



# Attitudes, Skills and Practices in Research of the Faculty of College of Education of Laguna State Polytechnic University LOS Baños Campus, Philippines: an action Research

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## Abstract

*The purpose of this study is to determine the attitude, skills and practices in research of the faculty of the College of Education. It follows an action research design which tested the effectiveness of intervention programs in imbibing the culture of research among the faculty. A validated questionnaire measuring the attitude, skills and practices in research of the faculty was utilized. The respondents agreed that they would like to make more use of research in their teaching, that research is relevant to their teaching and it is valuable in improving teaching quality. However, the faculty-respondents were adamant about feeling alienated by the language of research, that there is too-much evidence based practice in teaching and that research is written for practitioners. A slight majority of the faculty read research to support their teaching practice. A great majority are not taking part in any research-based study leading to further qualifications which means that they are not active participants in concretizing research as one of the functions of a university. Majority have not undertaken any school-based action research of any kind. Interventions such as Mentoring the Mentors Program and conduct of research capability building were implemented. The mentoring program yielded a number of research proposals done by faculty in groups. Seminar-workshops about the research process enhanced the faculty's knowledge and skills.*

**Keywords:** Attitudes, skills, practices, research, mentoring mentors.

## Introduction

A state university is tasked to perform four-fold functions of instruction, research, extension and production. Among these functions, instruction has always been given much consideration so much so that the three equally important functions are given lesser attention. The faculty of LSPU Los Banos Campus in general do not engage themselves actively in conducting research as evident in the recently reported research outputs. In fact, among the ten (10) areas of accrediting the Secondary Teacher Education Program research gained the lowest rating. Research was then concluded as the weakest link among the functions not gaining much improvement in recent years.

Philippine State Universities and Colleges vary widely in their competence and capacity to handle and perform research activities. According to Canete, L. (2013)<sup>1</sup>, State Universities and Colleges need to reflect and diagnose their capacity to perform research as evidenced by the number of research outputs published in international or national journals. UNESCO's World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-First Century Article 1 recognizes the importance of research and its significant contribution in the sustainable development and improvement of society<sup>2</sup>.

To address the problem, an action research to improve the current practices, attitudes and skills in research of the faculty of College of Education and Journalism was proposed to be undertaken. Carr and Kemmis (1986)<sup>3</sup> describe action research as being about the improvement of practice; the improvement of the understanding of practice; the improvement of the situation in which the practice takes place.

**This study aimed to:** i. 1. examine the faculty's current practices, attitudes and skills in the research process, ii. evaluate the extent to which these practices, attitudes and skills are integrated into the teaching profession. Consequently, results of evaluation were utilized to: iii. draw up recommendations for decisions regarding appropriate interventions, outcomes and other educational policies, iv. implement the recommendation; and v. evaluate the level of improvement in the current practices, attitudes and skills of faculty in research.

## Methodology

**Methods and Procedures:** The Dean of CEJ, A/Prof. Lerma P. Buenvinida was the consultant of this study.

The researcher, A/Prof. Consorcia S. Tan is the faculty who spearheaded the investigation and coordinated the implementation of recommendations. The core Instructors and

Assistant/Associate Professors of CEJ, the primary sources of data were the active participants of this study. Research Mentors were the faculty of CEJ identified to have exemplary knowledge and skills in research process.

The time frame set for this action research is presented in table 1.

**Table-1**  
**Timetable of Activities**

Date	Activities	Place
January 30, 2008	Survey and administration of questionnaire	LSPU Los Banos Campus
February 4-6, 2008	Retrieval of questionnaires	“
February 7-12, 2008	Tabulation, presentation, analysis and interpretation of data (Evidence 1)	“
February 13-15, 2008	Reporting of results	“
February 18-19, 2008	Posing recommendations on the ways and strategies to improve existing practices	“
February 20-29, 2008	Seek approval to conduct recommendations	“
March to April, 2008	Implementation of recommendations	“
April, 2008	Evaluation of results	“

**Conduct of the Research Project:** Once the problem was identified, an instrument to gather the pertinent information was constructed. The questionnaire was the main instrument used to gather data. A cover letter explaining the objective of the study was attached to the questionnaire.

Part I consists of the profile or information related to the samples under investigation This includes age, gender, subjects taught, length of teaching experience, highest educational attainment and subjects taught. Part II consists of questions eliciting information about research practices, attitudes and skills of faculty. A valid questionnaire<sup>4</sup> suits the purpose. The questionnaire was administered and retrieved as scheduled. Answers reflected were recorded, tabulated, analyzed and interpreted.

Results of data analysis were the bases for posing recommendations about possible interventions to improve existing conditions.

## Results and Discussion

**Profile of the Respondents:** To describe the profile of the faculty-respondents, table 2 shows their age, gender, length of

teaching experience, highest educational attainment and subjects taught. The table shows that a considerable percentage or 68.75 % of the faculty-respondents are 51-60 years of age. Only 2 or 12.5 % belong to 31-40 years age bracket and 3 or 18.75 % to 41-50.

**Table-2**  
**Profile of the Faculty-Respondents**

Profile	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Age		
21-30	0	0
31-40	2	12.5
41-50	3	18.75
51-60	11	68.75
61 and above	0	0
Total	16	100.00
Gender		
Male	2	12.50
Female	14	87.5
Length of Teaching Experience		
1-5 years	1	6.25
6-10	1	6.25
11-15	3	18.75
16-20	0	0
21-25	4	25.0
26-30	2	12.5
31 and above	6	37.5
Highest Educational Attainment		
Baccalaureate	1	6.25
With Masteral Units	9	56.25
Master's Degree	1	6.25
With Doctoral Units	3	18.75
Doctoral Degree	2	12.5
Subjects Taught		
Mathematics	4	25.0
Languages	6	37.5
Social Studies	5	31.25
Science	1	6.25
Technology	0	0
Professional Education	3	18.75

A great majority or 87.5 % are female, the rest are male.

Six (6) or 37.5 % have been in the teaching profession for more than 30 years, 25 % of them for 21-25 years, 18.75 % for 11-15 years, 12.5 % for 26-30 years and 6.25 % for 6-10 and 1-5 years.

Nine (9) or 56.25 % of the faculty-respondents have earned master's units, 18.75 % with doctoral units, 12.5 % are doctoral degree holders, 6.25 % are full-pledged master's and another 6.25 % with baccalaureate degree.

There are 6 faculty or 37.5 % who teach languages which include Filipino and English subjects, 31.25 % who teach Social Sciences, 25 % who teach Math, 18.75 % are mentors of Professional Education subjects and only 6.25 % Science.

**Attitudes of faculty towards the Research Process:** The faculty were asked about their attitudes towards the research process. Their responses are reflected in table-3. As can be glimpsed from the table, the respondents agreed that they would like to make more use of research with a mean of 1.12, that research is relevant to their teaching with a mean of 1.44; it is valuable in improving teaching quality (mean=1.06), that being up-to-date with research aids career progression (mean=1.06) and keeping up-to-date with current research is an essential part of professional development (mean=1.06).

**Table-3**  
**Attitudes of Faculty towards the Research Process**

Indicative Statements	Mean	Descriptive Rating
I would like to make more use of research.	1.12	Agree
I feel alienated by the language of research.	2.31	Neither nor Disagree
A lot of research is relevant to my teaching.	1.44	Agree
There is too much evidence based practice in teaching.	1.81	Neither Agree nor Disagree
Much of the research I hear of/read bears no relation to practice.	2.44	Neither Agree nor Disagree
Research is conducted by academics with no grounding in the real issues of teaching.	2.31	Agree
Research is valuable in improving teaching quality.	1.06	Agree
Being up-to-date with research aids career progression.	1.06	Agree
Research is written for practitioners.	1.56	Neither Agree nor Disagree
Keeping up-to-date with research is an essential part of professional development	1.06	Agree

Legend: 1.0-1.50 Agree

1.51-2.50 Neither nor Disagree

2.51-3.0 Disagree

However, the faculty-respondents were adamant about feeling alienated by the language of research with a mean of 2.31, that there is too much evidence-based practice in teaching (mean=1.81), much of the research they hear of/read bears no relation to practice (mean=2.44), and that research is written for practitioners (mean=1.56).

**Research Practices of Faculty:** The data in table 4 reflects the research practice of faculty. When asked if they ever read research to support their teaching practice, 11 or 68.75 % percent confirmed that they do read research and only 5 or 31.25 % said they do not. This Implies that most of the faculty realize the importance of research in their teaching profession and try to use it to support the concepts they impart to the students.

However, a great majority of the faculty, 13 or 81.25 % said that they are not currently taking part in any research-based study leading to further qualifications. This reality supports the idea that they are not active participants in concretizing research as one of the four-fold functions of the university. Only 3 or 18.75 % said they are currently taking part in a research-based study. These faculty make the teaching- learning activity.

**Table-4**  
**Research Practices of Faculty**

Indicative Statements	Yes f	Percentage %	No f	Percentage %
Do you read research to support your teaching practice?	11	68.75	5	31.25
Are you currently taking part in any research-based study leading to further qualifications?	3	18.75	13	81.25
Have you ever undertaken school-based action research of any kind?	3	18.75	13	81.25

more responsive to the ever changing realities of life which is one of the primary concerns of research. If one delves further, a domino effect is observed. Since most of the faculty are not actively engaged in research, this function will never progress if the faculty are not well-motivated to do it. A university is expected to excel in research as a catalyst of change in the society. And it can only live up to this expectation if its faculty possess a high level of research skills imbibed by a strong research culture and supported by the institutions' resources and well-defined mechanisms to ensure publication and benchmarking<sup>5</sup>.

Majority of the faculty-respondents also said that they have not undertaken any school-based action research of any kind, strongly affirming the fact that research is an area needing much concern and priority. Studies have shown that the Philippine Educational System is besieged with many unresolved problems affecting primarily the teaching-learning process. However, it is sad to note that despite the educators' awareness as to the existence of such problems only very few are ready to take the step and the initiative to search for answers<sup>6</sup>.

## Conclusion

These presentation, analysis and interpretation of gathered data support the fact that research is very much wanting of improvement in its integration, practice and implementation.

**Recommendations:** Consequently on the bases of these discussions, the researcher recommended the pursuit of the following activities:

**Research Mentoring:** This is a strategy also called Mentoring the Mentors. Its objective is to assist the faculty regarding the research process. It can be accomplished by: i. Grouping the faculty according to their field of specialization. ii. Designating a research mentor per group who will assist the faculty in their concerns about the research process. iii. Conducting brainstorming, sharing and discussion of research ideas, knowledge and skills. iv. Presentation of research proposal/output in an in-house review before the start of the 1<sup>st</sup> semester, SY 2008-2009. v. Conduct of the research project in the 1<sup>st</sup> semester, SY 2008-2009.

Conduct of a seminar-workshop about the research process.

Results and Discussion of the Implementation of Recommendations

After reporting the results of analysis of research attitudes, skills and practices of faculty, the recommendations were implemented.

The Mentoring the Mentors Program yielded a number of research proposals of faculty grouped by their area of specialization. A Faculty Research Proposal Presentation was conducted from July 17 to August 21, 2008. This was made possible after going through the suggested strategies of grouping

the faculty according to their field of specialization. A research mentor was assigned as leader of the respective group. They conducted brainstorming, sharing and discussion of research ideas, knowledge and skills.

A seminar-workshop about the research process was also conducted on May 31, 2008.

These initial steps to improve the research function has now become the stepping stone to make research gradually becoming a part of the professional culture of faculty. Brought about by both extrinsic and intrinsic motivations, the faculty are now heading towards the right direction with a shared vision for the university.

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