stated, research activities in a school enhance & enrich the teaching-learning process thereby contributing to the improvement of the quality of education.

To date, there is a scarcity of investigations into public school teachers' attitudes towards research at the division level and especially in Occidental Mindoro, Philippines. Hence it is important to investigate the attitude of public school teachers towards research to add to the existing set of knowledge. The results of this study, in the context of Occidental Mindoro, will potentially provide insights to the training developers, teachers and policymakers regarding teachers' attitude towards research.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

The study aims to determine the self-efficacy of the public school teachers in conducting action research; their attitude of the public school teachers towards action research and the possible factors that hindered teachers from doing action research & their influence level.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in the different public schools in Magsaysay, Occidental Mindoro from May to July 2016.

The study employed a descriptive research design. The 73 public school teachers from the Department of Education-Magsaysay District served as the respondents of the study. They were purposively selected for this study. They were the teachers who attended the Roll-out Training on Research Management cum Orientation on Basic Education Research Fund on June 22-24, 2016 and those who were personally interviewed on July 2016 at the Magsaysay National High School.

The study adopted and modified the Attitudes toward Research (ATR) scale developed by Papanastasiou [6] and Tentime and Desta [7]. The self-efficacy test by Higgins and Kotrlík [8] was used but some items were modified to suit the needs of the research objectives. Descriptive statistics such as mean, frequency and percentage were used to describe and quantify the variables.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Profile of the Public School Teachers in Magsaysay, Occidental Mindoro

Table 1a shows the profile of the public school teachers in Magsaysay, Occidental Mindoro.

Majority of the teachers were female (61.64%), married (71.23%), had pursued post-graduate education (52.0%) and with a Teacher I-III (64.38%) position.

They have long teaching experience with an average of 14.06 ranging from 2-38 years. One can infer that the teachers are in their middle-aged with a mean of 43.18 years old.

Table 1a. Profile of the public school teachers

Profile	Frequency (n=73)	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Male	28	38.35
Female	45	61.64
Marital status		
Single	21	28.76
Married	52	71.23
Rank		
Teacher I-III	47	64.38
Head Teacher I-III	3	4.10
Master Teacher I-IV	22	30.13
Principal	1	1.36
Educational attainment		
BA/BS	35	47.94
With Masters units	28	38.35
MA/MS	8	10.95
With EdD/PhD units	2	2.73

Table 1b. Age and years in service of the public school teachers

Profile	Mean	Range
Age	43.18	22-59
Years in service	14.06	2-38

Table 2. Research readiness of the public school teachers

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
The ability to do effective electronic database searching of the scholarly literature.	4.51	Very high self-efficacy
The ability to design and implement the base measurement approach for the study.	4.20	High self-efficacy
The ability to review a particular area of science theory and research, and write a balanced and comprehensive literature review.	3.45	Average self-efficacy
The ability to effectively present findings both verbally and in written form.	3.22	Average self-efficacy
The ability to design and implement the best sampling strategy for the study.	4.30	High self-efficacy
The ability to read and understand research findings and discussion in academic journals.	4.53	Very high self-efficacy
The ability to choose a research design that will answer a set of research questions and/or will test a set of hypotheses.	2.31	Low self-efficacy
The ability to identify the implication for future research.	4.28	High self-efficacy
The ability to interpret and understand statistical results.	1.29	Very low self-efficacy
The ability to formulate a clear research question or testable hypothesis.	2.60	Average self-efficacy
The ability to use various educational theories effectively in carrying out research.	1.32	Very low self-efficacy
Overall mean	3.27	Average self-efficacy

Legend: 4.50-5.00-Very high self-efficacy; 3.50-4.49-High self-efficacy; 2.50-3.49-Average self-efficacy; 1.50-2.49-Low self-efficacy; 50-1.49-Very low self-efficacy

Table 3. The attitude of the public school teachers towards action research

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
Action research contributes immensely in solving practical educational problems.	4.22	Agree
Research (Action) is not solely the task of trained professional researcher & thus does not concern teachers.	4.57	Strongly agree
The profits of Action research outweigh its contribution To education quality improvement	2.48	Undecided
Teachers' research involvement in action research should be one criterion of promotion	4.18	Agree
To improve their profession, teachers should conduct action research.	3.51	Agree
Teacher research enhances schools/curriculum improvement.	4.30	Agree
Doing action research is a part of teaching	4.26	Agree
Action Research is not a time-wasting activity	3.31	Undecided
Action research can contribute to the improvement of the quality of teachers	4.55	Strongly agree
Classroom oriented investigation is needed since teaching is a problematic activity.	4.31	Agree
Research makes me anxious.	4.57	Strongly agree
Research has to be conducted not only in higher educational institutions but also in primary & secondary schools.	3.28	Undecided
Research is a complex subject.	4.52	Strongly agree
Overall Mean	4.00	Agree

Legend: 4.50-5.00-Strongly agree; 3.50-4.49-Agree; 2.50-3.49-Undecided; 1.50-2.49-Disagree; 0.50-1.49-Strongly disagree

Table 4. Possible factors that hindered teachers from doing action research

Possible hindering factors	Mean	Interpretation
Lack of basic or theoretical knowledge about action research	4.13	High influence
Work over-load which leaves little time or no time for conducting research	4.53	Very high influence
Lack of practical training/experience in how to do action research	4.51	Very high influence
Lack of reading & other material	2.43	Low influence
Lack of confidence in doing research	4.35	High influence
Lack of motivation & interest	3.35	Undecided
Lack of conducive environment that encourages to undertake research/ morale support	3.38	Undecided
Lack of financial support from concerned authorities for workshop & seminars	4.15	High influence
Lack of internet facility in the school	2.43	Low influence
Lack of research centres in school or division	4.55	Very high influence
Lack of research specialist in school or division	4.55	Very high influence
Overall mean	3.85	High influence

Legend: 4.50-5.00-very high influence; 3.50-4.49-high influence; 2.50-3.49-undecided; 1.50-2.49-low influence; 0.50-1.49-very low influence

It could be deduced that working the same job for longer years has potential to make teachers burn out & give up interests in conducting different activities in the area; hence, the intention to improve instructional conditions through action research, most likely to be reduced.

3.2 Research Self-efficacy of the Public School Teachers in Magsaysay, Occidental Mindoro

According to self-efficacy theory, if people believe that they can complete successfully a given behaviour, then they are more likely to engage in that behaviour [9].

The term self-efficacy was soon extended to the research domain. Forester et al. [10] defined research self-efficacy as one's confidence in successfully performing tasks associated with conducting research (e.g., performing a literature review or analyzing data). Bieschke [11] stated that research self-efficacy is judgments about one's ability to perform specific research.

The findings revealed that teachers had an "average" level of research self-efficacy with a grand mean of 3.27. They tend to have "high self-efficacy" on the ability to read and understand research findings and discussion in academic journals (mean=4.53) and the ability to do effective electronic database searching of the scholarly literature (mean=4.51).

According to Lei [12] and Unrau and Beck [13] self-efficacy" on the ability to read and understand research findings and discussion in academic journals (mean=4.53) and the ability to do effective electronic database searching of the scholarly literature (mean=4.51). According to Lei [12] and Unrau and Beck [13] self-efficacy" on the ability to read and understand research findings and discussion in academic journals (mean=4.53) and the ability to do effective electronic database searching of the scholarly literature (mean=4.51). According to Lei [12] and Unrau and Beck [13].

3.3 The Attitude of the Public School Teachers towards Action Research

Fishbein and Ajzen [14] state that attitude is a "learned disposition to respond in a consistently favourable or unfavourable manner concerning a given object." Table 3 presents the attitude of public school teachers toward action research. They were asked to express their attitudes toward research with regards to 13 items. Overall, the teachers tend to hold positive

attitudes toward research with a grand mean of 4.00.

3.4 Possible Factors that Hindered Teachers from Doing Action Research and Their Influence Level

Table 4 shows as most of the respondents replied that all the listed possible hindering factors are potential hindrances on the teachers' engagement to conduct action research.

From the data below, one can conclude that the "very highly influential" impediments to conduct action research were work over-load which leaves little time or no time for conducting research (mean=4.53), Lack of practical training/experience in how to do action research (mean=4.51), lack of research centers in school or division (4.55) and lack of research specialist in school or division (mean=4.55). In line with these findings, Hancock (1997) & Seyoum [5] disclosed that teachers' professional status, teachers' working conditions & teachers' confidence, teachers' lack of strong orientation to practice, lack of necessary research skills are some of the factors that hinder teachers from engaging in educational research.

Here, it is interesting to note that lack of internet facility in the school (mean=2.43) was revealed as the least influencing factor which made teachers not to conduct action research at their schools.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the pertinent findings, the following are the conclusions drawn by the researcher:

1. The public school teachers in Magsaysay, Occidental Mindoro have an "average" level of research self-efficacy.
2. They tend to hold "positive" attitudes toward research.
3. The "very high" influential factors that hindered teachers from doing action research were work over-load, lack of practical training/experience in how to do action research and lack of research centres and research specialist in school or division.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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