

2017

## Philippine Classroom Teachers as Researchers: Teachers' Perceptions, Motivations, and Challenges

Mark B. Ulla

*Walailak University, deadpoet852@gmail.com*

Kenneth Ian B. Barrera

*Saint Michael College of Caraga*

Meller M. Acompañado

*Butuan City School of Arts and Trade*

---

### Recommended Citation

Ulla, M. B., Barrera, K. B., & Acompañado, M. M. (2017). Philippine Classroom Teachers as Researchers: Teachers' Perceptions, Motivations, and Challenges. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 42(11).  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2017v42n11.4>

This Journal Article is posted at Research Online.  
<http://ro.ecu.edu.au/ajte/vol42/iss11/4>

## **Philippine Classroom Teachers as Researchers: Teachers' Perceptions, Motivations, and Challenges**

Mark B. Ulla

Walailak University Language Institute, Thailand

Kenneth Ian B. Barrera

Saint Michael College of Caraga, Philippines

Meller M. Acompanado

Butuan City School of Arts and Trades, Philippines

*Abstract: This study explores teachers' perceptions and motivations, challenges, and needs of 50 teachers in Agusan del Norte, Philippines with regards to doing research. Methodologies used were survey questionnaire, and group and individual interviews. Findings revealed that teacher-respondents had a positive perceptions towards doing research and its benefits to their teaching practice and students' learning process. Thus, job promotion is the motivating factor why teachers did research. However, reported challenges such as lack of research knowledge and skills, heavy teaching loads, and lack of financial support from the schools obstructed them from doing it. Attending and participating to research trainings, receiving research incentives, and having lighter teaching timetable were what the teachers perceived they need to do research. The implication is for the policy makers, researchers, and school's officials to consider the findings of this study and address the needs of these teachers in order to create a community of teacher-researchers.*

### **Introduction**

Much has been written about the importance of action research in teacher education (Hine, 2013; Hong & Lawrence, 2011; Young, Rapp, Murphy, 2010; Vogrinc & Zuljan, 2009; Hien, 2009) and its effect to quality classroom instruction (Mahani, 2012; O'Connor, Greene & Anderson, 2006). The belief that teachers are active participants towards the development of education shows that by knowing the problem in the classroom; and by taking an action regarding that problem, teachers become the catalysts for change and responsible agents for the improvement of their own classroom teaching and for uplifting students learning. Doing classroom research is knowing what the problem is in the classroom and how that problem can be addressed in order to improve the teaching and learning process.

Since teachers are part of the environment where the problem occurs, action research enables them to discover what went wrong and what could be done to address the issue. Consequently, it has now become one of the major professional development concerns for teachers in the Philippines' schools. Teachers are encouraged by the Department of Education and the Commission of Higher Education to conduct a school based action research as part of their performance appraisal. In fact, the idea of "publish or perish" in higher education institutions in the Philippines is directing teachers to do good not just in the classroom teaching but also in publishing academic papers. Thus, aside from delivering

effective lessons every day to the students, doing research has also become part of the teachers' routine.

In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) has issued an order to all of its school heads, supervisors, and teachers for the adoption of "the enclosed Basic Education Research Agenda" which promotes the "conduct of education research" (DepEd, 2016) in the country. The purpose of which is to identify teachers and department's concerns and problems, and to recommend solutions based on the results and findings made. With professional growth and development as one of the key result areas for the individual teacher's performance commitment and review, doing action research has already become part of the annual performance appraisal for all teachers. It comprises five percent of the total score in the individual teacher's evaluation. However, 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.

Admittedly, most of the teachers in Agusan del Norte, Philippines which is one of the public schools division of CARAGA region, have not been doing research for the past years. Even if doing research is part of their annual performance evaluation, teachers tend to ignore the contribution it may bring to their performance evaluation score. Most importantly, they ignore the good effects of doing research towards their professional and career development. Thus, this present study aims to identify the teachers' perceptions, including needs, and challenges in doing action research. Likewise, since there are only limited number of studies conducted on teachers' perceptions and needs towards doing action research, this paper also tries to fill that gap to provide additional literature. The implication is for the school heads, policy makers, and schools' officials to consider the findings of this study and address the needs of these teachers in order to create a community of teacher-researchers.

## **Related Literature**

The studies that were reported on this section focused on the teachers' perceptions, the challenges they face, and the support they need in order to do research. While there were a number of studies that concentrated on this issue, there were only a few that looked on teachers' motivations to do research especially in the Southeast Asia region. In the Philippine context, this present study is the first one to report on teachers' motivations to do research, including the challenges and their needs. The researchers, in selecting the studies to be reviewed, considered those that dealt with teacher-researchers' challenges, needs, motivations, and perceptions with regards to doing research.

### **Teachers' Perceptions in doing Research**

Burns (2010) stated that doing research specifically, action research in education is not a new concept that educators did not know about. Although not all research teachers only undertake action research, Burns (2010) mentioned that action research has been going on for so long that its ideas circled around "reflective practice" and "teacher as researcher" in order to discover and solve the problems in the classroom teaching. This does not mean that there is

indeed a problem with the teachers' way of teaching, or that the teacher is ineffective; rather, this focuses on what could have been done better. From reflecting on the classroom teaching practices through examining better ways to improve on what is really happening to what the teacher wants to see happening in the classroom is what action research is all about. Teachers then become the researchers as they study themselves (McNiff, 2010) to probe and analyze the teaching context they have. This is mainly done for the teachers to see if the things that are happening within their classrooms are the things they really wanted to happen (McNiff, 2010). Likewise, doing action research could also lead to the betterment of the teachers' teaching skills and for their students' progress and improvement as well (Hine, 2013). According to Grima-Farrell (2017), 'teacher educators share a responsibility for providing educators with a lens through which to view every learner as valued and essential. One way to value learners is by employing the best-researched practices' (p.40).

Since in the field of education, teachers categorically become researchers in an action research, it has always been linked to teacher's professional development (Hine, 2013; Stewart, 2013; Mahani, 2012; West, 2011; Cain and Milovic, 2010). This is mainly because teachers get to try new teaching pedagogies that work best in their respective classrooms, evaluate teaching materials and design a new curriculum program for the school (O'Connor, et.al, 2006; Ulla, 2017). Hence, teachers who do research may not only find solution to, reflect on, and learn from the existing problem they have in their classrooms, but they also become equipped with knowledge and skills in doing research. As such, doing action research is indeed a significant contribution towards teachers' professional development. In fact, some benefits of doing action research have been mentioned in the literature. For example, teachers who are engaged in action research have gained confidence in teaching, become knowledgeable on various academic topics, and are motivated to teach (Borg, 2014). They have also broadened and deepened their understanding of their students and their own classroom teaching styles and strategies (Borg, 2014; Hong and Lawrence, 2011; Burns, 2010) as they reflect on the result of their research studies. Lastly, teachers become responsible and accountable for and to the improvement and development in their teaching as a result of doing action research (Morales, 2016).

In a study conducted by Bughio (2015) on the *Issues and Challenges in Doing Action Research in a Public Sector University*. He reported that doing action research projects is a key towards finding a practical solution to a classroom problem. Bughio's (2015) study looked into and discussed the challenges of doing research in order to improve the English language teaching in large classes at a public university in Pakistan. The data were collected in two purposes; for preliminary survey, and for intervention. He maintained that by doing research, new teaching pedagogies and approaches can be designed to replace the traditional method of teaching.

Grima-Farrell (2017) in her book "What matters in a research to practice cycle? Teachers as researchers", has pointed out key themes on the importance of doing research and the support needed by the teachers to do research. First, as research is evidence-based, teachers' needs and their context should be given importance in doing research. This is to provide effective and direct transfer of research knowledge to its practical applications. Second, effective teacher training should be determined in order to effectively engage teachers to do and review research. This is for the teachers to acquire knowledge and skills from research-based practices. Continuous teacher trainings and other professional development activities are known to guide teachers towards research-based practices. Therefore, trainings should be relevant and consistent in order to strengthen teachers' research knowledge and skills. Third, collaboration should be emphasized when doing research. She pointed out that by doing research together, teachers may build a common goal and concern towards research-based practices. Collaboration can increase concrete and real

evaluation and discussion that can lead to a better research work. The final theme refers to resource supports. Support from the principals and other schools' heads should be consistent. Doing research, which is a long-term activity is a tedious process. In order for the teachers to have a positive attitude towards completing their research work, support (time, understanding, resources) should be given to them.

However, some teachers hold a negative view on the idea of doing research and its effect to them professionally (Borg, 2014). According to Cain and Milovic (2010), although teachers believed that doing research is a significant tool for professional development which can promote lifelong learning, this did not have to change in their teaching practice. The reason given has been that time constraints make it impossible for teachers to do research as they have so much teaching hours to do and they rarely have time to do research (Morales, 2016; Kutlay, 2012). In the study made by Dehghan and Sahragard (2015), the language teacher-participants revealed that doing research is not their duty as classroom teachers. It is a duty of the professional researchers. Therefore, these teachers neither do research nor use research in their own classrooms.

### *Challenges in doing Research*

While there were a few previous studies in the Philippines that dealt with teachers as researchers and the challenges they faced in doing research, there are a number of studies that focused on this issue in other countries. For example, Ellis & Loughland (2016) investigated the challenges the teachers in Singapore and NSW faced when doing research studies. With a total of 42 respondents, the case study revealed that time, pressure in finishing the syllabus, insufficient research trainings, documenting the results, school administration, commitment to finish the research, and searching for research partner were the challenges that limit and restrict teachers to do quality research outputs. Vásquez (2017) mentioned that lack of research skills, and lack of financial support were some of the challenges faced by teachers as researchers in Colombia. In his article, he maintained that teaching is one of the professions that uplifts the condition of a society. Therefore, education authorities must consider and address the challenges faced by teachers in doing research. Likewise, Norasmah and Chia (2016) also did a similar study in Malaysia and they found that workload and time constraints, lack of research knowledge, and limited support were among the challenges reported to prevent teachers from doing research.

One study conducted by Biruk (2013) on the practices and challenges in doing research in Sululta Secondary School in Ethiopia revealed that only a few teachers were engaged in research due to lack of enough research knowledge. It was also revealed that there was a limited number of training, seminar and workshop regarding research. There was also an insufficient budget for teachers to do research. The researcher then recommended that the Education Bureau and the school management must allocate adequate budget and provide trainings, seminars and workshops to increase the number of teachers who would be involved in research.

Generally, all the studies reviewed above, informed this present study on the challenges faced by teachers in doing research. However, these mentioned studies did not explore teachers' motivations, the needs and the support needed for them to do research. Likewise, there were only a few number of studies that tried to examine the challenges and issues faced by the teachers with regards to doing research in the South East Asia context and in the Philippines. Thus, this present study will try to bridge the gap in the literature in order to provide additional study on this topic. In addition, it will also look into the common challenges of teachers including their perceptions, and needs in doing action research. It is

expected that the result of this study will be considered by the schools' principals, heads, and policy makers in order to promote and encourage teachers to do research. The following questions will be addressed in this present study:

1. How do these teachers perceive doing research in relation to teaching?
2. What are the challenges and issues these teachers face with regards to doing research?
3. What do these teachers need to get motivated to do research?

## Methodology

This present study focuses on teachers' attitudes and motivations on doing a research study. It is qualitative-descriptive as it identifies and describes teachers' perceptions and motivations, and the challenges they face in doing research. It makes use of simple frequency count and percentile ranking to present the data. The data description and the analysis were done after the tabulation and identification of the respondents' responses from the survey questionnaire and from the interviews.

## Participants

For ethical consideration, all the information and personal details from the teacher-participants in this study were treated with utmost confidentiality. Before the researchers have selected and identified the participants, a request letter was sent to the school principals for approval. The purpose of the study and the need to the conduct it had been emphasized in the letter. Upon the approval, the researchers, together with the school heads had informed the teachers about the purpose of the research. The selection of teacher-participants was made possible through the help of the school heads. Furthermore, it was made clear that their participation is voluntary and all the information obtained from the study would be treated with utmost confidentiality. As such, there were a total of 50 teachers, with informed consent, took part in the study. All the participating teachers were teaching different subjects and courses in a college and two schools in Agusan del Norte division. The choice of the place was made for the convenient of the researchers as two of them are teaching in the same province of Agusan del Norte, Philippines.

Most of the respondents aged between 21-61 years old, and with 1-41 years of teaching experience. There were 13 male teacher-respondents, and 37 female teacher-respondents. Twenty-six teacher-respondents obtained credits for and or have finished their Master's degrees, while only 24 of them did not have advanced degrees.

## Research Tools

### A. Questionnaire

For this study, a questionnaire from Biruk (2013) and O'Connor, Greene, & Anderson (2006) was modified, adapted and used. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. Part one consisted of the demographic profile of the respondents. Part two was about the perceptions and challenges faced by the teacher-respondents in doing action research. There were 10 items in the questionnaire that refer to the perceptions of teachers regarding action research, and 15 items for the challenges in doing research. All the items in the questionnaire followed a 4-point Likert scale format of *totally agree*, *agree*, *disagree*, and *totally disagree*.

The questionnaire was distributed between October and November 2016. It was retrieved immediately after the participants completed it. Responses were then tabulated, and analyzed.

**A. Group interview**

After the respondents completed the survey questionnaire, they were interviewed either by group or individual. The group interview, with 3 to 6 teachers, was done in different time since most of the teachers were also teaching. Only those who had free periods were interviewed by group.

On the other hand, individual interview was also done for those teachers whose free periods were in conflict with other teachers. The interview was focused on what influenced their motivation, their needs and the support needed to do research. The set of interviews was conducted between November and December 2016.

**Data Analysis**

The results obtained from the questionnaire were tabulated through the use of frequency count and percentage. These percentages were combined in order to interpret and describe the findings. Likewise, the data from the group and individual interviews were recorded and were transcribed. They were analyzed by highlighting the key themes from the interview data.

**Results**

**Questionnaire Findings**

Findings from the survey questionnaire with regards to teacher-respondents' perception in doing research and the challenges they faced while doing it are presented here. To quantify the result of the survey questionnaire, the percentages of *totally agree* and *agree* were combined against the percentages of *totally disagree* and *disagree*.

Statements	Totally Agree/Agree (n-50)	Totally Disagree/Disagree
1. Doing research is valuable to the teaching and learning process for me as a teacher.	100%	0
2. Doing research is valuable to the teaching and learning process for my students.	100%	0
3. Doing research will positively impact my students' learning.	100%	0
4. Doing research project will positively impact my teaching.	98%	2%
5. I view myself as a teacher-researcher.	92%	8%
6. Doing research will develop and enhance my skills professionally.	96%	4%
7. Doing research encourages critical self-reflection.	100%	0
8. Doing research engages teachers into a more systematic examination of instruction or teaching practice.	98%	2%
9. Doing research enables teachers to examine and explore classroom and school problems and their solutions.	100%	0
10. Doing research helps teachers to acquire new knowledge for classroom teaching.	98%	2%

**Table 1. Teacher-Respondents' Perceptions on doing Research.**

The data presented above shows that majority of the teacher-respondents believed that doing research is valuable to the teaching and learning process both for them and their students. They also believed that doing research encourages critical self-reflection, engages them into a more systematic examination of instruction or teaching practice, enables them to

examine and explore classroom and school problems and their solutions, and helps them acquire new knowledge for classroom teaching. However, 8% of the teacher-respondents did not see themselves as teacher-researchers; while, 4% of them did not believe that doing research will develop and enhance their skills professionally. Another 2% of the teacher-respondents thought that doing research project will not positively impact their teaching, will not engage them into a more systematic examination of instruction or teaching practice, and will not help them to acquire new knowledge for classroom teaching.

From the presented data, it can be noted that teacher-participants were very positive about doing research; its positive effect to their classroom teaching and to their students' learning.

Statements	Totally Agree/Agree (n-50)	Totally Disagree/Disagree
11. I do not have enough knowledge how to do action research.	64%	36%
12. I find doing research as time consuming.	74%	26%
13. I am so busy with my own teaching practice and personal life to do research.	68%	32%
14. I do not have much support from the school to do research.	60%	40%
15. I have no interest to do research at all.	28%	72%
16. I am not motivated to do research.	56%	44%
17. I have a low proficiency in English that hinders me to do research.	22%	78%
18. I do not see the importance of doing research in my professional life.	16%	84%
19. There is insufficient reference materials (journals, research books, research reports and etc.) in the library.	38%	62%
20. There is a shortage of training and seminar on research activities.	70%	30%
21. There is insufficient budget in the school to undertake research.	60%	40%
22. There is lack of recognitions to conducted research activities.	54%	46%
23. Heavy teaching load affects the practice of research.	76%	24%
24. There is lack of clear role of teachers in the school to conduct research.	68%	32%
25. Teachers involvement in action research should be one criterion of promotion.	84%	16%

**Table 2. The Challenges that Teacher-Respondents Faced in doing Research.**

It can be observed from the data presented in table 2 that teacher-respondents had some disagreements on some items in the questionnaire pertaining to the challenges they faced in doing research. Most of the respondents agreed that teachers' involvement in action research should be one criterion of promotion. They also agreed that heavy teaching load affects the practice of research. Furthermore, 74% of the teacher-respondents agreed that doing research is time consuming; while another 70% agreed that there is a shortage of training and seminar on research activities.

As presented above, the teacher-respondents also revealed some of the reasons why doing research is a challenge for them. Among these reasons include being busy with their own teaching practice and personal life, lack of clear role of teachers in the school to conduct research, do not have enough knowledge to do research, do not have much support from the school, insufficient budget, no motivations to do research, and lack of recognitions.

The data also showed that the teacher-respondents disagreed to the statements that they do not see the importance of doing research in their professional life. They also

disagreed that they have a low proficiency in English that hinders them to do research. Furthermore, 72% of the teacher-respondents disagreed that they have no interest to do research at all; while, 62% also disagreed that there is insufficient reference materials (journals, research books, research reports and etc.) in their library.

Based on the findings, it can be said that although teacher-respondents faced many challenges and problems in doing research studies, they believed that job promotion should be a motivating factor for them to engage in research work.

### *Interview Findings*

The group and individual interview findings pertaining to the needs of these teacher-respondents and their motivation to do research are presented here.

The teacher-respondents were asked if they have conducted research in their schools. Most of them stated that they have not yet conducted any research studies in their own schools. When asked why, they revealed that they did not have time to do it since they were busy with their teaching practice. However, for those teachers who did their masters research, they revealed that while they were teaching on weekdays, they study and do research on weekends. Furthermore, teacher-participants who were MA/MS degree holders stated that they had conducted their masters research study only once as a requirement for their Master's degree. When asked about their motivation to do research, one of them said that he aimed to become the next school principal. In other words, these teacher-participants wanted to be promoted, and doing and completing their master's research is a major step towards attaining that goal. Ellis & Loughland (2016) noted that doing research is another additional workload for the teachers. If the timetables of these teachers are not loosened, they would not prioritize research as classroom teaching is their main job responsibility.

When the teacher-respondents were asked as to the kind of support they need in order to do research, most of them said that they need the support from the schools' administration in terms of conducting and participating in research training seminars and workshops. They also need to have lighter teaching load, research incentives, and job promotion. The teacher-respondents revealed that most of their time was spent on classroom teaching, marking papers, and preparing lessons which give them no time to do research. They stated specifically that if their teaching load would be reduced to 18 or 20 hours of teaching a week, they would be motivated to do research.

It must be noted that in the Philippines, teachers are required to do teaching of not more than 6 hours a day, or 30 hours a week (DepEd, 2008; CMO, 2007). The 18 and 20 hours are the minimum teaching hours of teachers in the public and private universities and colleges in the Philippines. Ellis & Loughland (2016) stated that lack of time and time pressures relative to classroom teaching and doing research restricted the teachers in Singapore and NSW to have good and quality research studies. Vásquez (2017) also mentioned that heavy teaching loads is the reason why teachers do not do research. As teachers compromised with priorities in their workplace, family, and society, they should be given quality time to do the things they are expected to do. In this way, quality work will also be expected from them.

Likewise, they also said that aside from reducing the teaching time, they also need financial support from the school in order to do research. According to them, the schools, where they are teaching have no budget allocated for teachers to do research. Furthermore, research trainings and seminars should be made available for them to attend. This was emphasized by the teacher-respondents as their attendance and participation to research trainings will help them become knowledgeable to do research. According to them, the only

trainings, seminars, and conferences available for them are those pertaining to teaching strategies, classroom methodologies, and technology integration in the classroom. Lastly, they also mentioned that job promotion or incentives should also be given to them when they are able to do produce research studies for the school.

## **Discussion**

The present study explored the perceptions, needs, and challenges of 50 teachers from Agusan del Norte, Philippines in doing research. From the study, several key points can be taken from the results and data findings. First, teacher-respondents perceived that doing research is valuable to their teaching practice and students' learning process. 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. Such findings were congruent to the results of the studies conducted by Hine (2013); Young, Rapp, & Murphy (2010); Hien (2009); and O'Connor, Greene, & Anderson (2006). Hine (2013) stated that teachers who do action research would be able to improve their teaching practice and its result would be favorable to their students. This was supported by Young et al (2010) when they said that action research can enhance the classroom teaching practice where teachers can observe not just the students' learning process but the learning outcomes as well. While these findings reflect the positive perceptions of the teacher-respondents with regards to doing research, it should be noted, however, that only a few of the teacher-respondents actually do action research. Most of the teacher-respondents revealed that they have not done any research studies before because they were all busy with their classroom teaching. Only those who have finished or at least have earned Master's degree credits were able to do research as part of their advanced degree requirement.

Second, the teacher-respondents revealed some challenges that impede them to do research in the school. These challenges include; lack of research knowledge and skills, heavy teaching load, and no financial motivation and support from the school. These were also reflected in the findings from the studies conducted by Ellis & Loughland (2016); and Vásquez (2017). Ellis & Loughland (2016); and 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 a 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.

Furthermore, lack of research training would affect the interest, confidence and motivation of the teachers to do research activities. Sheikh, Sheikh, Kaleem, & Waqas (2013) also noted that participation to research seminars, symposiums, and courses would have a positive impact to the researchers as they would be exposed to different methodologies, styles, and concepts of doing research. Therefore, research trainings and seminars should be made available for all these teachers so that they would acquire the necessary knowledge and learn the skills on how to do research. If teachers do not have the skills, they would not be able to carry the task successfully (Ulla, 2016). These research trainings can be done during summer break and before the start of the new academic year; when teachers do not have teaching.

Lastly, one important finding from this present study is that teacher-participants reported that they were motivated to do research because they wanted to be promoted. It must be noted that, some of the teacher-participants only did research as part of the requirements for their graduate degrees. They did not do research other than their master's research. Thus, job promotion is their only motivating factor why they took their master's degree and did research.

In spite of the research challenges that were mentioned by the teacher-respondents, they were still keen on doing research provided that their needs would be met and be given. One of these needs is their attendance and participation to various research trainings in order to hone up their research skills. In the present study, there is a need for the teacher-respondents to be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills in order to do research. The school administrators and the Department of Education could conduct and allow the public teachers to attend and participate in the research seminars, workshops, and conferences.

Previous studies have shown the lack of financial support to teachers; making them feel demotivated and not interested to conduct research studies. In this present study, in order to encourage the teachers, the school administrators and the Department of Education should allocate budget for teachers as research incentives. This will inspire and motivate teachers to better not just their teaching practice but also their research skills.

The present study, although the strengths are in the presentation of the perceptions and motivations, the needs and the challenges of teachers in Agusan del Norte, Philippines, has its limitations with regards to respondents and focus. The limited number of teacher-respondents involved in this study could not be generalized for the whole population of teachers in the Philippines. It is therefore recommended that a further study which involves a number of teachers from the region or from the province should be made in order to validate the initial findings made from this study. It is also recommended that school principals and the heads of the Department of Education in the region or in the province be interviewed in order to have different perspectives on teachers as researchers. However, the present study offers a baseline data for policy makers, the heads of the Department of Education, school principals, teachers, and researchers in the Philippines to formulate policies, understand teachers as researchers, design a program relative to the needs of the teacher-researchers in order to address the challenges the teachers in this study identify.

## **Conclusion**

Despite being an aspect of teacher appraisal, teachers are still electing not to undertake research, not only in the higher education institutions but also in the primary and secondary school contexts in the Philippines. The present study identified the perceptions and motivations, including the challenges, and the needs of the teachers in Agusan del Norte, Philippines with regards to doing research. The findings demonstrated that teacher-respondents had positive perceptions towards doing research and its benefits to their teaching practice and to their students' learning process. However, reported challenges such as lack of research knowledge and skills, heavy teaching loads, and lack of financial support from the school were disincentives for these teachers from doing research. Thus, research trainings, research incentives, and lighter teaching timetable were what the teachers perceived they needed. The results, which were reported in this study, are not only applicable in the Philippine school contexts; but, for all education institutions in the world. It is, therefore important to regard teachers' needs, perceptions and challenges towards doing research to

motivate them to do research, and to improve; not just their teaching practice but also for them to grow professionally.

As doing research develops and improves teachers' teaching knowledge and confidence (Borg, 2014), broadens and deepens understanding on their own teaching styles and students learning strategies (Borg, 2014; Hong and Lawrence, 2011; Burns, 2010), and makes them responsible and accountable for the improvement of their teaching practice (Morales, 2016), addressing their needs would uplift the spirit of the teachers to do research in the school. The schools and other education institutions should also consider that doing research is an additional workload for the teachers. Thus, teachers should be given sufficient time to do both teaching and doing research. By giving them the support they need, teachers will not only appreciate it but also see the good and the advantages in doing research for their professional development; for themselves, and for their students.

## References

- Biruk, E. H. (2013). The practice and challenges in conducting action research: The case of Sululta Secondary School. *MA Thesis. Institute of Educational Research*. Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia.  
<http://etd.aau.edu.et/bitstream/123456789/4842/1/33.%20Biruk%20Haile.pdf>
- Borg, S. (2014). Teacher research for professional development. In Pickering, G and Gunashekar, P (Eds.), *Innovation in English Language Teacher Education*. (pp.23-28). Selected papers from the fourth International Teacher Educator Conference Hyderabad, India.
- Bughio, F.A. (2015). Issues and challenges in doing action research in a public sector university. *Journal of Research in Social Sciences-JRSS*, 3(1).  
<http://search.proquest.com/openview/323dfb5c66a6516fe5c92e5bb038112a/1?pq-origsite=gscholar>
- Burns, A. (2010). *Doing action research in English language teaching: a guide for practitioners*. New York: Routledge
- Cain, T. and Milovic, S. (2010). Action research as a tool of professional development of advisers and teachers in Croatia. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 33(1), 19-30. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619760903457768>
- Commission on Higher Education Memorandum Order No. 52, s. 2007. Addendum to CMO 30, series of 2004 entitled "revised policies and standards for undergraduate teacher education curriculum. <http://www.ched.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/CMO-No.52-s2007.pdf>
- Dehghan, F. and Sahragard, R. (2015). Iranian EFL teachers' views on action research and its application in their classrooms: A case study. *Journal of Teacher Education and Educators*. 4(1), 39 – 52. <http://jtee.org/document/issue7/MAKALE%203.pdf>
- Department of Education Memo Order Nos. 291, s. 2008. Guidelines for the implementation of CSC resolution no. 080096 on working hours for public school teachers. [http://www.deped.gov.ph/sites/default/files/memo/2008/DM\\_s2008\\_291.pdf](http://www.deped.gov.ph/sites/default/files/memo/2008/DM_s2008_291.pdf)
- Department of Education Memo Order Nos.: 4, s. 2016 and 43 and 13, s. 2015. Adoption of the Basic Education Research Agenda. <http://www.deped.gov.ph/orders/do-39-s-2016>
- Ellis, N. & Loughland, T. (2016). The challenges of practitioner research: A comparative study of Singapore and NSW. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*. 41(2).  
<https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2016v41n2.8>

- Grima-Farrell, C. (2017). What matters in a research to practice cycle? Teachers as researchers. Springer Singapore: Springer Science+Business Media Singapore. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-2087-2>
- Hien, T.T.T. (2009). Why is action research suitable for education? *VNU Journal of Science, Foreign Languages* 25, 97-106. [http://tapchi.vnu.edu.vn/nn\\_2\\_09/b4.pdf](http://tapchi.vnu.edu.vn/nn_2_09/b4.pdf)
- Hine, G.S.C. (2013). The importance of action research in teacher education programs. *Issues in Educational Research*, 23(2): Special Issue. <http://www.iier.org.au/iier23/hine.pdf>
- Hong, C. E & Lawrence, S.A. (2011). Action research in teacher education: Classroom inquiry, reflection, and data-driven decision making. *Journal of Inquiry & Action in Education*, 4(2). <http://www.wpunj.edu/dotAsset/330733.pdf>
- Kutlay, N. (2012). A survey of English language teachers' views of research. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*. 70, 188-206. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.01.055>
- Mahani, S. (2012). Enhancing the quality of teaching and learning through action research. *Journal of College Teaching & Learning – Third Quarter*. 9(3). <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1418715762?pq-origsite=gscholar>  
<https://doi.org/10.19030/tlc.v9i3.7086>
- McNiff, J. (2010) Action research for professional development: Concise advice for new and experienced action researchers. Dorset: September Books.
- Morales, M.P.E. (2016). Participatory action research (PAR) cum action research (AR) in teacher professional development: A literature review. *International Journal of Research in Education and Science (IJRES)*, 2(1), 156-165. <https://doi.org/10.21890/ijres.01395>
- Norasmah, O., & Chia, S. Y. (2016). The challenges of action research implementation in Malaysian schools. *Pertanika Journal of Social Science and Humanities*, 24(1), 43-52.
- O'Connor, K. A., Greene, H. C., & Anderson, P. J. (2006). Action research: A tool for improving teacher quality and classroom practice. *Ontario Action Research*, 9(1).
- Sheikh, A.S.F., Sheikh, S.A., Kaleem, A., Waqas, A. (2013). Factors contributing to lack of interest in research among medical students. *Advances in Medical Education and Practice*. 4:237-43. <https://doi.org/10.2147/AMEP.S51536>
- Stewart, T. (2013). Classroom research and classroom teachers. FLLT Conference Proceedings. Language Institute Thammasat University. <http://www.litu.tu.ac.th/journal/FLLTCP/Proceeding/134.pdf>
- Ulla, M. B. (2016). Pre-service teacher training programs in the Philippines: The student-teachers' practicum teaching experience. *EFL JOURNAL*, 1(3). <https://doi.org/10.21462/eflj.v1i3.23>
- Ulla, M. B. (2017). Teacher training in Myanmar: Teachers' perceptions and implications. *International Journal of Instruction*, 10(2), 103-118. [http://www.eiji.net/dosyalar/iji\\_2017\\_2\\_7.pdf](http://www.eiji.net/dosyalar/iji_2017_2_7.pdf) <https://doi.org/10.12973/iji.2017.1027a>
- Vásquez, V.E.L. (2017). Teachers as researchers: Advantages, disadvantages and challenges for teachers intending to engage in research activities. Retrieved from <https://www.academia.edu/719736> on January 15, 2017.
- Vogrinc, J. & Zuljan, M.V. (2009). Action research in schools – an important factor in teachers' professional development. *Educational Studies*. 35(1) <https://doi.org/10.1080/03055690802470399>
- West, C. (2011). Action research as a professional development activity. *Arts Education Policy Review*, 112:89–94. <http://bama.ua.edu/~jstallwo/CSE530/actionr.pdf>  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10632913.2011.546697>

- Young, M. R., Rapp, E., & Murphy, J. W. (2010). Action research: Enhancing classroom practice and fulfilling educational responsibilities. *Journal of Instructional Pedagogies*, 3(1), 1-10. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/759646028?accountid=28180>
- Zhou, J. (2012). Problems teachers face when doing action research and finding possible solutions: Three cases. *Chinese Education and Society*. 45(4), p68- 80. <https://doi.org/10.2753/CED1061-1932450405>