

Head Teachers' Technical Assistance, Competence and Challenges on Research: Basis for Training Development

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Abstract- Head teachers play a crucial role in the school because their leadership is essential to the school's success. They are expected to possess exceptional qualities and provide professional assistance to help teachers complete their duties more successfully and efficiently particularly in research. The main objective of the study is to determine the extent of the head teachers' technical assistance, competence and challenges on research. The study employed a descriptive-quantitative research design to 35 head teacher-respondents using a researcher's made survey questionnaire to determine the extent of the head teachers' technical assistance and competence in terms of research output, skills development and utilization of research findings. It further examined the challenges encountered in the extent of technical assistance on research. It was concluded that head-teacher-respondents moderately assisted on research in terms of skills development and utilization of research findings and highly assisted in the conduct of research. They were competent in the field of research. The head teachers faced challenges such as lack of background knowledge, unavailability of funds and resources, limited time, lacking school support, teachers' level of interest in writing research, ad their current teaching loads and other tasks assigned. Head teachers who have extended technical assistance in research were the same ones who were competent in the field of research. And their profile such as length of service, number of research trainings attended, and years of research experience were not factors in their extent of technical assistance on research.

I. INTRODUCTION

Research studies have demonstrated its indispensable nature across various domains, not just in education. It consistently offers guidance, emphasis, and a means of enhancing and resolving problems in areas where the educational system requires a solution. Educational

research enables substantial processes to act on curriculum development and reform, educate learners below proficiency level, understand traits, and adjust to innovations in instruction. It helps an organization overcome challenges and improve school governance, services, and instruction (Kapur, 2018). Furthermore, research serves to supplement situations in which individuals are forced to innovate. It is required in light of the trends, problems, obstacles, and struggles that educators face, particularly when operating under the direction of school administrators. It truly serves as innovation's sword and armor, advancing knowledge, facilitating decision-making, and ensuring that education is relevant, high-quality, and accessible.

Head teachers play a crucial role in the school because their leadership is essential to the school's success. They are expected to possess exceptional qualities like organizational skills to manage all aspects of the school's administration, academics, and extra-curricular programs. They guarantee compliance and possess an in-depth understanding of laws, rules, and regulations about education. They have a variety of traits, abilities, and expertise to successfully fulfill the responsibilities of leadership and guarantee the school's success, including doing fundamental or applied research.

The primary objectives of education research are to carefully examine educational problems and attempt to offer potential answers. Meanwhile, head teachers may foster an atmosphere where teachers feel supported, empowered, and valued by their schools by encouraging professional development, fostering peer collaboration, offering meaningful evaluations, establishing open-door policies, involving teachers in decision-making, fostering a positive school culture, and providing resources for classroom management. Giving teachers professional assistance to help them complete their duties more successfully and efficiently is an essential activity in a highly motivated educational setting, particularly when it comes to

research. The supportive leadership theory states that it is critical to inspire others, foster trust, and assist coworkers in overcoming obstacles (Ahmed, 2024). Instead of just assigning assignments and waiting for the findings, school administrators and head teachers are expected to provide teachers with technical support when they do research.

Head teachers are supposed to assist teachers until they are competent and empowered enough to manage research with little guidance. Their technical assistance may improve the knowledge and pedagogical skills of teachers. Both head teachers and teachers were provided with equal opportunities to grow in their careers; they supported training on research, skilling, and reskilling and were permitted to aim for higher education. However, based on observation some head teachers are less likely to perform well in giving appropriate technical assistance to teachers in research. There are also a few studies on how these head teachers help the teachers in the school’s research studies that may be the basis for pedagogical advancements.

In light of this, the researcher made the decision to investigate the extent to which head teachers supported their teacher-researchers with technical assistance, how they inspired and encouraged teachers to do research, their competence and the challenges encountered in doing so among public secondary schools in Zamboanga City. The findings will serve as the basis for training development.

II. METHODOLOGY

The study employed descriptive-quantitative design in determining the head teachers’ technical assistance, and their competency on research in terms of research output, skills development and utilization of research findings.

The study used a researcher made survey-questionnaire, as the main tool for data gathering with 4-point Likert Scale and consisted of four parts with focused on profile, technical assistance and competency of head teachers and their challenges in the extent of technical assistance on research.

The study was guided by appropriate research ethics and guidelines. Primary data were used in this study. Consent and permission from the respondents were gathered. The confidentiality of the respondents was maintained strictly to ensure the privacy of the respondents. Hence, the ethical aspect of the research was strictly implemented. The approval of the respondents to allow the researchers to present in the other forum or fora was ensured.

The guidelines set by the schools were followed in the conduct of the study. Permission to conduct the study involving the 35 head teachers from eight public secondary schools were requested with informed consent. Data gathering was conducted in the respective rooms of target-respondents.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Problem 1. What is the extent of head teachers’ technical assistance in research in terms of Research Output, Skills Development and Utilization of Research Findings?

Table 1: Extent of Head Teachers Technical Assistance in Research in terms of Research Output, Skills Development and Utilization of Research Findings

Extent of Head Teachers Technical Assistance Indicator	Mean	Description	Verbal Interpretation
Research Output	3.30	Strongly Agree	Highly Assisted
Skills Development	3.17	Agree	Moderately Assisted
Utilization of Research Findings	2.99	Agree	Moderately Assisted
Overall Mean	3.15	Agree	Moderately Assisted

Legend: Description/Verbal Interpretation
 1.00-1.71 - Strongly Disagree/Not Assisted
 2.50 - 3.24 – Agree/Moderately Assisted
 1.75 - 2.49 – Disagree/Fairly Assisted
 3.25 - 4.0 - Strongly Agree/Highly Assisted

Table 1 shows that majority of the head teacher-respondents moderately assisted in research in terms of skills development and utilization of research findings and highly assisted in the conduct of research with an overall mean of 3.15 described as agree and interpreted as moderately assisted. This suggests that the majority of head teachers who responded to the survey had a moderate role in helping to develop the skills and utilizing research findings, such as in research planning and collaboration with teachers, improving research writings, funding, evaluating, analyzing research findings to determine its significance and benefits for people locally, nationally, and internationally, suggesting what research should be done, and collecting data from respondents. Nonetheless, they made a significant contribution to the research output by exchanging ideas to find gaps, adding resources, answering questions about needs and difficulties as they arose, and encouraging participation in research training.

In the sphere of education, head teachers must provide technical support for research because it is crucial for management, educators, and the school as a whole. This finding relates to Independent Expert Group on the Universities and the 2030 Agenda (2022), which states that research is the cornerstone of academic growth and knowledge production across all disciplines. Faculty members significantly influence the intellectual atmosphere of the university through research efforts. The research aptitudes and skills of faculty members are essential to their professional advancement as well as the overall growth and reputation of the university (McQuiggan, 2012). Moreover, the US Department of Education (2017) states that research-savvy university faculty members are better suited to conduct in-depth investigations and add to the body of knowledge in their subjects. In a similar vein, faculty members conduct original research to generate novel concepts, refute accepted knowledge, and obtain new perspectives (Tremblay et al., 2017). By presenting their research at conferences, publishing it in respected journals, and enhancing the scholarly conversation about their topics, they also contribute to the intellectual conversation (Guptill, 2016). A faculty member's ability to provide high-quality instruction is directly impacted by their research skills (Abouelenein, 2016). Faculty members can stay current with innovative approaches and

advancements in their professions by participating in research projects (US Department of Education, 2017). Because of this, management must develop innovative problem-solving skills in order to get to the point where it can deal with and overcome challenges. The implication here is not that the principal becomes creative in and of itself, but rather that they cultivate an atmosphere that both encourages and embodies creativity, thereby raising and intensifying the outputs that provide distinction and leadership to the company as well as the ability to most successfully achieve the set goals (Roussan, 2012). Nonetheless, the study of Dolorica (2023) concluded that the secondary school principals offer a variety of efficient technical support services, including capacity building, knowledge sharing, and group and task management. Technical assistance gives teachers the crucial help they need to build the abilities necessary to carry out their duties. It was observed that teachers had issues with receiving technical aid due to their self-centeredness and aversion to meaningful change. Encouraging healthy and open communication in the connection between the mentor and the mentee is the best approach to attain excellent technical support and the adoption of a monitoring scheme that is teacher-friendly.

Problem 2. What are the head teachers' competency on research in terms of Research Output, Skills Development, and Utilization of Research Findings?

Table 2
Head Teachers' Competency in terms of Research Output, Skills Development and Utilization of Research Findings

Head Teachers' Competency Indicator	Mean	Description	Verbal Interpretation
Research Output	3.13	Agree	Competent
Skills Development	3.22	Agree	Competent
Utilization of Research Findings	2.83	Agree	Competent
Overall Mean	3.06	Agree	Competent

Legend: Description/Verbal Interpretation
1.00-1.71 - Strongly Disagree/Not Competent
2.50 - 3.24 – Agree/Competent

1.75 - 2.49 – Disagree/Less Competent
 3.25 - 4.0 - Strongly Agree/Highly Competent

Table 2 shows that the majority of the head teacher-respondents were competent in terms of research output, skills development, and utilization of research findings with an overall mean of 3.06 described as agree and interpreted as competent. This implies that the majority of head teachers were capable of identifying gaps as the basis for vital research to be carried out, organizing resources, adhering to research ethics, monitoring the findings of research, being proficient in working in teams, staying up to date on the latest research trends, attending research programs and training to hone their skills, and applying their research findings through Scopus index citations, paper presentations in national and international conference proceedings, and attempts to apply for funding for an international impact of their research findings.

This somehow contradicts Lagrio, et. al (n.d.) that revealed school heads and teachers have different beliefs concerning individual research skills and are described as sometimes and often respectively. There were only two teachers and none of the school heads engaged in crafting basic and action research.

Problem 3. What are the challenges encountered by head teachers in providing technical assistance on research?

The challenges that head teachers encountered in providing technical assistance on research were unavailability of resources and funding to motivate teachers to do research, lack of school support and funds that triggered teachers to be less interested in writing research, busy handling their teaching schedules since they had many teaching loads and paperwork to accomplish, lack of background knowledge and skills in research due to lack of training, no time for data gathering procedures since there were many school activities that they need to attend to and the lack of collaboration among teachers to conduct essential research.

This supports Lagrio, et. al (n.d.) that the challenges faced by the school heads and teachers in conducting research included their lack of training and seminars

on research techniques, the lack of funding for the school to conduct research, difficulty analyzing qualitative data, a heavy teaching load, and the rigorous and time-consuming nature of the proposal process.

Problem 4. Is there a significant relationship between head teachers’ technical assistance and their competency on research?

Table 3
 Correlation: Head Teachers’ Technical Assistance and Their Competency on Research

<i>X</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>r</i> – <i>valu</i> <i>e</i>	<i>p</i> – <i>valu</i> <i>e</i>	<i>Interpretati</i> <i>on</i>
Head Teachers’ Technical Assistance in Research	Head Teachers’ Competency on Research	0.837	0.000	Significant

Table 3 shows that there is a significant relationship between the head teachers’ technical assistance and their competency. The coefficient of correlation 0.837 with the corresponding probability value of 0.000 was significant at alpha = 0.05 which means that the hypothesis that states that there is no significant relationship between the extent of head teachers’ technical assistance on research and head teachers’ competency level was rejected. This means that the head teachers who have extended technical assistance in research were the same ones who were competent in the field of research. Conversely, those who were highly agreeing that they extended technical assistance to teachers in research were the same ones who knows well or skilled in the conduct and development of research, as well as on the utilization of research findings.

This relates to Lagrio et. al (n.d.) that that teachers' and school heads’ perceptions of their research competency differ. School heads were regarded as competent, whereas teachers were described as extremely competent. It was suggested that school

heads participate in training seminars and capacity development in order to be equipped to support teachers technically.

Problem 5. Is there a significant difference in the extent of head teachers' technical assistance on research when data are grouped according to Length of Service, Number of Research Trainings Attended, and Years of Research Experience?

Table 4
Extent of Head Teachers' Technical Assistance on Research when Grouped According to Length of Service, Number of Research Trainings Attended, and Years of Research Experience

Head Teachers' Technical Assistance on Research Groupings	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-Value	P-Value	Interpretation
Different Length of Service	1.516	.379	.917	.467	Not Significant
	12.395	.413			
	13.911				
Different Number of Research Trainings Attended	.871	.436	1.069	.355	Not Significant
	13.040	.407			
	13.911				
Different Years of Research Experience	1.809	.603	1.545	.223	Not Significant
	12.102	.390			
	13.911				

Table 4 shows the extent of head teachers' technical assistance on research when grouped according to length of service, number of research trainings attended, and years of research experience with F value of .917, 1.069 and 1.545 with the corresponding probability value of .467, .355 and .223 respectively are not significant at alpha = 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis that states there is no significant difference in extent of head teachers' technical assistance on research when data are grouped according to length of service, number of research trainings attended, and

years of research experience were accepted. The data indicate that the profile of head teachers such as length of service, number of research trainings attended, and years of research experience were not factors in their extent of technical assistance on research. This indicates that they similarly answered the survey by indicating that they provided moderate technical assistance for research in the areas of research planning, collaboration with teachers, research writing improvement, funding, evaluation, analysis of research findings to ascertain their significance and benefits for people locally, nationally, and internationally, recommendations for future research, and data collection from respondents. In addition, they share ideas to identify gaps, provide resources, respond to inquiries about needs and challenges as they emerge, and promote involvement in research training.

This in some ways supports the findings of Caingcoy (2020), who found that teachers' age and years of service had a minor but substantial negative association with their capacity for conducting research.

CONCLUSION

1. The head teacher-respondents moderately assisted in research in terms of skills development and utilization of research findings and highly assisted in the conduct of research. They assisted on development of the skills and utilizing research findings, such as in research planning and collaboration with teachers, improving research writings, funding, evaluating, analyzing research findings to determine its significance and benefits for people locally, nationally, and internationally, suggesting what research should be done, and collecting data from respondents. Nonetheless, they made a significant contribution to the research output by exchanging ideas to find gaps, adding resources, answering questions about needs and difficulties as they arose, and encouraging participation in research training.
2. Majority of head teachers were capable of identifying gaps as the basis for vital research to be carried out, organizing resources, adhering to research ethics, monitoring the findings of research, being proficient in working in teams, staying up to date on the latest research trends, attending research programs

and training to hone their skills, and applying their research findings through Scopus index citations, paper presentations in national and international conference proceedings, and attempts to apply for funding for an international impact of their research findings.

3. The challenges that head teachers encountered in providing technical assistance on research were unavailability of resources and funding to motivate teachers to do research, lack of school support and funds that triggered teachers to be less interested in writing research, busy handling their teaching schedules since they had many teaching loads and paperwork to accomplish, lack of background knowledge and skills in research due to lack of training, no time for data gathering procedures since there were many school activities that they need to attend to and the lack of collaboration among teachers to conduct essential research.

4. Head teachers who have extended technical assistance in research were the same ones who were competent in the field of research. Conversely, those who were highly agreeing that they extended technical assistance in research were the same ones who knows well or skilled in the conduct and development of research, as well as on the utilization of research findings.

5. The head teachers' profile such as length of service, number of research trainings attended, and years of research experience were not factors in their extent of technical assistance on research.

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