

# Research Engagement of Teacher Educators

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**Abstract:** The study determined the teacher educators' research engagement in terms of research publication and the competencies needed to publish research works in scholarly journals. Findings revealed that teachers have not developed the culture of research as evidenced by a small percentage of educators engaging in research activities. Majority have not been involved in research dissemination through publication of their research outputs. The teachers failed to publish their work since they lack the necessary competencies required in conducting research from the pre-writing to the publication phase. There is a need to capacitate teacher educators in conducting research from the conceptualization of the research topic to publication of their research work.

**Keywords:** Research, Publication, Competencies, Engagement.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Teacher educators in higher education institutions are expected to perform the tri-fold functions of instruction, research and extension. Universities in developing countries have retained strong teaching functions and weak research functions (Sanyal and Varghase, 2006). The state of higher education research in the country leaves much to be desired in terms of quantity, quality, thrusts and contribution to national development (Clemena and Acosta, 2006). In the world ranking based on quality publication, only one higher institution in the Philippines is included (scimagoir.com). Despite the number of higher education institutions in the country, researches and articles published in refereed national and international journals by faculty members are found wanting (Clemena and Acosta, 2006). As observed, very few teachers have engaged in research activities. Many professors do not conduct research beyond their thesis or dissertation. Those who conduct research are mostly not practicing teachers.

The dichotomy between inquiry, the field of research and practice, the area of teaching is still used as justification why teachers only teach and researcher's only research. Teachers like any professionals are expected to utilize research evidences in their professional practice. These research evidences may be culled from published researches on the profession or from individual findings of teachers' action researches. Although teachers are faced with the gargantuan task of facilitating learning, they need to conduct research to improve teaching practice. Actions and instructional decisions in the classrooms must be supported by evidence based research. For quality higher education to be sustained, educators must engage in continuous cycle of teaching and researching. To complete the cycle of the research process, findings of research must be disseminated to the bigger audience through research presentations and publication. In the Philippines, there is a need to improve faculty engagement in research undertakings. The minimal involvement of faculty in research may be attributed to the lack of research skills and training to capacitate them in conducting research.

Since faculty members are expected to conduct research and disseminate the results through publication, it is necessary to identify the research engagement of teachers. How many teacher educators have published their articles in refereed journals? What skills from the pre-writing to revising do teachers perceive as needed to successfully conduct research and publish the results?

This study focused on identifying the skills necessary for teacher educators to successfully conduct research and publish their research outputs. Findings of this investigation would serve as basis for research capacity building activities to enhance research competencies of educators in higher education institutions.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

There were three hundred thirty four (334) teacher educators as respondents of the study. These teachers have been teaching in teacher education institutions in the Philippines. They are members of the Philippine Association for Teachers and Educators in the Philippines (PAFTE), a professional organization of teachers in the country.

Qualitative and quantitative methods were used to establish the research engagement of teacher educators. A questionnaire was given to the respondents to identify the needed research competencies. Focussed group discussion was conducted to verify the respondents' answers in the questionnaire and to delve deeper into needed skills by the teachers in the different phases of the research process.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Research publication:

One of the objectives of the research was to determine the number of publications of teacher educators. Among the three hundred thirty four respondents surveyed from different colleges and universities offering teacher education programs, 38.6% or one hundred twenty nine (129) teachers have engaged in research activities and published their works in research journals. A lesser percentage comprising only 8.6% of teachers published their research outputs in local and international peer reviewed or ISI indexed journals for the last three years.

The data showed that majority of the teachers have not been involved in research or if they have conducted research projects, they failed to publish their research work. Publication of research outputs is very important since it completes the cycle of the research process which is dissemination of research findings. However, the research findings implied that less effort was exerted by teacher educators in publishing their work in local or international journals. When interviewed, some teachers said that they have not published because of the difficulty demanded in the publication process. Publishing one's work entailed a lot of technical requirements which consumed their time. The finding of the study was affirmed in the study of Clemena and Acosta (2006) which revealed that minimal involvement of faculty in research activities can be attributed to the lack of firm training that would make them consistent producers of research.

### Research skills of teacher educators:

The respondents were made to identify the skills from the pre-writing, writing, revision and publication phases needed to successfully conduct research and publish research outputs. Table 1 showed the top four (4) much needed skills in conducting research as perceived by the teachers themselves.

**TABLE 1 Research Skills Needed of Teacher Educators**

SKILLS	
Pre Writing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Choosing the topic to write about</li> <li>2. Looking for appropriate journals</li> <li>3. Searching for appropriate internet sites and other resources</li> <li>4. Outlining</li> </ol>
Writing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Analyzing/writing coherent research results</li> <li>2. Writing research rationale and theoretical framework</li> <li>3. Formulating conclusion</li> <li>4. Writing research abstracts</li> </ol>
Revising	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Evaluating order and logic in the research article</li> <li>2. Evaluating the kind of audience</li> <li>3. Evaluating claims and evidences</li> <li>4. Checking for word choice and syntax</li> </ol>
Publishing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sending manuscripts to appropriate journals</li> <li>2. Submitting articles based on required format and style</li> <li>3. Preparing the article based on the requirements of the journal.</li> <li>4. Complying with suggestions</li> </ol>

In the pre-writing, the teachers identified **choosing the topic to write about** as a skill needed in starting the research investigation. Teachers as researchers need to acquire knowledge in identifying researchable topics that are responsive, relevant and bear value to the discipline. Teachers said they needed to hone the skill of getting the most responsive and relevant research topic based on their readings. **Looking for appropriate journals and searching for appropriate internet sites and other resources** were also identified as much needed skills. With the influx of technology, teachers expressed the need to use this technology to look for more information of their research topic. The teachers shared that getting the right journals and internet sources are difficult since they do not have access to various resources. The skill of **outlining** was also identified as needed in conducting research. Teachers said that they needed to be skillful in outlining to formulate well organized research paper.

In the writing phase, the teachers expressed the need to acquire the skill in **writing coherent research results**. The teachers found difficulty in presenting the results of the study in a cohesive, coherent and comprehensive way. It was also revealed that they needed to acquire the skills in **writing convincing rationale and citing theories in the discipline** that serve as anchor of the research study. Other needed skills for teacher educators were **writing correct conclusion and research abstracts**. In conducting research, the conclusion must capsulize the essence of the main problem and its implications, which the teachers found wanting. According to the teachers, writing an abstract has been a challenge for them since they have to summarize the essence of the research given the limited number of words. After the writing phase, the teacher educators need to review and revise their work prior to submission for publication. In the revision phase, it was revealed that the skill on **evaluating order and logic in the research article** ranked first as much needed skill. The teachers have to develop the skill of assessing whether the article follows order and logic. Another important skill identified was on **evaluating the kind of audience** who would read the article. The skill is necessary to determine the type of readers and to be able to suit the research articles to the kind of readers. In revising research article, the teachers also expressed the need to develop the **skill on evaluating claims and evidences** reflected in their written work. What is claimed in the article must be supported with evidences and research findings. This is the skill which teacher educators said they have to hone. Another important skill identified by teachers in the revision phase was **checking for word choice and syntax**. Writers of research articles have to use the correct word and arrange them in meaningful and coherent sentences and paragraphs to arrive at the intended meaning. Wordiness and ambiguity need to be corrected for a more understandable and readable research articles.

The teacher respondents expressed the need to acquire skills to be able to publish their research work. Results revealed that teachers expressed the need to develop the skill on **sending manuscripts to appropriate journals**. "What journal would publish my research?" "Why is this journal appropriate for my written work?" "How do I know that this journal is appropriate and credible?" "What are the different journals available for the publication of my work?" These were some questions raised by teachers who were interested to publish their work. Another skill needed to publish their research works were **submitting articles based on required format and style** and **preparing the article based on the requirements of the research journal**. **Complying with the suggestions of the editors and reviewers was an important** skill needed by teacher educators skillful. They had difficulty responding to every single comment made by the reviewers. Publishing one's work would depend on the faithful compliance to the suggestions and recommendations of the editor and peer reviewers.

It can be gleaned from the results that teacher educators have to develop their skills from the pre writing to the publication phase to effectively perform their research function and contribute to research productivity in their respective institutions.

#### 4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research culture has not been fully developed among the teacher educators in higher education institutions in the Philippines as evidenced in the small percentage of teachers publishing their research work. Teacher educators need to develop skills in conducting research from the conceptualization of the research topic to publication of their research work. Most of them failed to publish their work since they lack the necessary competencies to carry out the research process from the pre-writing phase to the publication phase. Capacitating the teachers to acquire the culture of research is imperative as the country is moving into the 21<sup>st</sup> century evidence-based education.

Findings revealed a compelling reason to formulate capacity building activities to develop the research competencies of teacher educators. Instructional decisions and actions should be based on existing research findings for quality and

excellence in education. Higher education institutions should initiate research capacity building activities to improve the teachers' skills in conducting research and publishing their articles in reputable journals. Teacher education institutions need to initiate strategies that promote research productivity like "inter-university buddy-buddy system" or "collaborative research undertakings" among higher education institution locally and internationally.

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