

What is the Research Gap? Addressing Low Scholarly Productivity in Philippine Basic Education

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Abstract

This commentary examines the persistent issue of low research productivity among basic education teachers in the Philippines, aiming to identify its root causes and propose actionable solutions. Challenges such as heavy workloads, insufficient research training, inadequate institutional support, and resource constraints hinder teachers' ability to contribute to scholarly publications and participate in reputable conferences. The discussion highlights a multi-faceted approach to addressing these barriers, including reducing workload, enhancing research capacity through training and mentorship, increasing financial support, and fostering a research-oriented culture. When these measures are implemented, basic education teachers can be empowered to generate classroom-based insights, improve pedagogical practices, and contribute meaningfully to the global body of knowledge.

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Low research productivity in basic education schools in the Philippines remains a pressing issue, reflecting the broader challenges of fostering a culture of scholarly inquiry within the foundational levels of education [1,2]. While the value of research in improving pedagogy, addressing student needs, and enhancing educational outcomes is widely recognized, the paucity of publications in reputable journals and limited participation in esteemed conferences highlights significant gaps in the system. Therefore, to address this concern, there is a need to understand the root causes and explore viable solutions.

One major factor contributing to low research productivity is the heavy workload shouldered by basic education teachers. The demands of lesson planning, classroom management, extracurricular activities, and administrative responsibilities often leave little room for intellectual pursuits. Teachers are frequently stretched thin, with their focus primarily directed toward immediate instructional tasks, leaving minimal time and energy for research-related activities.

Another critical issue is the lack of training and mentorship in research. Many basic education teachers graduate from programs that prioritize teaching methodologies but do not sufficiently equip them with the skills to conduct rigorous research. As a result, many of them lack confidence in crafting research proposals, analyzing data, and writing for academic publication. The absence of a

structured mentorship program further exacerbates this deficiency, leaving novice researchers without guidance.

Resource constraints also play a significant role. Conducting high-quality research often requires funding for data collection, software, and access to academic journals. Unfortunately, basic education schools, particularly in rural and underfunded areas, struggle to allocate sufficient resources for such endeavors. Additionally, the limited availability of research grants specifically tailored for basic education teachers compounds the problem.

Institutional support for research is often inadequate. In many schools, research is not incentivized or integrated into professional development plans. The lack of recognition for research outputs in promotion criteria disincentivizes teachers from investing time and effort in scholarly work. Without institutional frameworks that prioritize research as a core function of teaching, it becomes challenging to foster a culture of inquiry.

The mindset and culture within the education sector also need to evolve. Research is often perceived as the domain of higher education institutions, with basic education teachers viewing it as tangential to their primary responsibilities. This perception undermines the potential contributions of teachers in generating classroom-based insights that could significantly enhance educational practices.

Addressing these issues requires a multi-faceted approach. First, reducing the workload of teachers through the hiring of additional staff or streamlining administrative tasks can free up time for scholarly activities. When teachers are not overburdened, they are more likely to engage in research.

Second, targeted training programs should be implemented to build teachers' research capacities. Workshops, seminars, and online courses focusing on research methodologies, statistical analysis, and academic writing can bridge the skills gap. Furthermore, collaboration with higher education institutions can provide access to expertise and resources, fostering a mutually beneficial partnership.

Mentorship programs are crucial in guiding novice researchers through the complexities of academic inquiry. Pairing experienced researchers with teachers can help demystify the research process and provide the support needed to produce quality outputs. Schools and districts should actively promote these mentorship opportunities.

Financial support is another critical area that needs attention. Allocating specific funds for research activities within school budgets and advocating for external grants from government agencies and private organizations can alleviate resource constraints. Schools can also explore partnerships with local and international funding bodies to secure resources for research.

Institutional reforms are necessary to create an environment conducive to research. Schools should integrate research into their performance evaluation and promotion systems, providing tangible incentives for teachers who engage in scholarly activities. Recognizing and celebrating research achievements can also motivate educators to pursue this path.

Efforts to shift the cultural mindset surrounding research are equally important. Schools should emphasize the value of classroom-based research and its potential to drive meaningful improvements in education. Building communities of practice where teachers can share their research findings and learn from one another can foster a sense of collective purpose and engagement.

Technology can also play a significant role in enhancing research productivity. Providing teachers with access to digital tools for data collection, analysis, and academic writing can streamline the research process. Additionally, subscription access to reputable journals and conference proceedings can inspire and inform teachers' work.

Collaboration and networking opportunities should be encouraged. Participation in conferences, both local and international, can expose teachers to emerging trends and best practices in education research. Schools and districts should support and fund teachers' attendance at such events, enabling them to contribute to and benefit from the broader academic discourse.

Policymakers have a crucial role to play in addressing systemic barriers to research productivity. Crafting policies that prioritize research in basic education, allocate resources, and establish clear guidelines for research integration can provide the structural support needed to drive change.

The road to improving research productivity in basic education schools requires sustained effort and commitment from all

stakeholders. Teachers, administrators, policymakers, and the broader education community must work collaboratively to overcome the barriers that hinder scholarly pursuits.

Research is not a luxury but a necessity for continuous improvement. It is through research that innovative solutions to persistent challenges can be uncovered, elevating the quality of education in classrooms. By addressing the root causes of low research productivity and implementing targeted solutions, educators can be empowered to become contributors to the global body of knowledge.

In closing, a collective effort is needed to integrate research into professional practice. Advocacy for resources, training, and institutional support must remain steadfast. Transforming schools into hubs of innovation and inquiry ensures that the next generation of learners benefits from an education rooted in evidence and best practices.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Author Contributions

All authors have contributed equally. They have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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