

Teachers' Competence and Difficulties in Research: A Descriptive Quantitative Study

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ABSTRACT

While teachers may encounter challenges in terms of competence and difficulties in conducting research, they also have the potential to make significant contributions to educational research and practice. By building research capacity, fostering collaborative partnerships, and addressing barriers to research engagement, educators can play a vital role in advancing the field of education and improving outcomes for students. This study analyzed the competence and difficulties teachers face in research. Data needed for this descriptive study was collected from 87 respondents using a self-made survey questionnaire that has passed a rigorous test of validity and reliability. Data were subsequently analyzed according to the research problems stipulated in the objectives of this study. In assessing teachers' competence, they excelled in selecting relevant research topics. In organizing information, differences were noted based on educational background, length of service, and plantilla position. Time management skills were consistent among diverse groups. The highest difficulty reported was balancing research commitments with personal and family life, emphasizing the need to address work-life balance challenges in research engagement. The study provides comprehensive insights into teachers' research engagement, emphasizing the importance of targeted interventions to address challenges and optimize competencies. The findings highlight the need for tailored support programs taking into account the diverse backgrounds and experiences of educators.

KEYWORDS

Competence, Descriptive, Difficulties, Quantitative, Research

INTRODUCTION

Competence in research should be one of the indispensable skills a teacher should possess. It is the foundation for the teacher's intellectual, communicative, design, critical thinking, and creative capacities (Begonuva, 2021). A competent teacher-researcher knows how to manage his time between his regular tasks and research. Teachers who know how to manage time well can maximize significant activities in developing their academic and life skills (Olivo, 2021). Despite all the support from the higher offices, teachers are reluctant to write and conduct research and innovations due to time and financial constraints, workload pressure, and other administrative work (Cutler et al., 2021).

The researcher observes that only a few teachers are involved in submitting research proposals, and not all who have submitted have reached the standard to be approved for research. Although most teachers claim that they struggle with research or are not capable of doing research due to a lack of experience and understanding of the research process, the researcher is motivated to investigate competence in research and difficulties that prevent secondary school teachers from taking part in research so that appropriate intervention could be done to address the gap. Researchers frequently need help to decide what, how, and when to conduct research when researching education because they frequently think that they can only research a topic if they are experts in it. However, specific core competencies can help teachers effectively research any topic related to their teaching practice and incorporate technological and pedagogical trends (Lopez, 2022).

A competent researcher has to do an intricate balancing act, constantly juggling responsibilities to find time for research across different stages (Sam, 2023). Time management is also essential in research. It can be carried out properly by setting goals, setting priorities, making schedules, minimizing distractions, and delegating tasks that can improve teacher performance in carrying out their duties (Kadir et al., 2019). Teachers, on their part, find it challenging to engage in research because of the same difficulties that researchers are facing, but most of all, they complain because their workloads prevent them from doing research. Their timeframes are incompatible with the time it takes to conduct research (Hill, 2020). Hussein et al.'s (2019) study found that teachers' top barriers to research include not having enough time for research, not having enough funding, having too many responsibilities at school, having to go through a laborious and rigorous proposal development process, not having research mentorship, and having insufficient experience analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data

This study is based on two theories, the Motivation Theory by Susan Harter (1970) and the Theory of Difficulty by David Perkins (1970). The Competence Motivation Theory suggests that when a person feels competent in a task, they are more likely to participate, put forth effort, and stick with it. This leads to increased motivation and inspires them to take on more challenges. In the context of this study, it means they are more likely to engage in research activities when they feel capable of conducting them. David Perkins' Theory of Difficulty proposes that a task's difficulty level can significantly affect learning and problem-solving abilities. Perkins identifies three levels of challenge. The first is the comfort zone, where tasks are too easy and offer little opportunity for learning or skill development. The second is the stretch zone, which encourages learning and development by pushing individuals out of their comfort zones without overwhelming them. Finally, the panic zone is where tasks are too complex for the person to handle and prevent learning altogether. Perkins suggests optimal learning occurs when individuals engage in tasks within their stretch zones, where they are challenged but not overwhelmed. Adjusting the difficulty level of tasks to match the learner's current abilities can help optimize learning outcomes. This idea is relevant to the study, as it highlights the importance of tailoring tasks to the teacher's skill level to promote engagement and practical learning.



Objectives

This study analyzed the levels of teachers' competence and difficulties in research in a district of a large school division in Central Philippines during the School Year 2023-2024. Specifically, this paper sought answers to the following objectives:

1. Determine the level of teachers' competence in research according to the selection of research topics, organization of information, and time management.
2. Determine the level of difficulty teachers have in research.
3. Determine the level of teachers' competence in research when grouped according to civil status, educational attainment, length of service, and plantilla position.
4. Determine the level of teachers' difficulties in research when grouped according to the aforementioned variables.

METHODS

Research Design

This paper used a descriptive research design to determine the levels of teachers' competence and difficulties in research. In the words of Baraceros (2016), descriptive research design presents an image or a picture of an individual or a group. Additionally, McCombes (2019) notes that the objective of the descriptive research design is to comprehensively and accurately characterize a population, circumstance, or phenomenon in which the researcher is not permitted to manipulate the variables.

Respondents

The study's respondents were 87 teachers during the School Year 2023–2024, from a total population of 112. This paper used stratified random sampling to determine the respondents, courtesy of the Cochran formula ($N=112$; $n=87$).

Data Collection

The researcher applied for and received authorization from the Superintendent of the Schools Division via the Public Schools District Supervisor following the validity and reliability of the research instruments. It was promised that the data gathered from the respondents and the school would be treated in the strictest confidence and used only for the intended research. The researcher then sent a copy of the approved letter, along with an explanation of the data collection method and a schedule, to the involved school heads. The objectives were followed in order of presentation of the outcomes.

After giving the respondents careful instructions on how to complete the required information, the researcher distributed the questionnaire and physically collected the completed forms. After being tabulated, categorized, and ready for statistical analysis, the data was made available. The results were put into a spreadsheet, and SPSS was utilized to analyze the information.

Data Analysis

Objectives 1-4 used the descriptive analytical scheme and mean as a statistical tool to determine the level of teachers' competence and the degree of difficulties in research based on variable groupings enumerated in the objective section.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher secured the teachers' free, prior informed consent and assured them of their right to withdraw from their research participation if deemed necessary. The respondents were assured that no information that discloses their identity will be released or published without their consent. All

collected materials were appropriately disposed of. At the same time, soft copies of the data were deleted, leaving no chance of future retrieval.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. *Level of Teachers' Competence in the Selection of Research Topic*

Area	Mean	Interpretation
A. Selection of research topics		
As a Teacher-Researcher, I...		
1. Identify relevant and engaging research topics within my area of expertise.	4.26	High Level
2. Select topics of research that interest me most.	4.29	High Level
3. Use assessment tools to gauge the quality of research topics and methodologies.	4.34	High Level
4. am familiar with various research methodologies and approaches	4.23	High Level
5. stay up-to-date with the latest developments and trends in their field	4.06	High Level
Overall Mean	4.24	High Level

The overall mean score of 4.24 is interpreted as a "high level" of teachers' competence in the area of selection of research topics. Using assessment tools to gauge the quality of research topics and methodologies obtained the highest mean score of 4.34, interpreted as a "high level." On the other hand, the lowest score obtained, staying up-to-date with the latest developments and trends in their field, with a mean score of 4.06, is interpreted as a "high level" of teacher's competence. This result implies that many respondents need more clarification about the latest developments and trends in the field of research.

Table 2. *Level of Teachers' Competence in Organization of Information*

Area	Mean	Interpretation
B. Organization of Information		
As a Teacher-Researcher, I...		
1. Formulate research questions, design studies, collect and analyze data, and draw meaningful conclusions	4.05	High Level
2. Understand topics like cataloging, classification, metadata, and information retrieval.	4.16	High Level
3. Use qualitative and quantitative research methods, content analysis, and usability testing.	4.11	High Level
4. Access and navigate academic databases, journals, books, and other relevant resources.	4.11	High Level
5. Understand data management principles, including data collection, storage, and analysis.	4.15	High Level
Overall Mean	4.12	High Level

The mean score of 4.12 overall indicates a "high level" of teachers' competence in research in the organization of information. Understanding topics like cataloging, classification, metadata, and information retrieval had the highest mean score among the responders (4.16), indicating a "high

level" of pedagogical proficiency. This finding suggests that a significant portion of the study's participants exhibit proficiency in information organization and management. However, there are significant uncertainties about their competence in essential areas of research methodology.

Table 3. *Level of Teachers' Competence in Time Management*

Area	Mean	Interpretation
C. Time Management		
As a Teacher-Researcher, I...		
1. Clearly define teaching and research priorities.	4.01	High Level
2. Align teaching and research schedules as much as possible to avoid conflict.	4.11	High Level
3. Make use of productivity and project management tools to help organize my research tasks and keep track of deadlines.	4.15	High Level
4. Take advantage of breaks between classes or during non-teaching periods to work on research tasks that require concentration	4.26	High Level
5. Prioritize self-care and maintain a healthy work-life balance	4.21	High Level
Overall Mean	4.15	High Level

Regarding time management, teachers have an overall mean score of 4.15. Utilizing breaks for research tasks achieved the highest mean score of 4.26, also reflecting a high level of competence. This finding underscores the ongoing importance of research in teaching for achieving academic excellence. It highlights the essential skills and knowledge required, such as formulating straightforward scientific questions, critically reviewing the literature, and effectively collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data to navigate the complexities of daily professional life (Amirova et al., 2020).

Table 4. *Level of Difficulties of Teachers in Research*

Difficulties	Mean	Interpretation
1. Doing heavy workloads and paper works	4.13	High Level
2. Accessing research resources (journals, databases, etc.	3.98	High Level
3. Attending training or workshops in research methodologies	3.45	Moderate Level
4. Finding time for research work.	3.99	High Level
5. Gaining a network with other researchers, attending conferences, or collaborating with external partners.	3.89	High Level
6. Acquiring knowledge regarding the conduct of research	3.80	High Level
7. Communicating my thoughts and ideas in English.	3.09	Moderate Level
8. Obtaining support from institutions for research activities.	3.33	Moderate Level
9. Earning grants and financial support	3.44	Moderate Level
10. Balancing research commitments with personal and family life.	4.18	High Level
Overall Mean	3.73	High Level

A high level of difficulties in research-related activities shows an overall mean score of 3.73. The challenge of balancing research commitments with personal and family life received the highest mean score of 4.18. Teachers may find it challenging to establish clear boundaries between their professional and personal lives. This lack of delineation between work and personal time can hinder their ability to disconnect from work and devote attention to personal and family relationships. Laaboudi's (2021) study highlights the complex interplay of factors, such as research demands within the teaching profession, which impact teacher performance and well-being.

Table 5. *Level of Teacher's Competence in Research in the Selection of Research Topic by Civil Status*

Categories	Mean	Single Interpretation	Mean	Married Interpretation
A. Selection of research topics				
As a Teacher-Researcher, I...				
1. Identify relevant and engaging research topics within my area of expertise.	4.30	High Level	4.24	High Level
2. Select topics of research that interest me most.	4.24	High Level	4.31	High Level
3. Use assessment tools to gauge the quality of research topics and methodologies.	4.45	High Level	4.28	High Level
4. Am familiar with various research methodologies and approaches	4.18	High Level	4.26	High Level
5. Stay up-to-date with the latest developments and trends in their field	4.15	High Level	4.00	High Level
Overall Mean	4.27	High Level	4.22	High Level

Regarding civil status, the overall mean score for competence in research was 4.27 for single respondents and 4.22 for married respondents. Specifically, in selecting research topics, single respondents demonstrated a high level of competence in using assessment tools to gauge the quality of research topics and methodologies. Conversely, the married group showed a slightly lower competency in staying up-to-date with the latest developments and trends in their field. These findings suggest that single individuals excel in identifying relevant research topics, while married individuals may benefit from additional support in staying abreast of developments in their field.

Table 6. *Level of Teacher's Competence in Research in Organization of Information by Civil Status*

Categories	Mean	Single Interpretation	Mean	Married Interpretation
B. Organization of Information				
As a Teacher-Researcher, I...				
1. Formulate research questions, design studies, collect and analyze data, and draw meaningful conclusions	3.97	High Level	4.09	High Level
2. Understand topics like cataloging, classification, metadata, and information retrieval.	4.24	High Level	4.11	High Level
3. Use qualitative and quantitative research methods, content analysis, and usability testing.	4.15	High Level	4.09	High Level
4. Access and navigate academic	4.21	High Level	4.06	High Level

databases, journals, books, and other relevant resources.				
5. Understand data management principles, including data collection, storage, and analysis.	4.12	High Level	4.17	High Level
Overall Mean	4.14	High Level	4.10	High Level

Regarding the organization of information, single respondents achieved an overall mean score of 4.14 compared to 4.10 for married respondents, indicating a high level of competence for both groups. However, single respondents showed a particular need for improvement in formulating research questions, designing studies, collecting and analyzing data, and drawing meaningful conclusions. This highlights a specific area where targeted training could enhance research skills among single teachers. Similarly, additional training in formulating theoretical frameworks may be beneficial, as suggested by Oestar and Marzo (2022).

Table 7. *Level of Teacher's Competence in Research in Time Management by Civil Status*

Categories	Single	Married
C. Time Management	Mean	Mean
	Interpretation	Interpretation
As a Teacher-Researcher, I...		
1. Clearly define teaching and research priorities.	3.97	4.04
2. Align teaching and research schedules as much as possible to avoid conflict.	4.12	4.11
3. Make use of productivity and project management tools to help organize my research tasks and keep track of deadlines.	4.00	4.24
4. Take advantage of breaks between classes or during non-teaching periods to work on research tasks that require concentration	4.27	4.26
5. Prioritize self-care and maintain a healthy work-life balance	4.21	4.20
Overall Mean	4.12	4.17

Regarding time management, both single and married respondents demonstrated high levels of competence, with overall mean scores of 4.12 and 4.17, respectively. Single respondents excelled in utilizing breaks for research tasks, as evidenced by the highest mean score of 4.27. However, both groups showed a need for improvement in clearly defining teaching and research priorities. This underscores the importance of targeted interventions to enhance these specific skills, potentially leading to improved teacher performance. Strategies such as goal-setting, prioritization, scheduling, minimizing distractions, and delegating tasks, as suggested by Kadir et al. (2019), could aid in optimizing teacher time management and overall performance.

Table 8. *Level of Teacher's Competence in Research in Selection of Research Topic by Educational Attainment*

Categories	Mean	Lower Interpretation	Mean	Higher Interpretation
A. Selection of research topics				
As a Teacher-Researcher, I...				
1. Identify relevant and engaging research topics within my area of expertise.	4.22	High Level	4.36	High Level
2. Select topics of research that interest me most.	4.22	High Level	4.43	High Level
3. Use assessment tools to gauge the quality of research topics and methodologies.	4.32	High Level	4.39	High Level
4. Am familiar with various research methodologies and approaches	4.19	High Level	4.32	High Level
5. Stay up-to-date with the latest developments and trends in their field	4.02	High Level	4.14	High Level
Overall Mean	4.19	High Level	4.33	High Level

Teachers with the highest educational attainment (HEA) showed a high level of competence in research. According to the data analysis, teacher with HEA had a mean of 4.33, indicating a "high level" of teachers' competence. The teachers with LEA had an overall mean of 4.19, but they were highly competent in keeping up with the latest trends and developments in their field. These insights can provide valuable information to institutions to identify existing strengths, promote collaborative learning, and provide customized professional development opportunities to enhance the professional growth of teachers in this group.

Table 9. *Level of Teacher's Competence in Research in Organization of Information by Educational Attainment*

Categories	Mean	Lower Interpretation	Mean	Higher Interpretation
B. Organization of Information				
As a Teacher-Researcher, I...				
1. Formulate research questions, design studies, collect and analyze data, and draw meaningful conclusions	3.93	High Level	4.29	High Level
2. Understand topics like cataloging, classification, metadata, and information retrieval.	4.00	High Level	4.50	Very High Level
3. Use qualitative and quantitative research methods, content analysis, and usability testing.	4.05	High Level	4.25	High Level
4. Access and navigate academic databases, journals, books, and other relevant resources.	4.07	High Level	4.21	High Level
5. Understand data management principles, including data collection, storage, and analysis.	4.08	High Level	4.29	High Level
Overall Mean	4.03	High Level	4.31	High Level

Teachers' competence in the organization of information based on their HEA indicated a high level. The LEA group attained an overall mean score of 4.03, while the HEA group achieved a higher mean score of 4.31; teachers with HEA had greater competence in organizing information, whereas the LOA group scored lower in areas such as formulating research questions and drawing meaningful conclusions. The findings suggest the need for targeted interventions and supportive programs to improve teachers' research skills in the lower group.

Table 10. *Level of Teacher's Competence in Research in Time Management by Educational Attainment*

Categories	Mean	Lower Interpretation	Mean	Higher Interpretation
C. Time Management				
As a Teacher-Researcher, I...				
1. Clearly define teaching and research priorities.	3.95	High Level	4.14	High Level
2. Align teaching and research schedules as much as possible to avoid conflict.	4.05	High Level	4.25	High Level
3. Make use of productivity and project management tools to help organize my research tasks and keep track of deadlines.	4.22	High Level	4.00	High Level
4. take advantage of breaks between classes or during non-teaching periods to work on research tasks that require concentration	4.29	High Level	4.21	High Level
5. prioritize self-care and maintain a healthy work-life balance	4.14	High Level	4.36	High Level
Overall Mean	4.13	High Level	4.19	High Level

The teachers were grouped by their educational attainment (EA) to measure their competence in research regarding time management. The LEA group showed an overall mean of 4.13, while the HEA group obtained 4.19. The HEA group scored the highest in prioritizing self-care and maintaining work-life balance, while the LEA group scored highest in fundamental research skills such as formulating research questions, designing studies, collecting and analyzing data, and drawing meaningful conclusions. Teachers, despite being equipped with knowledge and skills, need further training in utilizing theories and concepts to support and correlate with their research (Oestar & Marso, 2022).

Table 11. *Level of Teacher's Competence in Research in Selection of Research Topics by Length of Service*

Categories	Mean	Shorter Interpretation	Mean	Longer Interpretation
A. Selection of research topics				
As a Teacher-Researcher, I...				
1. Identify relevant and engaging research topics within my area of expertise.	4.19	High Level	4.37	High Level
2. Select topics of research that interest me most.	4.19	High Level	4.43	High Level
3. Use assessment tools to gauge the quality of research topics and methodologies.	4.31	High Level	4.40	High Level
4. am familiar with various	4.21	High Level	4.26	High Level

research methodologies and approaches				
5. Stay up-to-date with the latest developments and trends in their field	4.06	High Level	4.06	High Level
Overall Mean	4.19	High Level	4.30	High Level

In analyzing teachers' competence in research regarding the selection of research topics based on their length of service (LOS), the shorter LOS group attained an overall mean score of 4.19. In comparison, the longer LOS group achieved a slightly higher mean score of 4.30, indicating a "high" level of competence for both groups. Specifically, the item that involved selecting research topics of personal interest received the highest mean score of 4.43, reflecting a "high" level of competence among the longer LOS group. Teachers of different lengths of service were found to have a high level of competence in selecting research topics based on personal interests. However, staying updated with the latest developments and trends in their field received the lowest mean score, indicating that teachers need to work on this aspect. Knowledge-sharing and promoting adaptability in the teaching community can help enhance overall research competence among teachers.

Table 12. *Level of Teacher's Competence in Research in Organization of Information by Length of Service*

Categories	Shorter		Longer	
	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
B. Organization of Information				
As a Teacher-Researcher, I...				
1. Formulate research questions, design studies, collect and analyze data, and draw meaningful conclusions	3.92	High Level	4.23	High Level
2. Understand topics like cataloging, classification, metadata, and information retrieval.	4.10	High Level	4.26	High Level
3. Use qualitative and quantitative research methods, content analysis, and usability testing.	4.13	High Level	4.09	High Level
4. Access and navigate academic databases, journals, books, and other relevant resources.	4.13	High Level	4.09	High Level
5. Understand data management principles, including data collection, storage, and analysis.	4.04	High Level	4.31	High Level
Overall Mean	4.07	High Level	4.19	High Level

In evaluating teachers' research competence in the organization of information based on length of service, both shorter and longer LOS groups showed a "high" level of competence, with mean scores of 4.07 and 4.19, respectively. Teachers of different lengths of service were found to have a high level of competence in selecting research topics based on personal interests. However, staying updated with the latest developments and trends in their field received the lowest mean score, indicating that teachers need to work on this aspect. Knowledge-sharing and promoting adaptability in the teaching community can help enhance overall research competence among teachers.

Table 13. *Level of Teacher's Competence in Research in Time Management by Length of Service*

Categories	Mean	Shorter Interpretation	Mean	Longer Interpretation
C. Time Management				
As a Teacher-Researcher, I...				
1. Clearly define teaching and research priorities.	3.98	High Level	4.06	High Level
2. Align teaching and research schedules as much as possible to avoid conflict.	4.10	High Level	4.14	High Level
3. Make use of productivity and project management tools to help organize my research tasks and keep track of deadlines.	4.15	High Level	4.14	High Level
4. take advantage of breaks between classes or during non-teaching periods to work on research tasks that require concentration	4.27	High Level	4.26	High Level
5. prioritize self-care and maintain a healthy work-life balance	4.21	High Level	4.20	High Level
Overall Mean	4.14	High Level	4.16	High Level

The group with shorter length of service (LOS) obtained an overall mean of 4.14, while those with longer LOS group took 4.16. The highest score of 4.27 was obtained by the group with shorter LOS for "Taking advantage of breaks between classes or during non-teaching periods to work on research tasks that require concentration." The lowest score of 3.98 was obtained by those with a shorter LOS for "Clearly define teaching and research priorities." The findings suggest notable proficiency in articulating teaching and research priorities among educators in the shorter group. Tracking development will make it easier to pinpoint time management accomplishments and potential areas for improvement. To keep up a fruitful and successful research program, deliberate practice of time management is necessary (Chase et al., 2003).

Table 14. *Level of Teacher's Competence in Research in Selection of Research Topic by Plantilla Position*

Categories	Mean	Lower Interpretation	Mean	Higher Interpretation
A. Selection of research topics				
As a Teacher-Researcher, I...				
1. Identify relevant and engaging research topics within my area of expertise.	4.16	High Level	4.35	High Level
2. Select topics of research that interest me most.	4.18	High Level	4.37	High Level
3. Use assessment tools to gauge the quality of research topics and methodologies.	4.34	High Level	4.35	High Level
4. AM familiar with various research methodologies and approaches	4.32	High Level	4.16	High Level

5. Stay up-to-date with the latest developments and trends in their field	4.03	High Level	4.08	High Level
Overall Mean	4.21	High Level	4.26	High Level

The study found that teachers in the higher plantilla position (PP) had a higher competence level in research and selecting topics of interest, with a mean score of 4.26 and 4.37 respectively. The lower plantilla group had a mean score of 4.21 in overall competence and 4.03 in staying up-to-date with the latest developments. The findings can help institutions foster ongoing learning and career advancement opportunities for educators in the lower group.

Table 15. *Level of Teacher’s Competence in Research in Organization of Information by Plantilla Position*

Categories	Lower		Higher	
	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
B. Organization of Information As a Teacher-Researcher, I...				
1. formulate research questions, design studies, collect and analyze data, and draw meaningful conclusions	3.89	High Level	4.16	High Level
2. Understand topics like cataloging, classification, metadata, and information retrieval.	3.97	High Level	4.31	High Level
3. Use qualitative and quantitative research methods, content analysis, and usability testing.	4.03	High Level	4.18	High Level
4. Access and navigate academic databases, journals, books, and other relevant resources.	4.11	High Level	4.12	High Level
5. Understand data management principles, including data collection, storage, and analysis.	4.00	High Level	4.27	High Level
Overall Mean	4.00	High Level	4.21	High Level

The study found that the higher plantilla group had an average score of 4.21, while the lower plantilla group scored 4.00. Understanding topics such as cataloging, classification, metadata, and information retrieval received the highest mean score of 4.31. Teachers in the lower plantilla excel in basic research skills. These findings have implications for integrating research into teaching, fostering a research-oriented environment, supporting publication efforts, promoting collaboration, and aligning with institutional research goals. When more opportunities for research-related meetings are conducted, teachers will be able to acquire the necessary skills and competencies that will make them more confident and competent in research. (Cua & Maranon, 2023).

Table 16. *Level of Teacher’s Competence in Research in Organization of Information by Plantilla Position*

Categories	Lower		Higher	
	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
B. Organization of Information As a Teacher-Researcher, I...				
6. formulate research questions, design studies, collect and analyze data, and draw meaningful conclusions	3.89	High Level	4.16	High Level



7. Understand topics like cataloging, classification, metadata, and information retrieval.	3.97	High Level	4.31	High Level
8. Use qualitative and quantitative research methods, content analysis, and usability testing.	4.03	High Level	4.18	High Level
9. Access and navigate academic databases, journals, books, and other relevant resources.	4.11	High Level	4.12	High Level
10. Understand data management principles, including data collection, storage, and analysis.	4.00	High Level	4.27	High Level
Overall Mean	4.00	High Level	4.21	High Level

The study found that the higher plantilla group scored better in research time management, while the lower plantilla group excelled in articulating priorities. The highest and lowest mean scores were obtained by the higher and lower plantilla groups, respectively, for utilizing breaks and defining teaching and research priorities. These results have implications for maintaining balance, meeting expectations, enhancing engagement, demonstrating prioritization skills, fostering professional development, contributing to research, promoting research culture, and encouraging communication.

Table 17. *Level of Teachers’ Difficulties in Research by Civil Status*

Categories	Single		Married	
	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
1. Doing heavy workloads and paperwork.	4.15	High Level	4.11	High Level
2. Accessing research resources (journals, databases, etc.	3.88	High Level	4.04	High Level
3. Attending trainings or workshops in research methodologies.	3.39	Moderate Level	3.48	Moderate Level
4. Finding time for research work.	3.94	High Level	4.02	High Level
5. Gaining network with other researchers, attending conferences, or collaborating with external partners.	3.79	High Level	3.94	High Level
6. Acquiring knowledge regarding the conduct of research.	3.67	High Level	3.89	High Level
7. Communicating my thoughts and ideas in English.	3.09	Moderate Level	3.09	Moderate Level
8. Obtaining support from institutions for research activities.	3.18	Moderate Level	3.43	Moderate Level
9. Earning grants and financial support.	3.39	Moderate Level	3.46	Moderate Level
10. Balancing research commitments with personal and family life.	4.21	High Level	4.17	High Level
Overall Mean	3.67	High Level	3.76	High Level

The study found that both single and married teachers face a high level difficulty in research. Balancing research with personal and family life was found to be a significant challenge for single teachers, while obtaining support from institutions for research activities was a shared concern for both groups. The study highlights the need for institutions to address support issues to improve the research environment and productivity in the academic community.

Table 18. *Level of Teachers’ Difficulties in Research by Educational Attainment*

Categories Difficulties	Lower		Higher	
	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
1. Doing heavy workloads and paperwork.	4.19	High Level	4.00	High Level
2. Accessing research resources (journals, databases, etc.)	4.07	High Level	3.79	High Level
3. Attending trainings or workshops in research methodologies.	3.49	High Level	3.36	Moderate Level
4. Finding time for research work.	4.02	High Level	3.93	High Level
5. Gaining network with other researchers, attending conferences, or collaborating with external partners.	3.97	High Level	3.71	High Level
6. Acquiring knowledge regarding the conduct of research.	3.76	High Level	3.89	High Level
7. Communicating my thoughts and ideas in English.	3.03	Moderate Level	3.21	Moderate Level
8. Obtaining support from institutions for research activities.	3.34	Moderate Level	3.32	Moderate Level
9. Earning grants and financial support.	3.39	Moderate Level	3.54	High Level
10. Balancing research commitments with personal and family life.	4.29	High Level	3.96	High Level
Overall Mean	3.75	High Level	3.67	High Level

Table 20 shows a high level of difficulties teachers encounter in research when grouped according to educational attainment. Both the lower educational attainment (LEA) group and the higher educational attainment (HEA) group posted almost identical mean scores of 3.75 and 3.67, respectively. The study found that teachers face high levels of difficulty, particularly in balancing research commitments with their personal and family life. The respondents with LEA reported more difficulties in communicating their thoughts and ideas in English. The study recommends continuous professional development for teachers to overcome these challenges.

Table 19. *Level of Teachers’ Difficulties in Research by Length of Service*

Categories Difficulties	Shorter		Longer	
	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
1. Doing heavy workloads and paperwork.	4.12	High Level	4.14	High Level
2. Accessing research resources (journals, databases, etc.)	3.94	High Level	4.03	High Level
3. Attending trainings or workshops in research	3.52	High Level	3.34	Moderate Level

	methodologies.				
4.	Finding time for research work.	3.90	High Level	4.11	High Level
5.	Gaining network with other researchers, attending conferences, or collaborating with external partners.	3.77	High Level	4.06	High Level
6.	Acquiring knowledge regarding the conduct of research.	3.85	High Level	3.74	High Level
7.	Communicating my thoughts and ideas in English.	3.17	Moderate Level	2.97	Moderate Level
8.	Obtaining support from institutions for research activities.	3.29	Moderate Level	3.40	Moderate Level
9.	Earning grants and financial support.	3.44	Moderate Level	3.43	Moderate Level
10.	Balancing research commitments with personal and family life.	4.12	High Level	4.29	High Level
	Overall Mean	3.71	High Level	3.75	High Level

Data analysis revealed that teachers faced a "high" level of research difficulties when categorized by length of service (LOS) into shorter and longer groups. The shorter LOS group had an overall mean of 3.71, while the longer LOS group scored slightly higher at 3.75. Notably, item No.10, "Balancing research commitments with personal and family life," received the highest mean score of 4.29 from the longer LOS group, indicating a significant challenge. Conversely, item No. 7, "Communicating thoughts and ideas in English," scored lowest at 2.97 for the longer LOS group. This highlights the need for tailored support and flexible policies to address work-life balance challenges. Length of service did not predict the behavior of other variables, suggesting a uniformly high level of difficulty across the board. Graham et al. (2020) found that length of service did not predict the behavior of other variables, suggesting a uniformly high level of difficulty across the board.

Table 20. *Level of Teachers' Difficulties in Research by Plantilla Position*

Categories		Lower		Higher	
Difficulties	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation	
1. Doing heavy workloads and paperwork.	4.13	High Level	4.12	High Level	
2. Accessing research resources (journals, databases, etc.	3.97	High Level	3.98	High Level	
3. Attending trainings or workshops in research methodologies.	3.45	Moderate Level	3.45	Moderate Level	
4. Finding time for research work.	3.87	High Level	4.08	High Level	
5. Gaining network with other researchers, attending conferences, or collaborating with external partners.	3.84	High Level	3.92	High Level	
6. Acquiring knowledge regarding the conduct of research.	3.76	High Level	3.84	High Level	
7. Communicating my thoughts and ideas in English.	3.16	Moderate Level	3.04	Moderate Level	
8. Obtaining support from institutions for research activities.	3.34	Moderate Level	3.33	Moderate Level	

9. Earning grants and financial support.	3.47	Moderate Level	3.41	Moderate Level
10. Balancing research commitments with personal and family life.	4.13	High Level	4.22	High Level
Overall Mean	3.71	High Level	3.74	High Level

The study revealed that teachers in higher plantilla group faced a "high level" of research difficulties compared to their lower-ranked counterparts. Specifically, "Balancing research commitments with personal and family life" received the highest mean score of 4.22 from the higher plantilla group, indicating significant challenges. Conversely, "Communicating thoughts and ideas in English" scored lowest at 3.04 for the higher plantilla group, suggesting a "moderate" level of difficulty. This highlights the importance of supporting higher-ranking educators with mechanisms like flexible work arrangements. However, Umbac's (2014) study contradicts this, suggesting individuals in the Teacher III position face fewer difficulties in various teaching aspects, including research practices.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Despite facing significant challenges, teachers exhibit a high level of research competence. This paper found no significant differences in the ability of teachers to choose research topics, regardless of their professional or demographic backgrounds. However, variations in organizing information were observed based on educational attainment, work experience, and position, but not on marital status. The study suggests that having more leadership positions does not necessarily translate to more research time. Nevertheless, the high level of research competence among teachers underscores their strong collaboration, ultimately benefiting students. These findings underscore the importance of tailored support to address specific challenges across demographics, promoting inclusivity and effectiveness in research efforts. Initiatives to promote teachers' interest and engagement in research include continuous professional development, targeted support in research question formulation, creating a research-friendly environment, improving time management skills, targeted training on data collection techniques, refining recognition programs, and enhancing skills in disseminating research findings. Tailored interventions based on demographic variables should also be implemented to improve teachers' research competence.

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