

Skills Limitations, Resource Constraints and Workload Pressure as Barriers in Conducting Research among Public Elementary School Teachers

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ABSTRACT Despite increasing expectations for teacher-led research, public elementary school teachers continue to encounter persistent challenges that hinder their ability to initiate, conduct, and complete research activities effectively. This qualitative research utilised a structured open-ended question to gather the data from the 62 elementary school teachers using thematic analysis with inductive coding for data processing. Three emerging themes were identified in the study based on the responses of teachers with regard to their research writing experiences, which include capacity and skills limitations, resource and support constraints and workload pressures. The emergence of these themes provides empirical evidence that human capital development among public elementary school teachers is constrained by the combined influence of individual competencies, institutional support systems, and organisational demands, thereby extending existing literature on teacher professional development in basic education.

INTRODUCTION

Teacher-led research has become increasingly recognised as a valuable means of improving instructional practice, supporting evidence-based decision-making, and fostering continuous school improvement. In the Philippine basic education system, the Department of Education actively encourages teachers to conduct action research as part of their professional development and school-based improvement initiatives. Despite these efforts, research engagement among public elementary school teachers remains relatively low, with many educators finding it difficult to initiate, complete, and disseminate scholarly work (Maravilla 2020; Capulso et al. 2024). This suggests that policy support alone is insufficient to cultivate a sustainable research culture in schools.

One of the persistent challenges is the limited capability of many teachers to undertake research. Elementary school teachers continue to experience difficulties in identifying research problems, selecting appropriate methodologies, analysing data, and preparing scholarly manuscripts because of limited methodological knowledge, inadequate practical experience, and low confidence in academic writing (Flores 2024; Abella et al. 2024). Recent evidence further indicates that teachers who receive sustained mentoring, authentic research experienc-

es, and continuous capability-building opportunities develop stronger competence and greater confidence in conducting research than those who participate only in short-term training programs (Canonizado 2025; Carvajal 2025; Gonzales 2025; Lumasag et al. 2026; Santos et al. 2025). Likewise, interventions such as structured mentoring programs and research capability initiatives have demonstrated greater success in strengthening teachers' competencies when professional learning is continuous, contextualised, and practice-oriented (Abendaño and Pontillo 2025; Insorio 2026).

The study is grounded in two complementary theoretical perspectives that explain teachers' research capability and engagement. Professional Capital Theory (Hargreaves and Fullan 2012) explains that teachers improve their professional competence with continuous learning and reflective practice, which are facilitated by sustained investments in professional development. Within the framework of this study, the enhancement of the teachers' research capability through specific training, mentoring and collaborative learning opportunities is expected to enhance their competence in conducting, writing, presenting and using research. In line with this view, the Perceived Organizational Support Theory (Eisenberger et al. 1986) states that employees tend to show increased levels of commitment, motivation, and performance

when they perceive that their organization appreciates their efforts and supports their professional development. The institutional support for research training, mentoring, funding opportunities, access to learning resources and administrative encouragement in educational setting creates an enabling environment for teachers' research engagement.

Beyond individual competence, the school environment plays an equally important role in shaping teachers' research engagement. Limited access to scholarly resources, inadequate funding, weak mentoring systems, and the absence of a supportive research culture continue to discourage teachers from pursuing scholarly work (Insorio 2024; Alcazaren et al. 2022; Capulso et al. 2024). These constraints are particularly evident in many public elementary schools where internet connectivity, access to academic databases, and research support services remain limited. More recent studies emphasise that supportive instructional leadership, collaborative professional communities, and sustained institutional investments are essential for nurturing teachers' scholarly engagement and strengthening a culture of inquiry within schools (Albite and Cadacio 2025; Bou et al. 2025; Fresnido and Uy 2026; Lopez and Monkonsawasd 2026; Mesias et al. 2026; Megio et al. 2026).

These institutional challenges are compounded by the realities of teachers' daily responsibilities. Heavy teaching loads, administrative assignments, and numerous non-instructional tasks often leave little time and energy for research activities (Ancho and Bongco 2019; Caabas et al. 2024; Magtalas and Eduvala 2024). Recent literature further highlights that occupational stress, emotional exhaustion, burnout, and poor work-life balance reduce teachers' motivation to engage in research and other forms of professional development (Abilo et al. 2026; Angana and Abellana 2025; Cachero et al. 2026; Gomez and Villaruel 2026). As a result, many teachers view research as an additional obligation rather than an integral part of professional practice.

Although previous studies have identified several factors influencing teachers' research engagement, limited attention has been given to understanding how competence-related limitations, institutional constraints, and workload pressures interact to shape the lived experiences of public elementary school teachers. Furthermore, few studies have translated these interconnected challeng-

es into context-specific interventions that address the realities of Philippine public elementary schools. To address this gap, the present study explores the barriers encountered by public elementary school teachers in conducting and writing research.

In response to these gaps, the present study investigates the common barriers encountered by public elementary school teachers in conducting and writing research. By situating teachers' lived experiences at the centre of analysis, this study aims to contribute to the growing body of Philippine research on teacher professional development while providing practical inputs for educational management, policy formulation, and sustainable research capacity-building initiatives in basic education.

Objectives of the Study

This study aims to explore the common barriers encountered by public school elementary teachers through a qualitative study that will serve as a basis for designing a needs-responsive community development training program.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore the barriers encountered by public elementary school teachers in conducting and writing research. Qualitative research, according to Creswell and Clark (2007), is an approach to inquiry that explores and understands the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem through the collection of data in natural settings, the analysis of inductive data, and the interpretation of meanings from participants' experiences. A qualitative approach was deemed appropriate because it allows for an in-depth understanding of teachers' lived experiences, perceptions, and challenges, which cannot be adequately captured through quantitative measures alone.

The participants of the study were a total enumeration of 62 public elementary school teachers from one elementary school in Naga City, Camarines Sur, Philippines. Data were gathered using a semi-structured interview guide consisting of one broad, open-ended question, that is, "*What challenges or barriers do you experience in conducting, writing, and completing research?*" This

question was designed to elicit comprehensive responses covering issues related to research skills, resources, institutional support, and workload. Follow-up probes were used when necessary to clarify responses and encourage deeper reflection.

Interviews were conducted with the participants at a time convenient for them to minimise disruption to their teaching responsibilities. Prior to data collection, participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and their voluntary participation was emphasised. With consent, responses were recorded and later transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly observed by using codes, that is, T1 and T2 instead of real names.

The study utilised thematic analysis to analyse the qualitative data. The researchers first familiarised themselves with the data by repeatedly reading the interview transcripts and noting initial impressions. Inductive coding was employed during data analysis to allow themes and categories to emerge directly from the participants' responses without relying on predetermined codes or theoretical assumptions. Relevant words, phrases, and statements were then coded to capture meaningful units of information. Similar codes were grouped together to identify patterns and generate themes. These themes were reviewed, refined, and named to ensure they accurately represented the data. An external expert in community development reviewed the themes to enhance credibility and trustworthiness.

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data. The researchers read the interview transcripts carefully and took notes of the initial impression or interesting points with an end goal of understanding the overall content before analysis. The researchers went through the data and highlighted the important words, phrases or ideas and then assigned a code that describes each idea. They also look at all codes and group similar ones together and identify patterns or concepts that represent a significant idea as the main theme. The emerging themes were reviewed by an expert in community development and checked if the themes fit well with the data to ensure the trustworthiness of the result.

To ensure the rigour of the study, strategies such as credibility, dependability, and confirmability were applied. Credibility was enhanced through

careful transcription and validation of themes by an expert reviewer. Dependability was ensured by maintaining a clear audit trail of the data collection and analysis process. Confirmability was addressed by grounding all interpretations directly in participants' responses.

Ethical principles were strictly observed throughout the study. Participants were informed of the study's objectives, their right to withdraw at any time, and the confidentiality of their responses. Informed consent was obtained prior to participation, and all data were used solely for academic and research purposes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Teachers have various professional development needs to enhance their knowledge, research skills and practices as classroom teachers. However, due to some barriers encountered in conducting research in Basic Education, they find it really hard to complete and publish their research outputs. The following emerging themes were identified based on the interview conducted among teachers with regard to their research writing experiences and apprehensions, to wit, that is, Capacity and Skills Limitations, Resource and Support Constraints, and Workload Pressures and Systemic Challenges. This summarises the concerns of teachers that hinder them to build their capacity to produce research outputs. Through identifying the specific research capability gaps and addressing these barriers will contribute to the human capital development of teachers.

Theme 1: Capacity and Skills Limitations

This major theme 1 on capacity and skills limitations emerged from the four subthemes, which include *Limited Research Knowledge*, *Weak Data Analysis Skills*, *Low Writing Confidence*, and *Insufficient Training Exposure*. Public elementary school teachers often missed training opportunities available being provided by private and government educational institutions but they were given the luxury of time to attend and enhance their skills because of other common barriers like heavy workloads. According to Laguador (2015), the outcomes-based approach in faculty performance evaluation would systematically enhance the research capabilities of faculty members through the objec-

tive measurement of research outputs such as production, presentation, publication, and professional memberships, thus ensuring transparency and fairness and increasing the faculty members' involvement in research activities. This is in line with the Professional Capital Theory (Hargreaves and Fullan 2012) that sustained investment in teachers' professional learning, collaboration, and institutional support for teachers' research competence would enhance their research competence and contribute to the development of a strong research culture.

Subtheme 1: Limited Research Knowledge

Teachers responded that they encountered difficulty in identifying research design, formulating problems, writing reviews of literature and applying appropriate methods. The following responses highlight the difficulties of teachers in understanding fundamental research concepts and processes.

"I am not knowledgeable on how to conduct research" (T11)

"I do not know how to identify research problems." (T15)

"I completed a thesis during my bachelor's degree in education but I did not acquire all the necessary research writing skills because we were five members in the group. We were just given a specific part of the thesis to work on." (T22)

Many public elementary school teachers struggle with research because they simply are not trained for it. Identifying problems, gathering and reviewing literature, deciding methodologies to use, analysing and interpreting data seemed difficult to the teacher due to lack of knowledge and skills in research writing. The results can be explained in terms of Professional Capital Theory (Hargreaves and Fullan 2012) which suggests that teachers' professional capabilities are developed through continuous professional learning, collaborative practice and sustained investment by institutions in capacity building. As stated by Carvajal (2025) and Canonizado (2025), confidence and research productivity of teachers are founded on a solid basis of knowledge and skills in research. Hence, continuous professional development programmes such as seminars, workshops, mentoring and coaching are important in equipping teachers with the abilities needed to conduct, write and use re-

search effectively while developing a sustainable culture of inquiry in schools.

Subtheme 2: Weak Data Analysis Skills

Teachers encountered challenges in using statistical tools, collecting and processing data, interpreting data, or conducting qualitative coding. They are not exposed in research activities like utilising other quantitative data analysis aside from what they are using in computing the grades of students and preparing their school reports. They also find it difficult to interpret numerical data (Tingabgab and Binayao 2023; Oestar and Marzo 2022), choose appropriate tests, or use software like SPSS, Jamovi, or Microsoft Excel beyond basic functions. Only those teachers who attended advanced studies have heard or experienced these statistical tools. The following excerpts illustrate teachers' experiences related to weak data analysis skills.

"I do not know how to utilise and organise the data that I have inside the classroom." (T7)

"I have limited skills in collecting and processing of data." (T5)

"There are available statistics tools but I do not know how to use them." (T19)

Many public elementary school teachers are having difficulty converting classroom data to research undertakings because they lack the skills in analysing and interpreting data. Although they are trained to do basic reporting of class performance and school reports, making deeper meaning of data seems so difficult and using statistical tests and software feels inaccessible. The study of Canonizado (2025) and Lumasag et al. (2026), reveal that this technique is one of the major factors why teachers do not engage in research activities, and if so they rely on paying for experts to do the job, thus affecting their confidence in conducting research. This issue stems from insufficient professional development activities for teachers in research writing. The schools need to provide teachers hands-on and output driven research writing workshops that will develop the needed knowledge, skills, and competence of teachers in research.

Subtheme 3: Low Writing Confidence

This limits the ability of the teachers to begin or complete research papers. They often feel uncertain in organising ideas logically, using academic

language and following the structure of APA formatting. This low confidence based on the interview is rooted in limited exposure to research writing (Flores 2024). Most of them have no hands-on experience in conceptualising research problems, which is why they are hesitant to engage fully in research activities. Based on the interview, the following statements reveal the lack of confidence and competence of teachers in data analysis becomes a major obstacle in completing research projects effectively.

"I have an ultimate goal of doing a research paper because it is part of my dream to see my work published online but I am not confident on how to start it right." (T21)

"Completing research is a tedious process which I experienced during the master's thesis due to lack of confidence. It is very stressful. Knowing how to do it right for the first time is always necessary." (T33)

One of the biggest challenges for the teachers to engage in research undertaking is not just time and skills, but also confidence. Identifying problems to research writing can feel intimidating and challenging that can cause low esteem and confidence. Studies by Laguador and Soverano (2022), Carvajal (2025), Canonizado (2025), and Santos et al. (2025) confirm that teachers' research engagement is driven not only by motivation but also by confidence developed through continuous professional learning, hands-on training, collaboration, and research practice, which is consistent with Professional Capital Theory (Hargreaves and Fullan 2012) and Perceived Organizational Support Theory (Eisenberger et al. 1986), both of which emphasize that sustained professional development and institutional support are essential for strengthening teachers' research capability and participation. Lack of hands-on experience in teacher training caused hesitations and resistance in engaging in research writing. Educational institutions must implement sustainable capability-building, coaching, and mentoring programs because, without these initiatives, teachers will continue to avoid research and fail to develop innovative classroom practices.

Subtheme 4: Insufficient Training Exposure

Some teachers mentioned that the formal research training is not consistently integrated into

their pre-service preparation or in-service professional development. They struggle with understanding research designs, methodologies, and data analysis techniques because of minimal exposure and practical experience (Tingabngab and Binayao 2023). As a result, they feel unprepared with lack of confidence when tasked with conducting or writing research papers. These are some of the responses of the teachers related to insufficient training exposure.

"I know that there are available resources online, however organising the literature and studies is my problem due to lack of training" (T2)

"There is a limited opportunity to attend relevant training in conducting research." (T7)

"There are limited seminars or trainings conducted related to research writing." (T21)

Public school teachers view research as a medium for improving teaching and learning processes. However, some teachers lack the structured training required to undertake research independently. Research methodologies and data analysis are often perceived as difficult to navigate because hands-on, authentic research practice is seldom incorporated into university degree programs and conventional teacher training workshops. Studies by Abendaño and Pontillo (2025) and Tañajura et al. (2025) prove that continuous, practice-oriented training like Project RISE significantly develops and boosts a teacher's research skills and competence. This finding is consistent with Professional Capital Theory (Hargreaves and Fullan 2012), which implies that teachers develop professional competence through sustained professional learning, collaborative practice, and continuous institutional investment rather than through one-time training initiatives. Even so, Serillano et al. (2026) mention that many implemented programs are too fragmented, leaving teachers without the long-term mentoring they need to finish their work. Teachers remain motivated to conduct research, but the educational system fails to provide the support and opportunities necessary to develop their research capabilities. Without continued coaching and mentoring, teachers will lose confidence and avoid research. School heads can provide continuous and collaborative mentoring programs that turn real classroom experiences into meaningful, evidence-based practice.

Theme 2: Resource and Support Constraints

This major theme 2 on resource and support constraints emerged from the four subthemes,

which include *Inadequate Access to Materials*, *Lack of Mentorship*, *Limited Funding*, and *Weak Research Culture*. They find it difficult to gather essential literature and data due to lack of access to updated references and reliable internet connection. Most public elementary schools in the country have weak internet connectivity because some of them are located in far flung and rural areas. The school support for research activities is also limited due to lack of research experts and available software applications that will help them bring a positive research culture that encourages the opportunities for collaboration.

Subtheme 1: Inadequate Access to Materials

Teachers often face challenges in terms of inadequate access to research materials or online resources such books, e-journals and other references. These materials are essential in supporting their research activities. That is why they are looking for institutions that could provide them with these resources to motivate them in pursuing their studies. This problem not only slows down the research process but also affects the quality of their research outputs (Abella et al. 2024). These are some of the responses of teachers regarding the scarcity of research materials in their workplace.

"We have very limited resources and knowledge on how to access information related to my research problem" (T11)

"The school resources are not sufficient for such activity like conducting research because we are not yet mandated for that purpose." (T16)

"There is poor internet connectivity in the school vicinity." (T27)

"I have limited access to software being used in processing and analysing data." (T33)

Even the most motivated teachers cannot produce quality research without the right tools. Many struggle with basic institutional barriers, such as a lack of stable internet, paid scholarly databases, and data analysis software. The findings are in line with the Organizational Support Theory (Eisenberger et al. 1986) which suggests that employees are more likely to show commitment and perform discretionary professional activities when they believe that their organization values their contribution and offers adequate support for their development. The studies by Mesias et al. (2026), Lopez and Monkonsawasd (2026), and Vergara

(2025) highlight that accessibility and availability of research facilities is a must to encourage and develop productive research culture in an organisation. This issue affects teachers in the remote and far-flung areas where resources are scarce and facilities are often limited to day-to-day classroom activities hindering their professional growth. This is an organisational problem. School leaders may foster a sustainable research culture by really supporting and mentoring them in conducting research to drive innovation in the classroom. Institutional support is very important, which can be done by providing a sustainable mentoring program, investing in research facilities, and fostering collaboration among members of the organisation.

Subtheme 2: Lack of Mentorship

Navigating the writing process alone without the supervision of experts would be challenging for those teachers who are just starting in research. Lack of mentorship also hinders them to find some ways on how to make the research process lighter and easier (Capulso et al. 2024). The absence of experts in their journey towards achieving the quality of research is another barrier they wanted to address. They have this feeling of uncertainty if they are doing the process correctly or do they need to start all over again because they missed something along the way. They believed in the importance of having mentors who will check their outputs from time to time to get some advice right away. They have some experiences as follows.

"Nobody mentors us on how to write research." (T21)

"The school has no or limited experts to whom we can consult with regard to research." (T19)

"I wish to have someone or an institution who can provide us proper coaching and mentoring sessions because that is what we need as teachers in basic education." (T10)

"Research guidance is what I need to motivate me in conducting research study." (T25)

Venturing into research alone can be deeply isolating for teachers. Without proper guidance of a mentor to clarify things regarding data, teachers may feel overwhelmed, confused, and eventually stop doing research. Studies by Canonizado (2025), Lopez and Monkonsawasd (2026), and Serillano et al. (2026) reveal that one-off workshops simply are not enough, as true research confidence and skill

develop through ongoing, personalised coaching. This finding is supported by Perceived Organizational Support Theory (Eisenberger et al. 1986), which suggests that teachers are more likely to develop confidence, sustain engagement, and perform effectively in research when they perceive continuous mentoring, institutional encouragement, and access to adequate professional support. These findings underscore the importance of sustained institutional support in fostering teachers' research capability beyond short-term training initiatives. When teachers lack timely feedback and validation, research feels like an intimidating burden rather than a tool for growth. This lack of mentorship creates a lonely cycle that stalls innovation across the school. To change this, school leaders must step in and bridge the gap. By pairing novice teacher-researchers with seasoned mentors and building collaborative communities with experts from higher education institutions, one can transform research from a stressful solo assignment into a supported, team-driven journey.

Subtheme 3: Limited Funding

Conducting research entails financial resources. Even though the research is just a basic or action research, it still needs some funding where the teachers really find it difficult to look for assistance (Insorio 2024; Alcazaren et al. 2022). Limited funding restricts them to carry out research activities efficiently most especially they need to visit the community for data gathering. They have to visit far flung areas just to gather data from participants because utilising available technology like Google Forms, as widely used for this purpose is not feasible due to lack of internet connection in the area. Teachers usually shoulder the expenses personally because they do not know how to access funding agencies. This financial constraint sometimes discourages the teachers to complete the study or even engage in research. This limits their opportunity to produce meaningful and comprehensive studies.

The following accounts based on the interview demonstrate how financial constraints affect teachers' ability to pursue and complete research tasks. Likewise, Organizational Support Theory (Eisenberger et al. 1986) implies that teachers are more likely to participate in professional activities, such as research, when they perceive their organization

to be providing adequate resources and valuing their academic work. Therefore, the lack of financial support might be one of the reasons that might reduce the motivation and commitment of the teachers to conduct research not because of the lack of interest but the availability of the organizational support and resources.

"I have a limited budget to facilitate and administer research activity." (T41)

"I struggle to shoulder the expenses of printing, data gathering and purchasing materials to finish my study." (T20)

"If I want to finish my research, I need to finance it by myself. Acquiring funds for my research is also my problem, not only how to write it." (T18)

One major struggle to research is funding. Spending money for fieldwork, printing, and data collection often means dipping into their own pockets, transforming a professional duty into a personal financial burden. Mesias et al. (2026) and Lopez and Monkonsawasd (2026) show that financial support enables teachers to complete their research projects. Problems with funds lead to frustration and demotivation. Schools may foster collaboration and partnership with state universities and colleges and other government agencies for funding of their research endeavor.

Subtheme 4: Weak Research Culture

Most teachers have a negative impression about conducting research because they believe the process is so tedious and rigorous. It weakens the culture of research in an academic community if they have a negative attitude towards research (Maravilla 2020). It is not strongly promoted, recognised or integrated in the system of Basic Education because of its main priority to deliver quality instruction rather than producing knowledge. Hence, they are seeking assistance from the school administrators to consider this possibility to have a supportive environment in developing research programs for teachers that will also help them improve student performance and teaching strategies through scientific processes.

The excerpts presented below based on the interview show how the absence of a strong research culture influences the engagement of teachers in research activities.

"We are given the opportunity to write research but time constraint hinders us to pursue it

because it is not part of culture in basic education.” (T37)

“We have no activities in school related to research and it is not part of our practice.” (T25)

“We are not recognised for conducting or producing research outputs because the use of research in basic education is for promotion purposes only.” (T24)

“Research collaboration is not being practiced, that is why we find it hard to complete the study.” (T22)

Many teachers see research as just another exhausting requirement for promotions rather than a tool to improve classroom practices. Due to minimal support and recognition from the administration, research is a least priority of teachers, thus, developing a weak culture of research. Studies by Fresnido and Uy (2026) show that recognition, support, and collaborative teams naturally drive teachers to thrive and innovate. When research is not treated as part of the core of teaching, it defeats the very purpose of innovating the teaching and learning process. This is an organisation problem that greatly affects the teachers’ motivation. By recognising and valuing research as a tool for innovation and fostering positive collaboration among the members of the organisation, research culture is developed.

Theme 3: Workload Pressure and Systemic Challenges

This major theme 3 on workload pressure and systemic challenges emerged from the four sub-themes, which include *Heavy Teaching and Administrative Load*, *Bureaucratic Processes*, *Stress and Burnout*, and *Competing School Demands*. These challenges reduce the motivation and capacity of teachers to initiate and complete research projects. They find it difficult to prioritize research activities for their professional growth. This finding is in line with the Perceived Organizational Support Theory (Eisenberger et al. 1986) that teachers who perceive insufficient organizational support are less motivated and committed to research and are less likely to engage in scholarly activities.

Subtheme 1: Heavy Teaching and Administrative Load

The most common issues of the teachers in Basic Education are the administrative loads given

to them aside from teaching assignments. This significantly limits them for research writing. This confirms the finding of the studies that teacher groups in the Philippines claim that the teacher workload is compromising the professionals’ wellbeing (Ancho and Bongco 2019) and heavy workloads (Caabas et al. 2024) influence teachers’ overall effectiveness and efficiency (Tarraya 2024). They are juggling with instructional and administrative tasks that create barriers to initiate research projects. These responses illustrate how demanding workloads and administrative duties limit the time of teachers for research involvement.

“There are too many administrative tasks assigned to the teachers.” (T18)

“We have many paper works that need to be submitted and other school requirements need to be complied with, wherein even at home we bring these tasks as our assignments.” (T14)

“I devote most of my time to planning lessons, checking outputs and other admin works where research has no place in my calendar.” (T22)

Teachers are confined to their daily workload from lesson planning to performing clerical jobs, thus, no time for conducting research. Cachero et al. (2026), Angana and Abellana (2025), and Abilo et al. (2026) reveal that this heavy workload leads to poor work-life balance and causes physical and mental exhaustion. This finding aligns with Perceived Organizational Support Theory (Eisenberger et al. 1986), which suggests that excessive workload and limited institutional support reduce teachers’ engagement in activities beyond their primary teaching responsibilities, including research. Since instruction and paperwork demand more time and effort in teachers’ duty, research is considered an additional burden instead of part of the core duty. By reducing unnecessary paperwork, rebalancing administrative tasks, and carving out protected research time, one can support the teachers’ wellbeing and allow them to bring meaningful data back to their classrooms.

Subtheme 2: Bureaucratic Processes

The process of writing a research proposal is already difficult for the teachers to accomplish, and before their research papers receive some funding from the Department of Education, they have to undergo a rigorous and long procedure of evaluation. These complexities create delays and dis-

couragement for teachers to further pursue the research project (Tingabngab and Binayao 2023). Although they understand the purpose of having that kind of evaluation process, still it gives them a negative feeling of not trying it either. Only those with full determination and commitment to face the challenges of the process will continue to get the grant for them to pursue the research project.

The following statements reveal the challenges of teachers in navigating approval procedures and administrative requirements for research.

"The approval process of research in the department takes too long." (T21)

"I have limited research experience that is why I feel overwhelmed by the technical and administrative demands when submitting and presenting research proposals." (T6)

Even when teachers are motivated to engage in research, bureaucratic red tape often stops them before they start. They are easily discouraged because of the complex processes in seeking for approvals, tedious proposal evaluations, and demanding funding procedures can feel incredibly discouraging, especially for beginners. Studies by Gaylo (2024) and Herrera et al. (2024) show that organisational efficiency directly affects productivity in research. The supportive environment of the administration within the organisation encourages teachers to dive into scholarly work. This observation is supported by Perceived Organizational Support Theory (Eisenberger et al. 1986), which posits that teachers are more likely to engage in research when they perceive that their institution provides adequate support, values their contributions, and minimizes organizational barriers. This means school leaders need to rethink the paperwork. One can dramatically increase participation in action research without losing quality by simply clearing the administrative hurdles. By cutting unnecessary red tape, clarifying guidelines, and offering hands-on technical assistance, one can transform research from a stressful compliance exercise into an accessible, rewarding reality for the teachers.

Subtheme 3: Stress and Burnout

Public school teachers in the Philippines experience stress and burnout due to heavy workload related to teaching and other administrative tasks.

Teachers who reported a high perception of work/role overload and experienced significant burnout (Magtalas and Eduvala 2024). Likewise, strain relative to job stress results in burn-out and a low level of efficacy (Guhao Jr 2019). It diminishes motivation due to emotional and cognitive fatigue. These accounts highlight how stress and burnout diminish the capacity and motivation of teachers to conduct research.

"I have less or no energy after a whole day of school activities, thus doing research is not anymore in my list after office." (T27)

"It makes it difficult to concentrate in writing research due to other demands required of us to comply." (T14)

"I have started writing research but due to mental exhaustion, I stopped it." (T9)

Teachers who experienced physical and mental exhaustion do not have time and energy to engage themselves in heavy intellectual undertakings like reviewing literature and analysing data. Gomez and Villaruel (2026), Cachero et al. (2026), and Fresnido and Uy (2026) confirm that chronic stress and a lack of support directly crush a teacher's professional motivation and well-being. Engaging in research is not just about skills, it requires a supportive environment where they can develop, practice, and exercise research writing. This finding is consistent with Professional Capital Theory (Hargreaves and Fullan 2012), which emphasizes that teachers' professional competence and sustained engagement in scholarly work are developed through continuous learning, collaboration, and supportive professional environments. These findings show that workshops alone will not work if teachers are running on empty because of excessive workload and competing professional demands. School leaders must combine research training with genuine wellness programs, realistic workloads, and supportive leadership that actively fights burnout. By prioritising the teachers' mental health and clearing their plates, it gives them the breathing room they need to reflect, innovate, and bring fresh ideas into their classrooms.

Subtheme 3: Competing School Demands

Considered another barrier for teachers to be encouraged in pursuing research are the frequent school activities, meetings, reporting requirements and co-curricular responsibilities, which limit the

time for them to think of other things beneficial for their personal and professional growth. Teachers believed that no matter how they tried to balance their schedule with administrative and other social obligations, they would just end up frustrated (Tarraya 2024). They were given tasks such as club and class adviser, subject coordinator, ICT coordinator, student supreme government coordinator and other assignments that demand so much time and effort to accomplish the goals. These school assignments slow the progress or even prevent them from completing their research projects. The following responses indicate the experiences and observations of the teachers regarding the competing school demands.

"Since research is not part of my duties and responsibilities as a teacher, I give priority to my students. Although I know, completing and publishing research papers will help my promotion in the future." (T15)

"Conducting research serves as an investment but it needs more time than money. With the current demands in the school as teachers, research has no place in the schedule." (T35)

"I find difficulty to balance personal well-being and professional demands. That is why adding research activity to my schedule is a hard decision." (T36)

Abrugena et al. (2020) found that general education faculty members experienced personal, social, and institutional barriers such as lack of time management, limited communication and linkages with other institutions, and burdensome accreditation or quality assurance requirements, which were negatively associated with their overall attitude toward engaging in research activities. This finding is consistent with Perceived Organizational Support Theory (Eisenberger et al. 1986), which posits that inadequate organizational support and excessive institutional demands diminish teachers' motivation and willingness to engage in research activities.

Design of the Needs-Responsive Community Development Training Program

The findings of the study served as the basis for the design of the Community Development Training Program for Research. Qualitative findings revealed that one of the themes emerged is the Capacity and Skills Limitations, which implies

the needs of the teachers for capacity building. Teachers who identified their skills limitation have expressed their willingness to participate in the training. Understanding teachers' training needs guides the creation of community development training programs, specifically designed for teachers. This is highly contextualised that utilises sample topics, data sets, and scenarios drawn from real issues encountered by the teachers in the Department of Education.

Strengthening Teachers' Ability through Research Training (START) is the name of the community development program designed to build teachers' research capacity through workshops on research conceptualisation, production, presentation, publication, and utilisation gearing towards the achievement of personal and professional growth, while contributing to knowledge generation and improve classroom practices. It aims to provide opportunities for identified beneficiaries to experience a different way of learning (Rubio et al. 2016). It plays an important role in social transformation and becomes an instrument in changing the lives of many beneficiaries by providing sustainable activities. Since the teachers' ability to participate was strongly influenced by the convenience of in-school delivery, reflecting how time and scheduling impact professional development uptake (Stringer et al. 2025), it was also considered in the design of the program. This design is consistent with Professional Capital Theory (Hargreaves and Fullan 2012), which emphasizes sustained and context-responsive professional learning, and Perceived Organizational Support Theory (Eisenberger et al. 1986), which posits that accessible and institutionally supported professional development enhances teachers' participation, motivation, and commitment to research.

The program offers accessible, needs-based training and sustained support through coaching and mentoring for two years. The schedule of the projects is based on the arrangement of the service provider with the teachers. Its objectives are to fully implement the five planned projects, achieve at least 80 percent 'very satisfactory' ratings from participants, raise positive attitudes toward research from 40 percent to 70 percent, reduce reported research difficulties from 38 percent to 10 percent, and ensure that at least 80 percent of participants reach an intermediate level of research proficiency.

CONCLUSION

Addressing barriers in research writing among teachers builds a strong foundation of confidence and motivation to conduct more studies. This qualitative study has an end goal of identifying the challenges of teachers that might affect their interest to complete research projects. The findings of the study identified three emerging themes based on the responses of teachers with regard to their research writing experiences that include capacity and skills limitations, resource and support constraints, and workload pressures and systemic challenges. The result of the qualitative data analysis served as the basis for the design of the Needs-responsive Community Development Training Program for Research, which aims to increase research productivity, including completed action research, papers, and publications and to support evidence-based teaching practices through better integration of research findings into classroom instruction

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended to implement and evaluate the effectiveness of the Community Development Training Program for Research, which aims to equip teachers with research skills that can be useful for their professional development and classroom management strategies, as they examine their respective educational practices and services for continuous improvement. The service provider of the training program may provide regular research capability-building workshops for teachers, school-based research mentoring and coaching programs and improved access to research resources and academic databases.

LIMITATIONS

This study is also limited to teachers in one elementary school in the Philippines therefore, the findings cannot be generalised. It is recommended to replicate the study using a larger and more diverse sample of teachers, conduct comparative analysis between elementary, secondary, and senior high school teachers and include quantitative or mixed-methods approaches to validate qualitative findings.

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