

(REVIEW ARTICLE)



## Perceived level of understanding in writing action research of clarin south district elementary teachers: Basis for capacity building

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Magna Scientia Advanced Research and Reviews, 2024, 11(01), 140–146

Publication history: Received on 03 April 2024; revised on 15 May 2024; accepted on 18 May 2024

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/msarr.2024.11.1.0078>

### Abstract

Writing action research has become central for effective and productive learning to happen. This research aimed to determine the perceived level of understanding in writing action research among the 124 public elementary teachers from the 14 schools in Clarin South District, Division of Misamis Occidental. Frequency Count and Percentage, Weighted Mean, Standard Deviation, Kruskal-Wallis H test, and Mann-Whitney U Test were used to quantify data on the perceived level of understanding in writing action research and its significant differences when grouped according to profile. Results revealed that most of the teachers were female, 41 to 50 years old, had earned master's degree units, and had been working as Teacher I for less than 10 years. The perceived level of understanding on writing action research among teachers of Clarin South District was generally very high (GWAM=3.37) and did not significantly differ when grouped according to their profile. Therefore, teachers were committed to ongoing professional development and had the skills and knowledge required to conduct action research. Thus, it is suggested encouragement and support for professional development, and implementation of action research training and support for collaborative research.

**Keywords:** Action research; Perceived understanding; Capacity building; Elementary teachers; Clarin South District

### 1. Introduction

The Philippine educational system is undergoing rapid evolution driven by various factors such as globalization, the integration of information and communication technology (ICT), and the implementation of new K-12 programs across all Basic Education institutions. These changes encompass evidence-based policy development, improved student achievement, curriculum enhancement, instructional strategies, assessment methods, teacher quality, and professionalism. In order to keep pace with the fast-developing world, teachers recognize the need to engage in action research, embracing research as an integral part of their careers to cultivate a strong research culture and enhance local and global competitiveness. Many experts advocate for the incorporation of research into teachers' roles, as they can advocate for concepts and generate effective educational practices (Bullo et al., 2021).

Research is of significant benefit to teachers who aim to identify and address various challenges in the field of education. By conducting research, teachers can gain valuable insights and solutions (Bullo et al., 2021). However, teaching is not without its challenges, and it is not always an easy profession. In the complex realm of education, teachers face a multitude of difficulties, including budget constraints, disengaged students, behavioral issues, lesson planning, utilization of audio-visual aids, tracking student progress, managing attendance, tardiness, and absences. Furthermore, teachers bear additional responsibilities as coordinators, guidance counselors, and classroom advisers. Staying up to date with the latest breakthroughs and discoveries in the field is another demanding task emphasized by Juliano (2019). Consequently, it is crucial for teachers to continually update their skills and expertise (Macalisang, 2023).

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Recognizing the importance of action research in Basic Education, the Department of Education (DepEd) in the Philippines has made efforts to institutionalize research. Several changes and initiatives have been implemented to support this, including the adoption of DepEd No. 24 series of 2010, known as the Basic Education Research Fund, which provides financial support to individuals interested in conducting research. Other notable initiatives include DepEd No. 13 Series of 2013, which established a policy development process at the department, DepEd No. 13 series of 2015, which revised the guidelines for the Basic Education Research Fund, DepEd No. 4 Series of 2016, which amended the previous guideline, and DepEd No. 39 series of 2016, which adopted the Basic Education Research Agenda (Samosa, 2021).

The Basic Education Research Agenda, endorsed by the Philippine Department of Education, highlights the role of teachers in conducting national research (Samosa, 2021). As a result, research has become a crucial area in the annual performance evaluation process for all teachers. It is also incorporated into the teacher's performance commitment and review as one of the primary result areas, accounting for 5% of the total score in individual teacher evaluations.

Despite the challenges teachers face in conducting research, they recognize its importance in fulfilling their professional responsibilities and providing students with high-quality learning outcomes. Research offers significant benefits for both teachers and students. In order to promote student learning, teachers must prioritize effective professional development through capacity-building programs. By engaging in action research, teachers can focus on evaluating and adopting pedagogical approaches that promote effective instruction.

Furthermore, research plays a vital role in improving the quality of education, as outlined by the four pillars of Sulong Edukalidad: 1) K to 12 Curriculum review and update, 2) Improvement of the learning environment, 3) Teachers' upskilling and reskilling, and 4) Engagement of stakeholders for support and collaboration (SDM, 176 s. 2020). Additionally, research addresses the concerns and issues faced by teachers and the education department, contributing to the development of solutions. In comparison to studies conducted abroad, the number of studies focusing on teachers as researchers in the Philippines is relatively minimal. Some researchers have explored the perspectives and challenges encountered by teachers when conducting research (Ulla et al., 2017). However, the present study aims to investigate the case of elementary teachers in Clarin South District, Division of Misamis Occidental, as there is a dearth of research specifically focusing on this context.

The Department of Education has been making efforts and implementing initiatives, strategies, programs, and innovations to encourage public school teachers to recognize the importance of research in the classroom and its benefits to students. However, many secondary and elementary teachers still lack the motivation, knowledge, determination, and training required to engage in action research (Anzaldo & Cudiamat, 2019). This situation is evident in Clarin South District, Misamis Occidental Division, where only a small percentage, specifically 15 or 12% of teachers, have conducted and presented research in the past three school years. Moreover, for many teachers, conducting action research is often driven by compliance, promotion, and meeting requirements (Bullo et al., 2021).

Given the circumstances, the researcher is motivated to investigate the perceived level of understanding of action research writing among elementary teachers in Clarin South District. The study aims to design a capacity-building plan that can effectively encourage teachers to appreciate the value of research.

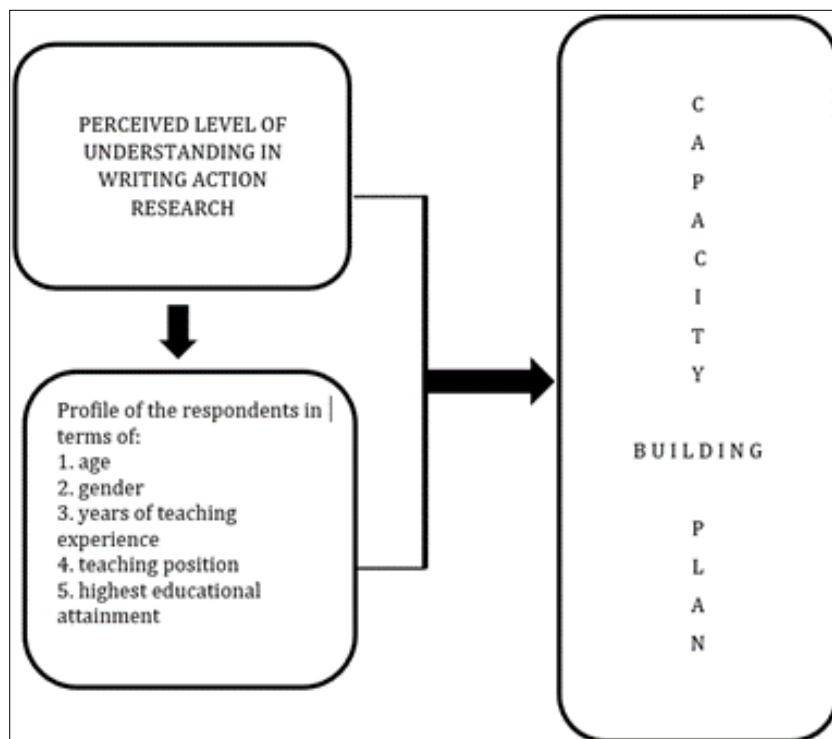
In conclusion, the Philippine educational system is experiencing rapid changes, influenced by globalization, the integration of ICT, and the implementation of K-12 programs. As part of these transformations, action research has gained prominence as an essential tool for teachers to enhance their professional practices and improve student learning outcomes. Despite the challenges and limited research engagement, the Department of Education has taken steps to support and institutionalize research in basic education. However, there is still a need to motivate and equip teachers, especially in specific contexts like Clarin South District, with the necessary skills and understanding of action research. By addressing these gaps, the study aims to contribute to the overall development of the research culture and quality of education in the Philippines.

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## 2. Conceptual Framework

This study aimed to assess the perceived level of understanding of action research writing among elementary teachers in Clarin South District. The research delved into the teachers' demographic profile, encompassing variables such as age, gender, years of teaching experience, teaching position, and highest educational attainment. Furthermore, the study investigated whether there were any significant differences in the perceived level of understanding of writing action research when teachers were grouped according to their profile. Based on the findings, a comprehensive capacity-

building plan was devised to address the identified areas of improvement. Figure 1 presents the schematic diagram depicting the various components of the study.



**Figure 1** Schematic Diagram of the Study

### 3. Methods

The study used quantitative descriptive-survey method to determine the perceived level of understanding in writing action research of Clarin South District elementary school teachers, Division of Misamis Occidental. Quantitative research means collecting and analyzing numerical data to describe characteristics, find correlations, or test hypotheses (Bandari, 2022). A total of 124 teacher respondents participated, selected from the 14 public elementary schools in Clarin South District. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure the representation of diverse participants. This approach allows for the elimination of biases and enhances the generalizability of the gathered data (Canonizado, 2021).

An adapted and updated tool based on the work of Anzaldo and Cudiamat (2019) was employed, and it underwent a rigorous validation procedure with input from three (3) experts. Furthermore, the instrument underwent reliability testing to assure internal consistency, resulting in an exceptional alpha coefficient of 0.95.

### 4. Results and Discussion

Writing Action Research refers to the process of documenting, analyzing, and disseminating the findings and insights gained from conducting action research. Action research is a methodological approach used in various fields, including education, social sciences, and organizational development, aimed at solving practical problems and improving practices within specific contexts. Writing Action Research involves translating the action research process into written form, typically in the form of reports, articles, or papers, to communicate the research questions, methodologies, findings, and implications to relevant stakeholders, such as educators, policymakers, or practitioners. Table 1 shows the perceived level of understanding in writing action research, with a comprehensive breakdown across various indicators. The table reveals a striking trend of consistently high scores across all indicators, with mean scores consistently falling within the "Very High Level" category. This suggests a strong understanding among participants regarding the intricacies of writing action research. Notably, the standard deviations accompanying the mean scores are relatively low, indicating a high level of agreement among participants in their assessments. This coherence in perceptions underscores the reliability of the findings and the uniformity in participants' understanding of the subject matter.

The present findings were supported by the study of Anzaldo & Cudiamat (2019), posited that teachers possessed the knowledge and comprehension of research as evidenced by their strong agreement. The David Kolb Theory of Experiential Learning used to explain why action research writing was seen to have a high degree of comprehension. According to the theory, students who had a high degree of understanding were less likely to actively participate in the cyclical process of experiential learning, which involved applying real knowledge, reflecting on the experience, and conceptualizing abstract knowledge before doing so (Mcleod, 2023). Teachers who had a high level of understanding are more likely to conduct action research, reflect on the results, make connections to the information acquired, and then apply or implement the new information.

Remarkably, a high level of understanding exhibited by the respondents can be attributed to the recognized value and significance of research in the field of education. This sentiment is supported by the findings of Yang (2009) and Badaila (2021), who investigated the reactions of English instructors towards engaging in action research. By actively participating in action research, teachers were able to engage in critical reflection, evaluating both the positive aspects and areas for improvement within their classroom experiences. This reflective practice empowered teachers to make informed decisions, refine their teaching methods, and create a more effective and engaging learning environment for their students.

Moreover, Huang et al. (2019) conducted school-wide research utilizing current models for urban school professional development. They used the Teacher-Reflect-Teacher model. In this model, teachers were taught to formulate research questions; reflect on gathered data, and decide on better options to choose; teach and reflect (second cycle); and participate in group project sharing. The research concluded that professional development was impactful and practical, and was teacher-driven with a teacher-supported methodology.

**Table 1** Perceived Level of Understanding in Writing Action Research

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
Research Parts	3.41	0.607	Very High Level
Number of Writers (Individual Research)	3.28	0.546	Very High Level
Number of Writers (Collaborative Research)	3.39	0.545	Very High Level
Based on Scope (School-wide Research)	3.33	0.540	Very High Level
Scope (District-wide Research)	3.27	0.530	Very High Level
Significance of Writing Action Research	3.41	0.607	Very High Level
Writing Action Research (All Components)	3.37	0.097	Very High Level
<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>	<b>3.35</b>	<b>0.496</b>	<b>Very High Level</b>

#### 4.1. Capacity Building Plan

The Department of Education is institutionalizing action research (AR) in classrooms. IPCRF indicator number eleven (11) is what it is. The majority of teachers have struggled greatly with research since they lack experience in this area. By providing a frequent forum for knowledge, appreciation, discussion, and dissemination of these studies, the Department of Education Research Agenda outlines the prioritizing of research and innovation initiatives and the strategic use of research studies in the policy-making process.

This policy makes sure to adjust the research culture for a methodical focus on pertinent educational challenges. As a result, new knowledge was created in understudied but crucial basic education sectors, and existing research resources were utilized to their full potential both inside and outside of the Department. Capacity development will support and enable motivated researchers to acquire new skills, knowledge, and understanding, thereby increasing their expertise.

Research training is a useful platform for Clarin South District teachers to learn how to conduct Action Research and become familiar with the steps required to conduct action research based on the DepEd research format. It will also provide them with the extra output and help them plan their research.

This training design is intended to provide teachers with a consistent understanding of the structure and procedures for formulating, conducting, and completing Action Research, as well as assessing, validating, and evaluating their study.

The goal of this District Action Research Training for Teachers is to get classroom teachers involved in attempting to solve problems in their classrooms. It aims to:

- To train teachers on how to develop action research using the DepEd research format;
- To put ideas into practice as a means of improving and expanding knowledge about curriculum, teaching, and learning; and
- To plan and carry out a research project aimed at gaining a better understanding of a problem or effecting real change or improvement in a school setting.

## 5. Research capacity building plan

The purpose of a Research Capacity Building Plan is to cultivate a robust infrastructure for advancing knowledge and innovation within a specific field or institution. It aims to empower researchers with the necessary skills, resources, and support systems to conduct high-quality research, foster collaboration, and address emerging challenges. Hence, the plan aims to strengthen the research infrastructure by providing access to state-of-the-art facilities, technologies, and resources necessary for conducting cutting-edge research. By investing in research capacity building, organizations can enhance their ability to tackle complex problems, drive scientific progress, and make meaningful contributions to society.

**Table 2** Research Capacity Building Plan

Goals and Objectives	Strategies / Activities	Time Frame	Persons Involved	Materials Needed	Expected Output
To acquire research skills for teachers	Assess teachers' skills and capabilities in conducting a research	September-October (First Quarter)	School Heads	Assessment Tool	Validated Results
	Identify the following based on the assessment results: 1. Strengths of teachers in research; and 2. Weaknesses of teachers in Research	September-October (First Quarter)			Categorized list
	Seek the support from Division Planning & Research Office for the intervention and capacity training/workshop	September-October (First Quarter)	School Heads SEPS in Research & Planning Teachers	Research Design Training Matrix	Quality research output
To promote research culture to teachers within the school level	Conduct In-Service Training (INSET) with all the teachers.	September-January (First & Second Quarter)	School Heads  Department Heads	Matrix Research Training Design	Output Presentation Accomplishment Report
	Organize a focus group discussion (FGD) to determine the following: 1. Issues/problems experienced that is to be investigated for research;	November-January (2nd Quarter)			Come-up issues to be investigated

	2. Task reduction and proper scheduling or assigning of tasks for teachers for them to have enough time in conducting research		Resource Speakers Teachers		
	Conduct feedbacking sessions on the conduct of educational research.	November-January (2nd Quarter)			Accomplishment Reports
To develop teachers' research skills and competencies	Encourage teachers to attend training and short-term courses to enhance capabilities on research. Conduct a school-based research training	Year-round			Accomplishment Reports
	Encourage teachers to pursue graduate studies	Year-round			

## 6. Conclusions

Teachers in the Clarin South District demonstrate an exceptional grasp of the intricacies of action research methodology, highlighting their proficiency and readiness to engage in scholarly inquiries within their teaching realms. This commendable level of expertise underscores their dedication to continual growth and signifies their adeptness in navigating the complexities of educational research. Their elevated comprehension not only bodes well for their capacity building and professional evolution but also promises substantial enhancements in their instructional techniques and, consequently, student achievements.

### *Recommendations*

Based on the conclusion of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- Foster a culture that promotes and facilitates continuous professional development opportunities for teachers, ensuring their growth and enhancement in their respective fields.
- Design and execute comprehensive action research training programs, equipping teachers with the necessary knowledge, skills, and tools to conduct meaningful and effective action research projects.
- Provide ample support for collaborative research among teachers, encouraging them to collaborate, share ideas, and work together to generate valuable insights and solutions to educational challenges.
- Future researchers should consider employing a qualitative research design to delve deeper into the experiences, perceptions, and motivations of teachers engaged in action research, allowing for a richer understanding of the subject matter.
- Implement the capacity-building plan devised in this study to empower and assist teachers in successfully carrying out their research endeavors.

## Compliance with ethical standards

### *Disclosure of conflict of interest*

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

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