RESEARCH WRITING SKILLS AND CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY TEACHERS IN THE SCHOOLS DIVISION OF CAMARINES NORTE

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Completed 2022

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SEPS for Planning and Research

ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to determine the research writing skills and the challenges and problems experienced by the teachers in SDO Camarines Norte. It made used of descriptive design and 662 conveniently chosen respondents.

Findings revealed that most of the respondents are female and belong to the middle adulthood age range. The teachers were new in the teaching position and have served in 1-5 years in teaching. They have no experience in writing action research but wrote or conducted other types of research but are knowledgeable, however, experienced difficulties. The overall productivity profile of the is average. They are no longer beginners in research but practices the typical or usual aspects of it. The respondents have no experience in writing action research. They challenged in writing its parts since they have no formal writing practice.

The researcher, therefore recommends that trainings in the form of capacity building should be given to these teachers and those who are untrained ones. The researcher endorses the use of the BUSIKLAT research handbook that can aid in writing and conducting action and basic research. In terms of research management, the teachers can freely use the EDUSALIKSIK website for submission of title, proposal and completed researches. Openness, willingness and patience are also enjoined from the teachers so that in the future they can write and conduct research that can benefit not only the school and other teachers but their learners as well.

Key words: Research skills, Challenges, SDO Camarines Norte, BUSIKLAT Research Handbook, EDUSALIKSIK

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Gratitude is the memory of the heart!
(Jean Baptiste Massieu)

The researcher is heartfully indebted to the following who contributed to the completion of this research:

DepEd RO V PPRD management and staff for the approval and technical assistance;

SDO Camarines Norte headed by SDS Nympha D. Guemo, ASDS Maria Flora T. Pandes, SGOD Chief Ramon B. Avila and the Planning and Research Section Staff for the unwavering support and constant push;

To the respondents of this study for the time shared and efforts made;

To Ana Marie L. Zaldivar and Aileen Forescal, Filipino Teachers from CNNHS and TLNHS for the healthy ideas on the title of the research handbook;

To Dennis Secretario, Jena Den Secretario, Jen Dennise Secretario and Wilson Angel Villarin for the cover design and layout of the handbook;

To my family and friends for the constant inspiration; and

Above all, to the God Almighty, the source of all knowledge and wisdom.

GNRito

CONTEXT AND RATIONALE

Man, since time immemorial always seeks for the unknown, for what is true and right as well as finding ways or solutions to problems that beset him. People from all walks of life, of whatever career and professions always show the desire to learn and know about things around him. This is because of the fact that no matter how many experiences we have or how diverse our circle socially, there are things that we do not know. Thus, we search for knowledge and answers to whatever it is that we would like to know, solve and answer. This is simply called as research.

Research unlocks the unknown of things. It allows us to explore the world which can lead us to a deeper understanding of things around us. Moreover, research permits us to know, learn more and even solve problems thereby opening up new opportunities for learning and even growth and development in whatever task that we have. Zarah (2020) wrote that the main purpose of research is to inform action, gather evidence for theories and contribute to developing knowledge in a field of study. She considers research as important to everyone- not just for students, scientists and academicians. Finding reasons why research is important seems like a no-brainer, but many people avoid it like the plague. However, for those who like to learn, whether they are members of a research institution or not, conducting research is not just important. It is considered as imperative.

As “superheroes in the classroom” (Salleh, 2014), teachers are challenged by the ever-changing nature of the work they do every day. They must stay adaptable and need to learn, unlearn and relearn. There is a need for them to

undergo professional development, and to conduct research is one of which. Conducting research has the advantage of bringing teaching and learning really close together and translating new teaching ideas to their very own classroom. Research for teachers is embedded in their teaching practice with immediate application leading to a continuous learning as they teach. Thus, research for teachers or conducting research can improve practice while being informed by theory at the same time.

However, teachers sometimes feel intimated by the prospect of venturing into research. The result of the study conducted by Gepila, et al (2018), revealed that teachers in the basic education level are identified as beginners or limited in terms of their research profile. Their profile is found to be not relevant with their research skills and techniques as well as with their research management. The study further revealed that majority of the DepEd teachers had none, if not, limited experience and exposure on various research-related activities. The researchers mentioned that the findings can possibly be associated with the fact that DepEd only encourages but not requires teachers to engage themselves in the field of research due to their insufficient budget allocation and the latter's low motivational level as well as excessive teaching workloads.

Such is also the case in the Schools Division of Camarines Norte especially in terms of the number of teachers conducting researches. With more than 6,000 teachers, both elementary and secondary, in the onset of CY 2021, only about 175 teachers have conducted action research from school year 2018-2020. During these years, the unit in-charge of research have conducted capacity building

seminars/trainings/workshops which aims to increase the number of teachers conducting research, but to no avail, only a few teachers actually conducted one. Added to this, record shows that for the SY 2020 alone, out of 253 elementary schools, only 11 schools have conducted action research with only 14 teachers conducting the research. For the secondary level, out of 69 secondary schools, only 13 schools have action research with a total of 21 researchers actually conducting the research. Considering the fact that Master Teachers are required to have research in every school year, and that we have a number of master teachers, what could have been the problem why this is not done.

It is through this context that the proponent of this action research was motivated to find out why only a few teachers are conducting research. Thus, this action research.

PROPOSED INNOVATION, INTERVENTION AND STRATEGY

The proponent of this research proposed a handbook in writing action research that can be used by the teachers in SDO Camarines Norte. The handbook was contextualized and adapted to the situation and context of the teachers in SDO Camarines Norte. It addressed the challenges as well as the problems and issues experienced by the teachers in conducting research studies. However, its main focus are the guidelines and techniques on how to write action research. The different parts of the action research proposal were given emphasis especially in the aspect of how this will be written.

Added to this, the research management guidelines provided by the department will be incorporated so with the research agenda of the SDO, DepEd Order No 39 s 2016 and the new DepEd order No. 44, s 2022. The purpose of which is to guide the teachers on what to write or conduct research and what will be done if ever they want their research to be funded. Entitled BUSIKLAT, SDO Camarines Norte Research Handbook, it generally aims to improve the research skills of the teachers as well as enhance the culture of research in SDO Camarines Norte.

The researcher also prepared an innovation project entitled as PROJECT E-STAAR which means Electronic Submission and Technical Assistance for Action Research. This innovation project consists of three (3) salient features: a modified template for action and basic research, a monitoring and evaluation tool in reviewing research and the EDUSALIKSIK website which is a platform for submission and technical assistance to be provided to research proponents.

ACTION RESEARCH QUESTION

This study aims to determine the research writing skills as well as the challenges and problems experienced by the teachers in conducting research in the Schools Division of Camarines Norte. Specifically, this action research sought answers to the following research questions:

1. What is the profile of the teacher-respondents in terms of gender, age, work experience/position and research experience?

2. What is the level of the research productivity profile of the respondents in terms of research skills and technique, knowledge of research environment and practice of research management?
3. What are the problems and challenges faced by the teacher-respondents in conducting research?
4. What intervention can be developed in order to improve the research writing skills and to solve the problems and challenges experienced by the teacher-respondents in the Division of Camarines Norte?

ACTION RESEARCH METHODS

The proponent of this research employed the Descriptive design as the study is concerned with the present status of the respondents in terms of their research skills as well as the challenges and problems, they experience in writing action research. This study specifically used the mixed (Quan-Qual) method of research because both quantitative and qualitative data were considered in exploring the problems under investigation.

a. Participants and/or Other Sources of Data and Information

The respondents in this study were the teachers of both elementary and secondary schools in the Schools Division of Camarines Norte. They were chosen through convenience sampling due to issues having to do with the distance of other schools and social distancing because of the pandemic. The researcher asked help from the PSDS of the 14 districts of SDO Camarines Norte to help in

conveniently choosing the 662 teachers from the entire division. Other sources of data that will be considered in this research is DepEd Order No. 16, s. 2017 or the Research Management Guidelines which can help the researcher in considering some of the contents of the output to be made.

b. Data Gathering Methods

The data gathered in this research are both quantitative and qualitative data. SOP 1 was quantified using a survey questionnaire found in Part 1 of the questionnaire. This contained items that explored the profile of the teacher-respondents in terms of gender, age, work experience/position and research experience. SOP 2 was explored using another survey questionnaire containing three parts, that is, Part A, B and C. Part B and C of these questionnaire were adapted from Researcher Development Framework (2010). Part A on the other hand, was developed by the researcher. These questionnaires determined the research productivity profile of the respondents in terms of research skills and technique, knowledge of research environment and practice of research management. As to the SOP 3, an interview guide was prepared that helped the researcher in finding out the challenges faced by the teachers in writing and conducting research as well as the problems they experience in doing their research. The data gathered in SOP 1 to 3 were considered in developing a research handbook that can be easily understood by teachers and which can help them in writing and conducting research.

c. Data Analysis Plan

The data gathered were analyzed using descriptive statistics with the utilization of frequency, percentage, ranking and the mean as a measure of central tendency. The data gathered were tabulated and treated with the statistical tools mentioned to determine the pertinent findings of the study. Responses to the interview guide were analyzed through groupings considering the similarities and differences in the answers given. A Likert scale was utilized to interpret the computed mean rating for the profile of research productivity which include research skills and techniques, knowledge of research environment and practice of research management. The Likert used was as follows:

3.26-4.00 - Expert

2.51-3.25 - Advanced

1.76-2.50 - Average

1.00-1.75 - Beginner

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND REFLECTION

Profile of Teachers

Profile refers to the description of someone containing all the most important or interesting facts about the person (Cambridge Dictionary, 2022). In this study this refers to the gender, age, work experience or position and their research experience as a teacher. The profile of the respondents is shown in Table 1.

Gender. Out of the 662 respondents, there were 524 or 79% female and 138 or 21% male. This shows that there were more female respondents than

the male teachers who were able to access the questionnaire and link for it and have participated in this research study.

Table 1

Profile of the Respondents
(N=662)

Profile	Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	138	21%
	Female	524	79%
Age	21-25	59	9%
	26-30	115	17%
	31-35	104	16%
	36-40	127	19%
	41-45	101	15%
	46-50	68	10%
	51-55	52	8%
	56-60	32	5%
	61-65	4	1%
Work Experience/Position	T 1	366	55%
	T 2	119	18%
	T 3	137	21%
	HT 1	4	1%
	HT 2	1	0.1%
	HT 3	10	2%
	MT 1	16	2%
	MT 2	9	1%
Teaching Level	Elementary	286	43%
	Junior High School	282	43%
	Senior High School	94	14%
Years in Service	≤ 1-5	266	40%
	6-10	164	25%
	11-15	73	11%
	16-20	56	8%
	21-25	54	8%
	26-30	32	5%
	31-35	14	2%
	36-40	3	1%
Research Experience	With experience	137	21%
	Without Experience	525	79%
Type of Research Conducted	Action Research	28	20%
	Basic Research	46	34%
	Thesis/Dissertation	63	46%

The gathered data on gender cannot deny the fact that teaching is a feminine profession. According to the Philippine Commission on Women (2014), as of 2008–2009, 89.58% of the teachers in public elementary schools and 77.06% of the teachers in public secondary schools are females. And this is considered as an overwhelming majority. Added to this, in the elementary level education remains an overwhelmingly female-dominated field. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2014) states that only 13% of elementary school teachers are men. This under representation of men may partially be due to prejudice, which occurs when members of a group attempt to enter social roles that are stereotypically incongruent for their group (Eagly & Karau, 2002). This goes to show that there were more female teachers who responded in this study because of the fact that that there are more female teachers than male teachers in the field.

This finding on gender is similar to the findings of the study of Anzaldo and Cudiamat (2019) who determined the perception of public elementary school teachers in writing action research. They found out that 14 or 93.33% of the total number of the respondents who are female and only 1 or 6.67% is male. They concluded that there are majority of female teachers over male. They further expounded that the reason can be attributed to the fact that that there is more female who are taking the course of Education than the male. They further said that this is because individuals can be affected by the mentality that teaching is a work and profession for females that is why there are more female teachers than the male ones.

Age. In terms of age, 127 or 19% of the respondents belongs to the age range of 36-40 while 115 or 17% are in the age bracket of 26-30. There were also respondents whose age falls in the range of 31-35, that is 104 or 16% and 101 or 15% of the respondents have age that falls in the bracket of 41-45. It can be noted from the gathered data that most of the respondents, that is 447 out of 662 or 68% fall under the ages 26 to 45. The other respondents were either younger or older than the above-mentioned age group.

The gathered data showed that most of the respondents are in the adulthood stage, a stage that is characterized by full physical and intellectual maturity. In this particular stage, the adults are with high level of education, good health support and guidance from partner and family members, high ambitions and realistic goals, ability to accept success or failure gracefully, ability and willingness to communicate with others, respect for others and active participation in prestigious community affairs will easily climb up the ladder to successful economic and social status.

In terms of research, this could be a time where they would want to become involve in conducting studies particularly if it can help them in responding to situations which they experience in their teaching. Moreover, it is at this point in their career that they would want to get promoted. Knowing that research is one of the criteria being assessed, then conducting one at this particular age range would be timely and relevant.

Anzaldo and Cudiamat (2019) cited Alufohai and Ibhafidon (2015) classified teacher's age into three levels – young age, middle age and old age. They further

said that 21-30 can be categorized as under the young age, 31-40 in the middle age and the 41-50 in the old age. Using these levels, there are 174 respondents who are in the young age category. For the middle age category, there are 231 teachers and 161 in the old age level.

Work Experience/Position. Most of the respondents who participated in the research are in Teacher 1 position with a frequency of 366 which is 55% of the total number of respondents. There were also 119 or 18% Teacher 2 and 137 or 21% who are in Teacher 3 position. There were also 16 (2%) respondents who are Master Teacher 1 and 9 (1%) who are Master Teacher 2. There were also Head Teachers who participated in the study. There were 10 (2%) HT 3, 4 (1%) HT 1 and 1 (0.1%) HT 2 who acted as respondents in this present study. These number of respondents from each teaching position show their interest in research especially on how to conduct one.

The number of Teacher 1 and Teacher 2, as well as the Teacher 3 teachers holding those positions who participated in the study show the value that these teachers are giving to career supports and continuous professional development. As research is one of the criteria in assessing teachers' accomplishment, it is a must therefore that they give importance to research. Although, it should not be failed to mention that conducting research is not just for professional development but more on providing data that can be used in the improvement of the educational process. In other words, conducting research would help teachers to develop

professionally which at the same time can lead them to better educational practices.

Garcia and Weiss (2019) reported the important role of career supports and continuous professional development given to teachers. The report examined the magnitude of the teacher shortage and the working conditions and other factors that contribute to the condition. Their review of early career supports, ongoing professional development, and opportunities for cooperation and influence offered to public school teachers reveals a mixed picture, with clear room to improve the system of professional supports that play a role in teacher retention and expand the knowledge base of the teaching workforce.

The result of their study showed that positively, the set of supports already broadly offered in the schools is a strong foundation to build upon. Large shares of first-year teachers work with a mentor (79.9 percent) or participate in teacher induction programs (72.7 percent). And large shares of teachers generally are accessing certain types of professional development, including workshops or training sessions (91.9 percent), activities focused on the subjects that teachers teach (85.1 percent), regularly scheduled collaboration with other teachers on issues of instruction (80.8 percent), and opportunities to observe or be observed by other teachers in their classrooms (67.0 percent).

Parallel to this indicator, the researcher asks about the years in service of the teacher-respondents. Most of them served DepEd from 1 to 5 years, that is 266 or (40%), followed by 6-10 years having 164 or 25% respondents and 73 or 11% respondents for 11-15 years in service. There were also 56 or 8% and 54 or

58% respondents who served for 16-20 and 21-25 years respectively. It can be interpreted that most of the teachers who have rendered 1 to 5 years of service are newly hired teachers compared to those who with 6 years and above experience in teaching profession.

Research Experience. As to research experience, the table shows that most of the respondents, that is, 525 (79%) teachers have no experience in research writing or conducting research. On the other hand, 127 teacher-respondents or 21% said that they have experience in writing research.

The data gathered shows that most of the teachers have not yet conducted or written research. Some said that they know research but have not actually written or conducted one. This implies the need to conduct capacity building activities that would help teachers, specifically new teachers in the field. It would be a responsibility on the part of the research coordinator in the school and in the division to implement measures that will enable these teachers without experience to be capacitated in conducting research studies. This is so because research is relevant to teachers as this inspires personal growth and development in individuals and in groups.

Parsons and McRae (2007) wrote that teachers have always good researchers. Teachers always (re) search as educators. Any teacher who has asked a question deemed essential to practice and used a systematic method to find an answer has engaged in a form of research. Attentive teachers observe their students and, through systematic and embedded study, come to understand the

culture of the learning environment. However, in terms of a formal research, a lot of teachers still lack the skills the write and conduct one especially if a particular template or guidelines will be followed.

A follow up question was asked as regards the type of research that the teacher-respondents have conducted. Result showed that most of the teachers, that is 63 or 46% have an experienced writing thesis or dissertation. This was when they enrolled in graduate studies like the masters and doctoral programs. Others have said that they have conducted basic research, that is 46 teachers which is equal to 34%. The remaining 28 teachers, that is, 20% of the total number of respondents said that they have conducted action research.

This finding implies that teachers know the importance of research and some of them have conducted one. However, it is good to note that they belong to a minimal number. The study conducted by Ulla (2017) about teachers in the Philippines as researchers revealed that doing action research in the Philippine public elementary and secondary schools may not be that popular as a number of these teachers are not equipped with the necessary knowledge on what action research is and how to do it. DepEd has been doing significant ways to update and inform the public-school teachers about the importance of doing research, but many teachers in both elementary and secondary schools were uninterested and demotivated. This therefore shows that there should be much thing to be done in order for these teachers to conduct action research that will be beneficial not only for themselves but for their clienteles as well.

Level of Research Productivity Profile

Productivity is commonly defined as a ratio between the output volume and the volume of inputs. It refers to the quality, state, or fact of being able to generate, create, enhance, or bring forth goods and services (Dictionary.com). In this study, this refers to productivity profile of the respondents in terms of research skills and techniques, knowledge of research environment and practice of research management. The level of the teacher-respondents in these three factors will determine if they are productive in research and its undertakings.

Research Skills and Techniques.

Research skills and techniques are the ability to find an answer to a question or a solution to a problem. They include the ability to gather information about a topic, review that information and analyze and interpret the details in a way to support a solution. Having research skills is necessary to advance career as they directly relate to one's ability to gain insight and inspire action (Indeed Editorial Team, 2020).

Table 2 presents the research skills and techniques of the teacher-respondents who participated in the study. It shows the 10 indicators defining research skills and techniques of the teacher-respondents as well as the summary of the ratings they have given. Of the 10 indicators, the one having to do with "Identifies problem that can be studied" got the highest mean rating of 1.96. It was followed by the indicator "Utilizes relevant information and evaluate sources" having a mean score of 1.93. The top 3 indicator, "Has knowledge in gathering,

presenting, analyzing and interpreting data", obtained a mean rating of 1.89. On the other hand, the indicator "Can be able to plan data and statistical analysis" got the lowest mean rating of 1.79. All these ratings are interpreted as Average in the Likert scale that was used.

Table 2

Research Skills and Techniques
(N=662)

INDICATORS	Mean	Adjectival Rating
Identifies problem that can be studied	1.96	Average
Formulates problem question/research problems and hypotheses	1.88	Average
Understands and can be able to do topic narrowing and information retrieval	1.87	Average
Utilizes relevant information and evaluate sources	1.93	Average
Can choose appropriate design and methodology of the research to be conducted	1.81	Average
Can formulate/source out questionnaire, identify respondents and sampling techniques and select appropriate statistical tools to be used.	1.87	Average
Can be able to plan data and statistical analysis	1.79	Average
Has knowledge in gathering, presenting, analyzing and interpreting data	1.89	Average
Has facility in using language/strong written and verbal skills	1.88	Average
Has knowledge in reporting findings, formulate conclusions and giving recommendations	1.86	Average
TOTAL	**1.87**	**Average**

Legend: 3.26-4.00 - Expert
2.51-3.25 - Advanced
1.76-2.50 - Average
1.00-1.75 - Beginner

The obtained results shows that the teacher-respondents see themselves as being average in terms of having research techniques and skills. They see themselves as no longer beginners in terms of using skills and techniques in conducting or doing research. They already have knowledge in identifying problems, in gathering, presenting, analyzing and interpreting data and even in

using sources. However, they consider themselves as not yet advanced and even not yet an expert in terms of utilizing their research skills and techniques. Although average, the teacher respondents find their data planning and statistical skills as the lowest. And this has been always the problem of most researchers, how data can be statistically treated or what statistical tools can be used most relevantly.

These findings about the research skills and techniques of teachers are supported by the study of Basilio and Bueno (2019) about the research skills and attitudes of master teachers in a division. Their study concluded that master teachers in the locale of the study have average skills in searching, using and evaluating information including their awareness on the various sources of information and where to obtain them. They have fair skills in designing experimental study as well as selecting and developing research instruments, choosing appropriate statistical tools and preparing manuscript for publication. These findings have prompted the researchers to conduct a capability building study that will enable the master teachers to develop their skills. Specifically, they have proposed a research capability training program as the output of the study. The program according to them will consists of various levels from lectures, hands-on workshop, and writing research articles for colloquium and for possible publication.

Knowledge of Research Environment.

Research environment is defined by Evans (2007) as including: ‘shared values, assumptions, beliefs, rituals and other forms of behavior whose central

focus is the acceptance and recognition of research practice and output as valued, worthwhile and pre-eminent activity. Also known as research cultures, they are thought to be the most influential predictors of research productivity. The knowledge of the teacher-respondents of research environment was determined. In this study, research environment was defined using 10 indicators which were again rated by the respondents using a Likert scale. The results and the data gathered are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Knowledge of Research Environment
(N=662)

INDICATORS	Mean	Adjectival Rating
Aware of impact on others and wide environment and takes responsibility for own work space.	2.07	Average
Understands research issues and demonstrates responsible working practices	1.99	Average
Understands and applies the relevant codes of conduct and guidelines for the ethical conduct of research	1.96	Average
Demonstrates awareness of issues relating to the rights of other researchers, of research subjects and of others who may be affected by the research	1.98	Average
Understands the concept of social responsibility and seeks guidance as necessary	2.06	Average
Has basic understanding of legal requirements surrounding research	1.87	Average
Has basic understanding of data ownership rules as they apply to own research	1.95	Average
Within own research respects the right of participants to confidentiality and anonymity	2.04	Average
Understands the concept of attribution. Appropriately recognizing contributions and co-authorship	1.98	Average
Understands and adheres to the rules and regulations regarding academic malpractice	1.99	Average
TOTAL	**1.99**	**Average**

Legend: 3.26-4.00 - Expert
2.51-3.25 - Advanced
1.76-2.50 - Average
1.00-1.75 - Beginner

Among the 10 indicators used to characterize knowledge of research environment, the indicator “Aware of impact on others and wide environment and takes responsibility for own work space” obtained the highest mean rating of 2.07. This is followed by the indicator having to do with “Understands the concept of social responsibility and seeks guidance as necessary” obtaining a mean rating of 2.06. Top 3 indicator obtaining a mean rating of 2.04 has something to do with “Within own research respects the right of participants to confidentiality and anonymity”. All these three indicators obtained an adjectival rating of Average. The indicator “Has basic understanding of legal requirements surrounding research” obtained the lowest rating among the 10 indicators. It obtained a mean rating of 1.87 but still described as Average.

The obtained results show that the teacher respondents cognizant of the fact that research always has an impact not only to their selves as researchers but also to the respondents of the research and in education in general. Added to this, the teacher-respondents know that in conducting research, one must consider the impact that it will have on others, thus social responsibility must always be practiced. The respondents also have an average knowledge of the right of the participants to confidentiality and anonymity. Although average, the respondents believe that they have basic knowledge about the legalities and legal basis for research. Overall, the teacher-respondents believe that they are average in terms of knowing the different characteristics of a research environment.

Nguyen and Klopper (2014) conducted a study about the influence of research environment on research productivity in a research-oriented university in

Vietnam. The findings revealed that the respondents are aware of the importance of research and research productivity, but the environment does not support them to engage in research. This too, could be the reason why only a few teachers in the Division conducts action research. The knowledge of the teachers is only average in terms of the legalities, ethical issues and standards of research. Being advanced or expert on this field might lead to increase in the number of teachers conducting action research particularly in SDO Camarines Norte.

Practice of Research Management

Research management is defined as the application of both management and management science to a particular field of research and development activities. Seven components of research management include theory and methodology; the planning, implementation, and evaluation of research programs; communications; utilization; and special applications. (Cook, 2009). In this study practice of research management is characterized by 10 indicators which were rated by the teacher-respondents. The result of the ratings given is presented in Table 4.

The teacher-respondents rated the indicator having to do with “acts on decisions agreed with supervisor/line manager and delivers results” and “aware of risks in virtual environments and when using interactive communication technologies” with a mean of 1.91. The indicators “Aware of how own research aligns with the research strategy of the institution and strategic focus of the discipline/research area” and “makes efficient use of available resources” obtained

the highest mean rating of 1.87. On the other hand, the indicator “Writes own research proposal” obtained the lowest mean rating of 1.73 among the 10 indicators. All these mean ratings were interpreted as Average. The total mean for all the indicators is 1.84 which is again verbally interpreted as Average.

Table 4

Practice of Research Management
(N=662)

INDICATORS	Mean	Adjectival Rating
Aware of how own research aligns with the research strategy of the institution and strategic focus of the discipline/research area.	1.87	Average
Develops understanding of broader context of research	1.82	Average
Applies effective project management through the setting of research goals, intermediate milestones and prioritization of activities	1.79	Average
Acts on decisions agreed with supervisor/line manager and delivers results.	1.91	Average
Makes basic risk assessment and is able to manage risks in own project with support.	1.84	Average
Aware of risks in virtual environments and when using interactive communication technologies	1.91	Average
Understands the processes for funding and evaluation of research.	1.81	Average
Writes own research proposal.	1.73	Beginner
Makes efficient use of available resources.	1.87	Average
Knows immediate academic system/work environment, departmental or faculty	1.85	Average
TOTAL	**1.84**	**Average**

Legend: 3.26-4.00 - Expert
2.51-3.25 - Advanced
1.76-2.50 - Average
1.00-1.75 - Beginner

The findings revealed that the teacher-respondents are still in average level when it comes to practicing research management. They are no longer beginners but not yet advanced or even experts. Of worthy to note is the indicator which received the lowest mean rating which pertains to writing research proposal. The teacher-respondents said that they are still beginners when it comes

to this indicator. This implies that lesser researches are being conducted in the division because in terms of writing research, the respondents see themselves as beginners. This means that they are just starting to do research or learning from it for the first time. Further, the results show that they are knowledgeable or a little bit practicing on strategies in research or use research resources but to actually write research and conduct one for that matter, they are still gaining skills.

These findings are paralleled to the profile of the teacher-respondents in this study. Since most of the respondents are occupying Teacher 1 position and most of them have 1 to 5 years in service, it is but natural and normal that they consider themselves as beginners in terms of writing research. They may have experiences in writing thesis or dissertation, but still struggles in writing action research. According to Dziedzic (2016), engaging in action research is a “brief, clear, and detailed look at how

to complete your own self-directed site-based action research”. To do so, the potential action researchers walk through the typical components of an action research project – from question development to literature review to methods and methodology to collecting and analyzing data to reporting findings. The step-by-step approach provides novice action research with a solid grounding in what action research is how one might go about conducting it, and how to share the results. Thus, it can be said that teacher-respondents who are beginning teachers need to know first these components before delving into writing or conducting one.

The ratings for research productivity profile were summarized and is presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Summary of Ratings for Research Productivity Profile

Indicators	Mean Rating	Adjectival rating
Research Skills and Techniques	1.87	Average
Knowledge of Research Environment	1.99	Average
Practice of Research Management	1.84	Average
TOTAL	**1.9**	**Average**

Legend: 3.26-4.00 - Expert
2.51-3.25 - Advanced
1.76-2.50 - Average
1.00-1.75 - Beginner

As mentioned, the research productivity profile of the respondents was defined in terms of research skills and techniques, knowledge of research environment. The highest mean rating of 1.99 was obtained by the indicator knowledge of research environment. For research skills and techniques, it was 1.87 ranking at second. Lastly, practice of research management obtained the lowest mean rating of 1.84. All these mean ratings were verbally interpreted as Average.

The results obtained implies that in terms of possessing skills in research together with the necessary techniques in writing one, the teacher-respondents' level or standard is just the usual or typical. This is the same with having knowledge about research environment. The respondents showed that they have a standard familiarity with the concepts involving research environment that include behavior, beliefs and overall research culture. The teachers are in an average or standard level. In terms of managing research, the respondents were also in a typical and in the usual level.

It can therefore be said that the teacher-respondents in terms of research productivity are just average as can be seen from the total mean rating of 1.9 for

the three indicators. This shows that they are productive research wise, but their productivity is typical and the usual. They know and practice research in general, however, they cannot be considered as advanced or experts yet. This further means that there are aspects of research that they do not know yet or have not been practicing yet, that is why, to write an action research or conduct a study seem to be difficult. They know what research is and its relevance to teachers but their knowledge of it cannot still be put into practice.

The study of Nguyen and Klopper (2014) on the influence of research environment within a university on research productivity revealed that all the respondents in their study are aware of the importance of research and research productivity, but the environment does not support them to engage in research. And this is also the case of the teacher-respondents in this study. They still lack the zeal for conducting research as well as the right attitudes necessary if one is to conduct research.

In the study conducted by Ulla et al, (2017), they particularly mentioned doing action research in the Philippine public elementary and secondary schools may not be that popular as a number of these teachers are not equipped with the necessary knowledge on what action research is and how to do it. DepEd has been doing significant ways to update and inform the public-school teachers about the importance of doing research, but many teachers in both elementary and secondary schools were uninterested and demotivated. Factors like tight teaching timetable and heavy teaching workload (Morales, 2016; Kutlay, 2012) are just few

of the reasons why some public-school teachers are not motivated and have no interest to do research.

Research productivity among teachers can only be average because of a lot of factors. Vásquez (2017) reported that lack of research knowledge and skills training raised an important problem to teachers doing research. As there is insufficient training for the teachers to conduct research activities, teachers did not feel confident to begin conceptualizing and writing research.

Zhou (2012), who conducted the same study in China also reported similar findings. He found that teachers did not have a clear understanding of what research is. Teachers also did not have enough time to do research and they did not have sufficient knowledge of research methodology to conduct research.

Problems and Challenges Faced

Problems and challenges are inevitable in life and so with writing research. The teacher-respondents were asked as to the challenges they meet or the problems they encounter in writing or conducting research. The responses of the respondents are presented in Table 6.

The table shows that teachers experienced a number of problems and challenges in writing or conducting research. Of the many challenges they experienced, Rank 1 has something to do with “No experience in conducting research.” It has been voted or listed by 264 of the total number of respondents. It was followed by “Little or lack of knowledge on how to write the parts of an action

Table 6

Problems and Challenges Faced in Terms of Writing Action Research

Problems and Challenges Faced	Frequency	Rank
No formal writing practice	92	3
Insufficient information or data	26	11
No experience in conducting research	264	1
Difficulty in creating/conceptualizing what to write	29	10
No sufficient/Lack of research skills	67	6
Difficulty in formulating questions	10	17
Heavy teaching load/Conflicting schedules	9	18
Limited resources	15	14.5
No focus and time in writing research	64	7
No time to attend trainings and seminars on research	71	5
Pandemic issues	75	4
Limited ideas for innovation, intervention or strategies	38	9
Lack of support from colleagues and the administration	12	16
Lack of research materials and resources	39	8
Poor internet connectivity	15	14.5
Little or lack of knowledge on how to write the parts of an action research	195	2
Personal reasons	22	12
School's location	6	20
Lacks/Less idea on what to research	16	13
Unable to start	7	19

research" with 195 teaching choosing it. Top 3 was "No formal writing practice" having 92 teachers who listed it as one of the many challenges and problems they have experienced. "Pandemic issues" were also their concern and this was listed by 75 teachers and occupies rank 4. AS for rank 5, the respondents listed "No time to attend trainings and seminars on research". This was listed by 71 teachers. Other challenges include not having enough research skills, no focus and time in writing research and lack of research materials and resources.

The gathered data revealed that writing or conducting research is not always a bed of roses. In writing or conducting research, would be researchers, in

this case, the teachers can meet issues, problems and challenges which hinders them even if they are motivated to do so. The study of Bullo, et al (2021) jibes with the findings of this research. They conveyed that majority of the teacher respondents experienced challenges and problems. They further said that the teacher-respondents agreed that the challenges they encountered were according to this rank: additional workload and burden on the part of the teacher (23%), lack of time (22%), writing anxiety (19%), lack of support from the school (13%), lack of sufficient reference materials (12%), and inadequate knowledge regarding the conduct of educational research (11%).

Such results were congruent to the present study and to the study conducted by Ellis and Loughland (2016) who stated that lack of time and time pressures relative to classroom activities, both extra and co-curricular, and doing research restricted the teachers in Singapore from having quality research. Vásquez (2017) mentioned that heavy teaching loads are why teachers opted not to do research. As teachers compromise with priorities in their workplace, family, and society, they should be given quality time to do what they are expected to do. Furthermore, lack of research training would affect the teachers' interest, confidence, and motivation to do research activities. Sheikh, Kaleem, and Waqas (2013) also noted that participation in research training and courses would positively impact the researchers as they would be exposed to different methodologies, styles, and concepts of doing research. Added to these, Sarkar (2014) shared the findings of his study stating the following as the challenges encountered by the teachers in conducting research; first is getting permission for

collecting data, second is recruiting intended participants, and problems in using survey questionnaires.

These findings together with the studies and literature cited that to write led the researcher to believe that the predicaments of the teacher-respondents from SDO Camarines Norte is not separate from the experiences of other teachers not only in the entire division but also in the country as well. Since teachers are mandated by virtue of RA 9155 to conduct educational researches not only as a part of professional development, it is but necessary for them to be fully knowledgeable about writing and conducting researches, in particular, action researches. Although it is tough, conducting research can really help teachers develop their knowledge and skills as teachers. Teachers perceive research as an important tool in creating and delivering instructions to students promoting positive learning outcomes. It is also valuable and practical as it would really help the teachers and the students as well. Citing Ulla, Barrera, and Acompanado (2017) teachers perceived that doing research is essential to their professional growth. They agreed that doing research encourages critical self-reflection, enables them to examine and explore classroom and school problems and their solutions, and develops and enhances their knowledge and skills for classroom teaching.

Having said these facts, it is therefore timely and relevant to help the teachers in acquiring knowledge and skills in writing and conducting research. Being the research coordinator of SDO Camarines Norte, I consider it as a big challenge and responsibility to be able to support and assist teachers in crafting research proposals and completion report that can guide them in also helping out

their learners and school in whatever situations, conditions or problems that they came to meet as they deliver learning to the clienteles.

Intervention that was Developed

Having known the demographic profile, research productivity profile as well as the problems and issues experienced by the teacher-respondents, the researcher proposes as planned an intervention that will help and assist the teachers, non-teaching personnel included, in SDO Camarines Norte. At the beginning of the study, the researcher observed that teachers find it hard to submit research proposals in the division office because of the health protocols being followed because of the pandemic. The researcher then, proposed an innovation entitled Project E-STAAR which stands for Electronic Submission and Technical Assistance on Action Research.

The innovation consisted of three (3) innovative ideas such as 1.) Utilization of a modified template/format in writing action research proposal and accomplishment report; 2.) Use of monitoring and evaluation tool in the online provision for technical assistance to research proponents; and 3.) EDUSALIKSIK website for the online submission of proposals and completed researches and provision of technical assistance.

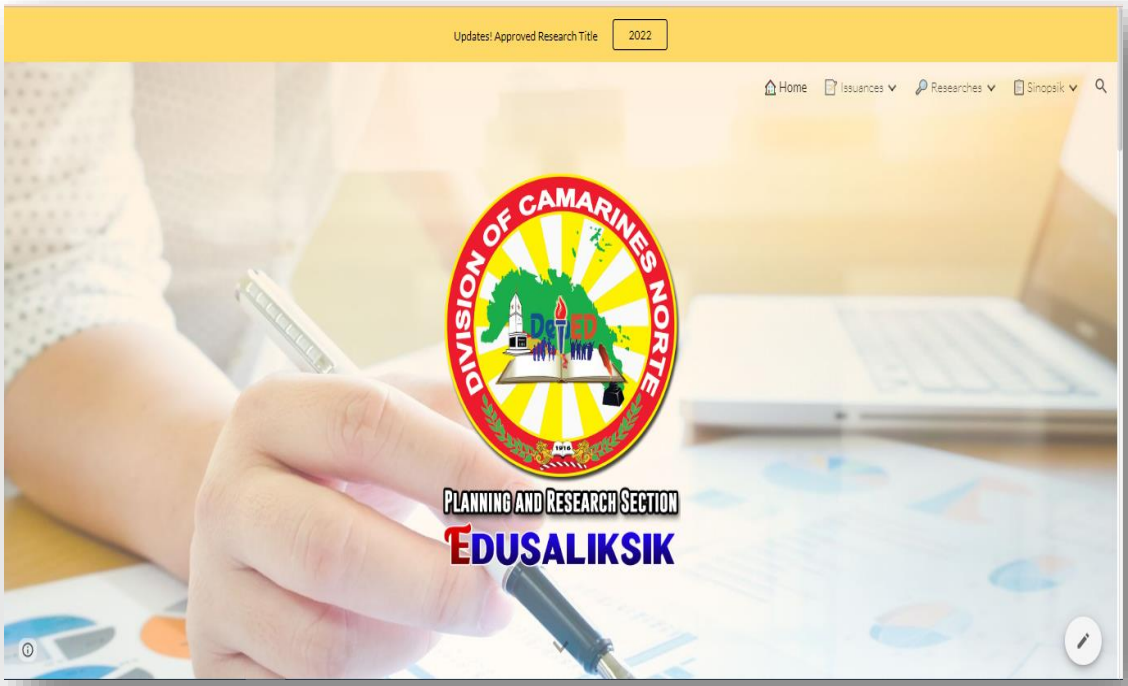

Plate 1 Part of the Home Page of the EDUSALIKSIK Website

Teachers who wished to submit research proposals have to do it in the EDUSALIKSIK website using their respective DepEd email. They will have to submit first their proposed title for review and critiquing. Once the title is approved, an email will be sent to the proponent with an attached modified AR template. At this point, the research proponent can now write his/her proposal following the guidelines set in the template. These guidelines are different indicators that they should discuss in each part of the action research. If followed properly, the teacher can now be able to write and have his/her own research proposal.

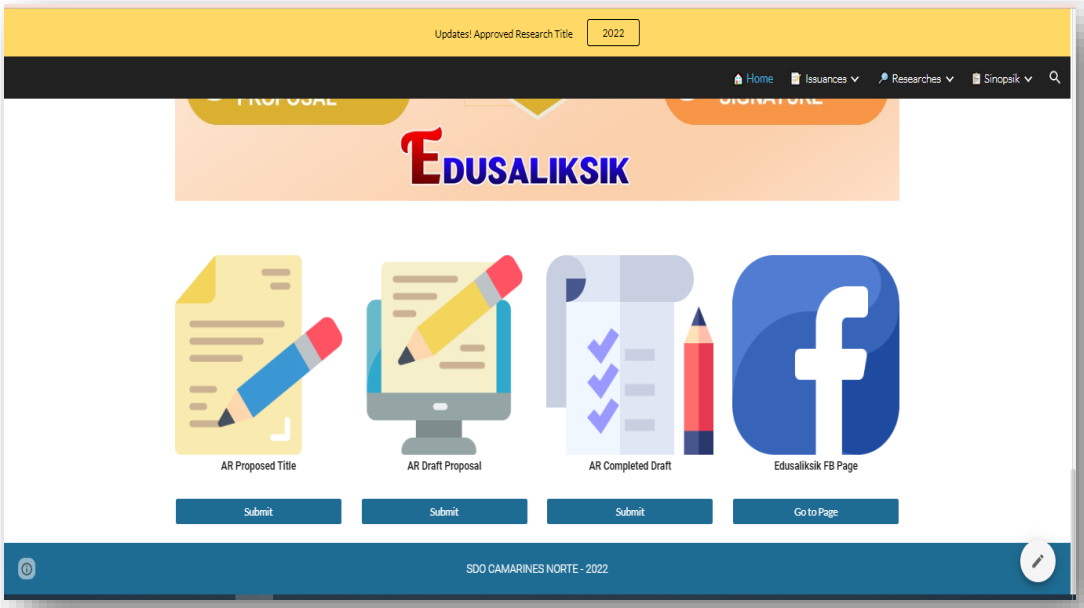

Plate 2 Icons in the Home Page of the Website where researchers can submit their title, proposal and completed research

Proposals submitted in the website will be reviewed and check using the monitoring and evaluation tool. The reviewer/checker will see to it that the indicators in the template is followed or observed or not observed. If it was observed but needs improvement, the checker will comment what are lacking or what improvements should be made. The monitoring tool will be sent to the proponent through the submitted DepEd email. Revisions that will be done by the research proponent will again be submitted to the website for further checking and review.

Once, the proposal is already acceptable and have followed the guidelines, it will be approved. The research proponent will automatically receive an email saying that the research proposal is already approved. The letter will instruct the research proponent to have the proposal printed in one (1) copy and that it should

be signed by the appropriate signatories. The time/day for signing will be the only occasion that the research proponent will be going to the school division office.

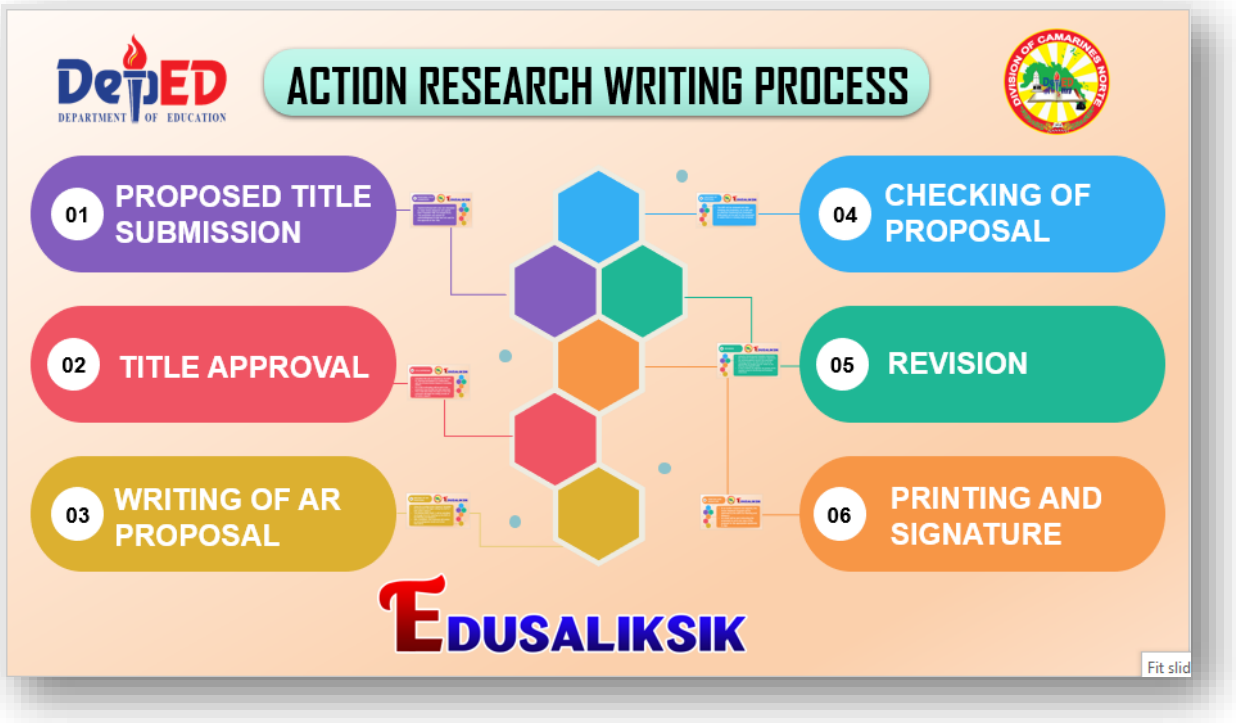

Plate 3 The Action Research Writing Process found in the Website

The same procedure is followed in the submission of completed action research. Submitted completed report will be checked and reviewed using the monitoring tool. If there will be revisions, the paper will be returned to the proponent through his/her email. The process will be repeated until the completed report is acceptable and will be approved. A letter will be received by the proponent that his/her completed report is already approved. An instruction is contained in the

letter telling the research proponent to print one copy and have it signed by the designated signatories.

The utilization of the salient features of the Project E STAAR resulted to convenience and comfort on the part of the research proponents in the submission of title, proposal and completed report. At the confines of their homes or in the school when not busy, they can be able to submit research requirements. Added to this, a smaller number of bond paper will be utilized since revisions that will be done will also be submitted in the website. Thus, less effort and less materials to be utilized.

Furthermore, the modified template used have helped the teachers in crafting their proposal. Although they still find writing an action research proposal as difficult, in one way or another, the modified template helped them in their endeavor. In fact, more teachers have submitted their titles in the website, so with their proposals. This led to more BERF researches which was submitted by SDO Camarines Norte to the Policy, Planning and Research Division of DepEd Regional Office V. For CY 2022, the division was able to submit 16 action researches and 1 basic research in the BERF facility. This means that there will be 17 researchers whose research will be funded through the Basic Education Research Fund or BERF. The facility provided by the Project E STAAR, in a way, have made the culture of research in the division enhanced and improved.

Aside from the Project E STAAR, the proponent of this research developed a handbook for research which can be utilized by the teaching and non-teaching personnel in the division. The SDO Camarines Norte Handbook is dubbed as

BUSIKLAT, a Bicol word which literally means “to open” or “*buksan*”. The title **BUSIKLAT** is actually coined from three words BUKSAN, PANANALIKSIK and AKLAT. In Filipino, it means, *“**BU**ksan ang pansalik**SIK** na ak**LAT**”*, (Open the Research Book) urging DepEd personnel in the division to be open to the contents of the handbook in order they will be capacitated in writing and conducting research.

To capacitate these personnel, **BUSIKLAT** research handbook contains discussions on the essence of research, the action and basic research templates as provided by DepEd Order No 16 s, 2017 and including the modified templates which are part of the Project E STAAR. In addition, the handbook contains discussion on the parts of an action and basic research and how are these parts written and discussed in a research proposal. The researcher also included the topics that can be research on as provided by DepEd Order No 39 s, 2015. Another topic discussed and provided in the handbook is the newly mandated Quality Control Checklist which is utilized by research committees in evaluating completed researches especially those which are funded by BERF. The overall mechanics in using the EDUSALIKSIK website was also included in the presentation an discussions made in the handbook. This is to facilitate the easy navigation in the website whenever a DepEd personnel in the division would like to submit on it.

Plate 4 Front and Back Cover of Busiklat

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

This study was conducted to determine the research skills and the challenges experienced by the teachers in SDO Camarines Norte. Findings revealed that most of the respondents are female and belong to the middle adulthood age range. The teachers were new in the teaching position and most of them have served in 1-5 years in teaching. Most of these teachers have no experience in writing action research but somehow wrote or conducted basic research and thesis or dissertation. They are knowledgeable of research but have difficulties in writing or conducting one.

The overall productivity profile of the respondents in terms of research skills and techniques, knowledge of research environment and practice of research environment is average. This means that they are no longer beginners in the

aspects of research and are only knowledgeable and practices the typical or usual aspects of research. Furthermore, the respondents shared that they have no experience in writing action research. They mentioned that they experience problems and challenges in writing its parts since they have no formal writing practice. This could be because of the pandemic and that they cannot be able to attend trainings and seminars on research.

The researcher, therefore recommends that trainings in the form of capacity building should be given to these teachers and those who are untrained ones. Further, the research endorses the use of the BUSIKLAT research handbook that can aid them in writing and conducting action and basic research. In terms of research management, the teachers can freely use the EDUSALIKSIK website for submission of title, proposal and completed researches. Openness, willingness and patience are also enjoined from the research so that in the future they can write and conduct research that can benefit not only the school and other teachers but their learners as well.

REFLECTION

The researcher is always been passionate about research. She advanced in her profession as a teacher with research at her side. She became what she is now because of her skill, passion and love for research.

It is such a big responsibility to be appointed as research coordinator of the division. It came to her knowledge that for a long time, with 7,000 plus teachers, only a few are conducting or writing one. In fact, the respondents of this study are

only 10% of the total population of teachers excluding the non-teaching personnel both in the school and in the division office. While the researcher was consolidating the data gathered, it came to her understanding that many of the teacher-respondents know what research is and its different aspects but to actually write one would be very challenging to them. As a researcher and a former teacher, I can still remember how I have struggled in writing research but my love for it and the knowledge gained through trainings and joining research competitions enhanced my skills and techniques in research. With the conduct of this research, I learned that teachers were actually motivated to conduct or write research but their lack of skills, proper attitude and knowledge of research management prevented many of them in not being able to write and conduct one. And this was what motivated the researcher to conduct this particular research: to provide technical assistance to them and to improve the culture of research in her very own division.

The openness and the trust of the respondents to the researcher were some of the factors contributing to its success. Included, of course, is the utmost support of the top management of the division who willingly consented and approved every research activity that were conducted. The consent they gave and the approval of the innovation to be utilized as a submission platform was a lot of help not only to the researcher but to the research proponent as well. The confidence of these managers gave the researcher an assurance to continue even when there are challenges and issues being faced and experienced.

The output of this research study will be continuously improved to cater the needs of the personnel of SDO Camarines Norte. Every school will be pushed to conduct research at least once a year. Newly promoted master teachers will be trained in writing research as this is one of their mandates. More capability building activities will be conducted to upskill and retool teachers in conducting and writing researches that can help not only themselves but the learners as well. School heads will be motivated to write one for them to become model of their teachers in terms of conducting research.

All the endeavors done in this research study were done in the midst of pandemic. The researcher hopes that in the coming days, with alert levels remove and minimal health protocols, dissemination of the outputs will be made face to face. Capability building activities will be brought to each district or big schools so that this researcher can really explain the how's of research.

ACTION PLAN

The output of this research such as the Project E-STAAR will continuously be used and be the platform for the submission and providing technical assistance to teachers who opt to conduct research. The BUSIKLAT Handbook will be shared to all schools as a reading material where they could learn on how to write and conduct researches. The table below presents the target activities that the researcher will do in order to further utilize and disseminate the result of this research.

Activities	Objectives	Time Frame	Persons Involved	Success Indicator
Launching of the BUSIKLAT Research Handbook	To share the result of the research conducted to all teaching and non- teaching personnel of SDO Camarines Norte	August 2022	SEPS-PRS Research Coordinators	Copies of the handbook distributed to schools
Conduct of research capacity building to school	To retool and upskill the teachers in conducting and writing action research	Year round	SEPS-PRS Research Coordinators & Enthusiast	Proposal, Accomplishment Report, Researches submitted in the EDUSALIKSIK website
LAC session and INSET	To participate in the SLAC and school INSET as speaker	As need arise/as per invitation	SEPS-PRS, School Head, Research coordinator	Proposal, Accomplishment Report
Division Research Colloquium	To showcase conducted action researches	December 2022	SEPS-PRS Research proponents	Accomplishment Report

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FINANCIAL REPORT

ACTIVITY	CASH OUT	BALANCE
Basic Education Research Fund (BERF) Facility Grant		Php 15,000.00
Crafting and preparation of the research proposal	Php 500.00	14,500.00
Submission of the research proposal and signed MOA	325.00	14,175.00
MOA signing	4,842.91	9332.09
Data gathering and consolidation	1,768.60	7,563.49
Preparation of the output	3,123.00	4,440.49
Utilization and dissemination of the research result and output	2,516.00	1,924.49
Book binding	1,000.00	924.49
Miscellaneous expenses	924.49	**0.00**

Prepared by:

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Proponent