

Capacitating Teachers' Research Competence and Productivity through Mentorship Initiatives

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to enhance teachers' research competence and productivity through the implementation of mentorship initiatives at Kiburiao National High School. Specifically, it examined the level of teachers' competence and productivity before and after the intervention, determined the significant differences between pre- and post-implementation data, and explored teachers' experiences, challenges, and perceptions of the mentorship process. The study employed a mixed-method design, integrating quantitative analysis of pre- and post-assessments and qualitative insights from interviews and reflective journals. Quantitative results revealed that teachers' research competence significantly improved from low ($M = 1.83$) to moderate ($M = 2.91$) levels after the mentorship. Statistical analysis using the paired t-test indicated highly significant differences ($p < .001$) across all research domains—problem identification, methodology, technology use, and ethics. Similarly, the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test ($T = 0$, $p < .001$) confirmed a significant improvement in research productivity, as evidenced by the increase in approved titles (7 to 21), proposals (3 to 8), and completed studies (4 to 7). Qualitative findings revealed that mentorship fostered confidence, collaboration, and motivation among teachers while addressing challenges in research writing. The mentorship initiative was found to be an effective capacity-building strategy, strengthening teachers' research competence and establishing a sustainable research culture within the school. The study recommends institutionalizing mentorship programs as part of continuous professional development to promote evidence-based practices and professional growth among teachers.

Keywords: mentorship initiatives, research competence, research productivity, teacher professional development, action research.

INTRODUCTION

Action research plays a significant role in educational settings by fostering a culture of inquiry, reflection, and continuous improvement. Through action research, educators can systematically investigate classroom practices, evaluate instructional strategies, and address challenges specific to their teaching contexts. By actively engaging in the research process, teachers can enhance their pedagogical skills, deepen their understanding of student learning needs, and contribute to evidence-based decision-making in education.

In Kiburiao National High School, a minimal number of teaching and non-teaching staff members have actively pursued action research initiatives. Only seven out of a total of 60 personnel have managed to successfully complete action research projects with just three teachers submitting proposals for action research. This accounts for approximately 12% of the staff actively involved in such endeavors for the school year 2024-2025. This low level of engagement in action research highlights a significant gap in the development of teachers' research competence within the school community.

Teachers' negative perceptions or misconceptions about the complexity or relevance of action research may deter teachers from actively participating in such activities. Additionally, inadequate training and support in

research methodologies and data analysis may contribute to a lack of confidence and proficiency among educators. These factors collectively contribute to the challenges faced in promoting a culture of research and inquiry within the school community. Efforts to address these barriers and enhance teachers' understanding and appreciation of action research can significantly impact their willingness and ability to participate in research endeavors.

The Department of Education emphasizes the importance of action research to enhance governance, facilitate access to education, and elevate the quality of instruction (DepEd Order No. 43, s. 2015). Additionally, DepEd Order No. 16, s. 2017, provides guidance to teachers and administrators at all levels on conducting research, fostering collaboration, and promoting capacity development within the education sector.

Earlier studies conducted by Tshomo and Lhaden (2015), Sherab (2015), and Illaga Jr. and Celis (2021) highlighted the positive impact of action research in refining classroom practices and fostering greater student engagement. These findings have reinforced the idea that action research enables teachers to make well-informed decisions about instructional methods and strategies suited to the unique needs of their learners (Liu et al., 2022; Mobeen & Dawood, 2022; Yoong et al., 2022). In support of this perspective, Ullah et al. (2017) examined public school educators in Agusan Del Sur, Philippines, and found that teachers recognized the benefits of integrating research into the teaching and learning process. Action research enables teachers to pinpoint areas for improvement in their instructional practices and apply practical interventions to address emerging challenges. As such, educators are expected to develop strong research writing skills to sustain the relevance and responsiveness of their instruction to the evolving needs of 21st-century learners. Similarly, the study of Escopete and Garcia (2023) highlighted that teacher faced considerable difficulties in conducting action research, particularly in securing funding, managing workload, and allocating time, while school initiatives to motivate them were largely confined to administrative encouragement and limited incorporation of research in capability-building programs.

In my role as the school research coordinator, the minimal involvement of teachers in action research initiatives at Kiburiao National High School emphasizes the necessity for focused interventions to enhance the research competence of the faculty. Mentorship initiatives present a promising avenue to tackle this challenge, offering educators personalized guidance, support, and expertise to navigate the intricacies of the research process effectively.

The implementation of mentorship initiatives aimed at capacitating teachers' research competence holds immense potential to transform teaching and learning practices at Kiburiao National High School. By empowering educators to embrace action research as a means of professional growth and school improvement, the school can cultivate a vibrant community of reflective practitioners committed to enhancing student success and fostering excellence in education.

Statement of the Problem

The study aimed to capacitate teachers' research competence through the implementation of mentorship initiatives.

The research questions providing focus for this study were:

1. What is the level of teachers' research competence before and after the implementation of mentorship initiatives?
2. What is the level of teachers' research productivity before and after the implementation of the mentorship initiatives in terms of:
 - a. approved action research titles;
 - b. action research proposals developed; and
 - c. completed action research studies?
3. Is there a significant difference in the research competence of teachers before and after implementing the mentorship initiatives?

4. Is there a significant improvement in the teachers' research productivity before and after the implementation of the mentorship initiatives in terms of:
 - a. approved action research titles;
 - b. action research proposals developed; and
 - c. completed action research studies?
5. How do mentorship initiatives enhance teachers' competence in action research writing in terms of their experiences, the challenges they encountered and overcame, and the influence on their confidence and skills in planning, writing, and completing their research?

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study focused on the effectiveness of mentorship initiatives in enhancing teachers' research competence and productivity. It explored both the measurable outcomes and the lived experiences of teacher-participants who underwent the mentoring process. Quantitatively, the study assessed the level of teachers' research competence and productivity before and after the implementation of the mentorship initiatives using an adapted questionnaire. Qualitatively, it explored teachers' reflections, challenges, and perceived benefits of the mentorship program through semi-structured interviews. The study was limited to teachers of Kiburiao National High School who were directly involved in the mentorship initiatives and did not include those who had not participated in research-related capacity-building activities. Data collection was confined to the school setting, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other institutions or divisions. Nonetheless, the results provided meaningful insights into how mentorship initiatives can strengthen teachers' research engagement, competence, and overall professional development.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A mixed-method research design was employed in this study to comprehensively examine the impact of mentorship initiatives on teachers' action research competence. The quantitative component utilized a pre-experimental design with a one-group pretest–posttest structure, as there was only one group of participants without a control or comparison group. All participating teachers were exposed to the intervention, which involved the implementation of structured mentorship initiatives. Quantitative data were collected through adapted survey questionnaires designed to assess teachers' research competence before and after the intervention.

Complementing this, the qualitative component gathered in-depth insights into teachers' experiences and perceptions of the mentorship process. This was achieved through focus group discussions, individual interviews, and reflective journals. These qualitative data sources captured the challenges, strategies, and professional growth teachers experienced throughout the initiative, thereby providing richer context to the quantitative findings.

The study was conducted in three phases: pre-implementation, implementation, and post-implementation. During these phases, both quantitative and qualitative data were systematically collected and analyzed to evaluate the effectiveness of the mentorship initiatives. The integration of numerical results with descriptive narratives allowed for a more holistic understanding of how mentorship influenced teachers' competence and productivity in conducting action research.

Locale of the Study

This study was conducted at Kiburiao National High School, located in Purok 1, Quezon, Bukidnon, Northern Mindanao, Philippines. The school is a public secondary institution under the Quezon III District of the Division of Bukidnon, offering both academic and technical-vocational programs. Kiburiao National High School caters to a diverse group of teachers and learners in a predominantly rural setting, making it an ideal venue for implementing and evaluating mentorship initiatives aimed at enhancing teachers' research competence and productivity. The study was carried out during the first quarter of the school year 2025–2026, providing timely and relevant data reflective of the school's ongoing professional development efforts and research culture.

Research Participants

A mixed-method approach was utilized in this study, employing both quantitative and qualitative sampling techniques. For the quantitative phase, a simple random sampling method was used to select thirty (30) out of sixty (60) school personnel from Kiburiao National High School as participants. This phase aimed to determine the improvement in teachers' research productivity before and after the implementation of the mentorship initiatives.

Meanwhile, for the qualitative phase, a purposive sampling technique was employed to identify five (5) personnel who actively participated in the mentorship initiatives on action research. These participants were chosen for their relevant experiences and insights that could provide deeper understanding of the program's impact. Data for the qualitative phase were collected through individual interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). The study was conducted at Kiburiao National High School during the Academic

Research Instruments

The study utilized two instruments: an adapted questionnaire from Cortes (2019) and a semi-structured interview guide developed by the researcher. The adapted questionnaire was designed to measure teachers' research competence before and after the implementation of the mentorship initiatives. It employed a five-point Likert scale with the following response options: 1 – Strongly Disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Agree, and 5 – Strongly Agree.

The questionnaire consisted of five domains representing essential components of research competence. The first domain, Problem Identification, measured teachers' ability to conceptualize a researchable topic, identify research gaps, consider the practicality of the study, and ensure that the topic was grounded in real school issues. The second domain, Appropriate Use of Data Collection Tools, assessed the teachers' understanding of various data collection methods such as observation, artefacts, interviews, and assessment data, as well as their awareness of the uses, limitations, and reliability of each tool. The third domain, Data Gathering and Interpretation, evaluated teachers' ability to organize, present, and analyze collected data to generate meaningful insights and formulate evidence-based action plans. The fourth domain, Technology Application, measured the teachers' proficiency in using technology for literature searching, bibliographic referencing, data analysis, and data presentation. Lastly, the fifth domain, Research Ethics, determined their understanding of ethical standards in conducting research, including obtaining approvals, securing informed consent, and addressing ethical concerns during data collection.

In addition, a semi-structured interview guide was employed to gather qualitative data on teachers' experiences and reflections regarding the mentorship initiatives. The open-ended questions explored the effectiveness of the mentoring process, challenges encountered, strategies that enhanced research competence, and perceived outcomes in terms of professional growth and research productivity. The instruments underwent content validation by a panel of experts in research and educational management to ensure their alignment with the study objectives. After validation, the tools were pilot-tested to determine their reliability and internal consistency before the full implementation.

Data Gathering

In the process of conducting the study, several data collection methods were employed, beginning with the formal request for permission addressed to the School Principal. This initial step involved preparing a formal letter that outlined the study's objectives, duration, and expected outcomes.

During the pre-implementation phase, surveys and questionnaires served as the primary data collection tools. Adapted instruments were utilized to assess teachers' attitudes toward action research and their level of research competence. Specifically, a survey questionnaire adapted from Cortes (2019) was employed to measure research competence. The instrument underwent pilot testing and yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.88, indicating high reliability. These instruments were chosen for their validity and relevance

in evaluating teachers' attitudes and competencies related to action research. The administration of the surveys and questionnaires established baseline data that provided valuable insights into teachers' perceptions and expectations regarding the mentorship initiatives. During the implementation phase, data were collected through observations, documentation of activities, and periodic administration of surveys and questionnaires to monitor participants' engagement, progress, and experiences. Throughout the implementation phase, data were gathered through observations, documentation of activities, and periodic administration of surveys and questionnaires to monitor participants' engagement, progress, and experiences.

In the post-implementation phase, surveys and questionnaires were again administered to determine the impact of the mentorship initiatives and to obtain deeper insights into participants' experiences, challenges, and recommendations for improvement. To ensure data triangulation and enhance the credibility of the findings, focus group discussions (FGDs) were also conducted to capture qualitative perspectives and validate quantitative results. Furthermore, continuous data tracking and monitoring mechanisms were employed across all phases to record attendance, participation, and feedback, which informed the overall evaluation and refinement of the mentorship initiatives.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics, particularly the mean, were utilized to assess the teachers' research competence. The mean served as a valuable statistic as it offered a representative value for the entire dataset and was sensitive to fluctuations in the data, capturing even minor changes.

Inferential statistics, specifically the paired t-test and Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test, were employed to determine if there existed a significant difference in the teachers' research competence and productivity before and after the intervention. The paired t-test was suitable for this study as it involved related samples, wherein the same group of participants was measured at two different points in time, thereby allowing the examination of changes within the same group.

For the qualitative data, thematic analysis following the framework of Braun and Clarke (2006) was employed to identify meaningful patterns and themes from the focus group discussions, interviews, and reflective journals. The process involved familiarizing with the data, generating initial codes inductively, organizing similar ideas into categories, and refining them into overarching themes that reflected teachers' experiences, challenges, strategies, and perceived benefits of the mentorship initiatives.

Ethical Consideration

This study adhered to the highest ethical standards to ensure the protection of the rights, dignity, and well-being of all teacher-participants involved in the mentorship initiatives. Prior to data collection, informed consent was secured from each participant after providing a comprehensive explanation of the study's objectives, procedures, potential risks, and anticipated benefits. Participation in the mentorship program and subsequent data-gathering activities was entirely voluntary, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without any adverse consequences.

Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained by assigning pseudonyms and securely storing all records, interview transcripts, and related documents to prevent unauthorized access. The researcher ensured that personal and professional information shared during mentoring sessions, focus group discussions, or interviews remained confidential and used solely for research purposes.

Throughout the research process, the researcher exercised reflexivity and bracketing to minimize potential biases, ensuring an impartial interpretation of the teachers' experiences, perceptions, and insights regarding the mentorship initiatives. Interviews and discussions were conducted in a respectful, supportive, and non-judgmental environment to promote open and genuine sharing.

These ethical safeguards are consistent with the established principles of qualitative research and the Department of Education's (DepEd) ethical standards for educational research. They were designed to uphold

research integrity, foster trust among participants, and ensure that the study meaningfully contributes to enhancing teachers' research competence and productivity through mentorship initiatives (Chasokela, 2023; InnovateMR, 2024; Scribbr, 2024).

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The respondents' level of research competence before and after implementing the mentorship initiatives

Table 1. The teachers' level of research competence before and after implementing the mentorship initiatives

VARIABLES	BEFORE		AFTER	
	Mean	Qualitative Interpretation	Mean	Qualitative Interpretation
Problem Identification	1.75	Low level of competence	2.85	Moderate level of competence
Research Methodology	1.35	Very low level of competence	2.87	Moderate level of competence
Technology	2.18	Low level of competence	3.29	Moderate level of competence
Research Ethics	2.04	Low level of competence	2.64	Moderate level of competence
Overall Mean	1.83	Low level of competence	2.91	Moderate level of competence

Rating	Scale	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Interpretation
1	1.00-1.50	Very Low	Very low level of competence
2	1.51-2.50	Low	Low level of competence
3	2.51-3.50	Average	Moderate level of competence
4	3.51-4.50	High	High level of competence
5	4.51-5.00	Very High	Very high level of competence

The data in Table 1 reveals a significant improvement in the teachers' level of research competence across all measured variables after the implementation of mentorship initiatives. Before mentorship, the teachers exhibited low to very low competence levels, with the mean scores for Problem Identification at 1.75, Research Methodology at 1.35, Technology at 2.18, and Research Ethics at 2.04, all reflecting low or very low competence. After mentorship, these mean scores increased substantially: Problem Identification rose to 2.85, Research Methodology to 2.87, Technology to 3.29, and Research Ethics to 2.64, all indicating a moderate level of competence. The overall mean score improved from 1.83 (low competence) to 2.91 (moderate competence), demonstrating that the mentorship program effectively enhanced teachers' research skills.

This finding implies that mentorship initiatives play a critical role in developing teachers' research competency, particularly in essential areas such as problem identification, methodology, ethical considerations, and technology use. It suggests that structured mentorship offers substantial benefits in equipping teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to engage confidently in research activities. The increase to a moderate competence level indicates progress but also highlights potential for further development through continued mentorship and professional development efforts.

Supporting literature affirms these implications. Research by Bueno (2023) shows that faculty mentorship significantly enhances research abilities, including methodology and topic selection. Dingal (2023) provides evidence that mentoring increases teacher competence and enthusiasm for research. Studies by Ndebele (2022) and Abetang (2020) highlight the positive effects of mentorship on pedagogical and research skills development. Additionally, meta-analyses by Eby and colleagues (2008) and Johnson & Huwe (2003) confirm that mentoring improves critical thinking, problem-solving, and research productivity among educators. These studies collectively demonstrate the value of mentorship in fostering teacher research competence, making it an essential strategy for educational institutions aiming to strengthen their research culture and improve instructional quality. Such findings strongly support implementing and sustaining mentorship programs as a key component of teacher professional development, ultimately contributing to enhanced research capacity and educational outcomes in schools.

Figure 1. Research productivity before and after implementing the mentorship initiatives

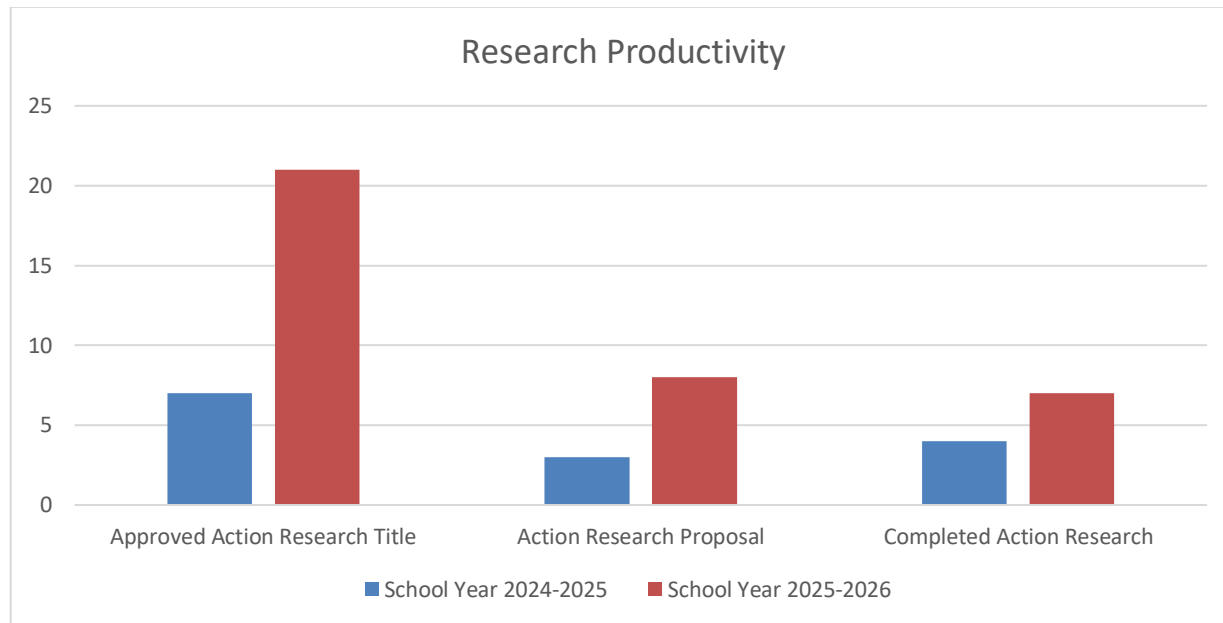


Figure 1 illustrates the comparison of teachers' research productivity during School Year 2024–2025 (before the mentorship initiatives) and School Year 2025–2026 (after implementation). A marked increase is observed across all indicators—approved action research titles, proposals, and completed research outputs. Prior to the mentorship program, only 7 research titles were approved, 3 proposals were submitted, and 4 studies were completed. After the introduction of the mentorship initiatives, these numbers rose significantly to 21 approved titles, 8 proposals, and 7 completed studies. This upward trend visually demonstrates the positive influence of the mentorship initiatives on teachers' engagement and output in research-related activities. The consistent increase across all categories indicates that teachers became more confident and capable of producing quality research when provided with structured guidance and support.

Encouragingly, this demonstrates that mentorship programs are effective in enabling teachers to apply their improved research skills in practice. It suggests that institutions should consider mentorship as a strategic intervention to boost both research competence and output, thereby elevating the overall quality and quantity of teacher-led research initiatives.

Table 4. The significant difference in the teachers' research competence before and after implementing the mentorship initiatives

Variables	t-value	p-value
Research Competence	-19.417	<.001**
Problem Identification	-13.735	<.001**
Research Methodology	-14.366	<.001**
Technology	-7.036	<.001**
Research Ethics	-5.639	<.001**

*Significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

**significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The findings shown in Table 4 confirm that there are statistically significant differences in the teachers' research competence as well as in its component domains includes problem identification, research methodology, technology, and research ethics before and after implementing mentorship initiatives. All variables present highly negative t-values (e.g., -19.417 for overall research competence and ranging from -5.639 to -14.366 for specific components) and extremely low p-values (<.001), signifying that the post-mentorship scores are dramatically higher than the pre-mentorship scores. These results establish strong

evidence that the mentorship program was effective in elevating teachers' competencies in research processes and skills.

The negative t-values mean that the post-mentorship competence scores were higher than the pre-mentorship scores, confirming an increase in competence due to the mentorship initiative. The magnitude of the t-value, along with the very low p-values ($< .001$), indicates that this difference is statistically significant and unlikely to be due to chance. Researchers often focus on the absolute value of the t-statistic when interpreting significance, while the sign helps understand the direction of the change.

Implications of these results are substantial for educational leadership and development planning. The statistically significant improvement across all measured domains underscores the transformative impact of mentorship in fostering teachers' research competence, particularly in critical areas such as methodological understanding, technology integration, and ethical processes. Educational institutions should thus prioritize sustained mentorship initiatives as a primary strategy for building teacher capacity, advancing research proficiency, and promoting evidence-based practice in schools.

Numerous related studies support these conclusions. Crespí et al. (2023) used t-test analysis to demonstrate that mentoring has a significant effect on the development of transversal competences, with all measured domains showing marked growth following mentoring interventions. Hagrass et al. (2023) found that educational programs focused on mentorship competencies led to statistically significant improvements in performance among nurse mentors, highlighting the broader applicability of mentorship's effects. Leidenfrost et al. (2014) showed, through t-tests and related analysis, that different mentoring styles are linked to quantifiable improvements in academic and research outcomes for mentees. Dingal (2023) similarly documented the major impact of master teachers' mentoring skills on instructional practices and professional development, with mentoring having a substantial positive effect on indicators of teacher competence. Studies from educational project journals and enhancement programs indicate that after targeted mentoring, teachers are more capable in key areas necessary for successful research, with performance improvements that are both statistically and practically significant.

Table 5. The significant difference in the teachers' research productivity before and after implementing the mentorship initiatives

Variables	T-value	p-value
Research Productivity	0	$< .001^{**}$

The Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test result ($T = 0$, $p < .001$) reveals a significant difference in teachers' research productivity before and after the implementation of the mentorship initiatives. This means that the mentorship program had a substantial positive effect on the teachers' ability to develop, propose, and complete research studies. The findings affirm that mentorship serves as an effective capacity-building mechanism, equipping teachers with the necessary skills, confidence, and motivation to engage in scholarly work.

Prior to the program, research involvement was limited due to lack of technical knowledge, low self-efficacy, and absence of peer guidance. The introduction of mentorship initiatives—through collaborative proposal writing, one-on-one consultations, and peer review sessions—created a supportive environment where teachers could receive continuous feedback and encouragement. This led to improved research outputs and heightened enthusiasm toward research engagement.

The findings of this study carry important implications for teacher professional development and school research culture. The significant increase in teachers' research productivity after the implementation of mentorship initiatives underscores the vital role of structured guidance and collaborative support in enhancing teachers' research competencies. Mentorship provides teachers with opportunities to learn from experienced peers, gain practical insights into research processes, and build confidence in developing and implementing their own studies. This suggests that schools should institutionalize mentorship programs as part of their continuous professional development framework, ensuring that teachers receive ongoing technical and motivational support.

Table 6. Teachers' Experiences and Perceptions of Mentorship Initiatives

Themes	Codes
Experience in Joining Mentorship Initiatives	- Transformative and supportive guidance - Overcoming barriers through guided support - Motivated and enriched learning experience
Challenges Encountered and Overcome During Mentorship	- Difficulties with technical aspects of research design and writing - Overcoming challenges through personalized feedback and practical strategies - Mentorship as a source of encouragement to persist
Influence on Confidence and Skills in Planning, Writing, and Completing Research	- Increased confidence in completing research projects - Enhanced skills in research planning, writing, and analysis - Motivation to continue engaging in research

Theme 1: Experience in Joining Mentorship Initiatives

Teachers described their experiences in joining mentorship initiatives as transformative, supportive, and motivating. Participants consistently shared that they initially felt overwhelmed by the technicalities of research writing but were able to gain clarity and direction through the step-by-step guidance of their mentors. Participant 1 emphasized how the mentorship turned a challenging task into a purposeful journey, leading to the development of the STEP Program, while Participants 3 and 4 valued structured guidance, collaborative workshops, and practical insights that enriched their research writing competence. Participant 5 highlighted the mentor's expertise and encouragement, which not only improved their skills but also contributed to their recognition in research congresses.

These findings align with Hudson (2016), who emphasized that mentoring is a transformative process that empowers teachers through modeling, feedback, and encouragement, thereby enhancing their research capacity. Similarly, Mullen and Klimaitis (2021) highlighted that mentorship creates a supportive learning environment that motivates teachers to engage in professional growth, particularly in research and innovation. This shows that the experiences of teachers in the mentorship initiative are consistent with literature underscoring the value of guided support in professional development.

Theme 2: Challenges Encountered and Overcome During Mentorship

Despite the positive experiences, teachers encountered various technical and conceptual challenges in action research writing. Participants reported difficulties in formulating researchable problems, aligning research frameworks, structuring proposals, and reviewing related literature. For instance, Participant 1 noted challenges in converting classroom observations into systematic research questions, while Participant 3 felt overwhelmed with research design. However, these challenges were mitigated by personalized feedback, reflective questioning, and practical strategies provided by mentors, making the process less intimidating. Participant 4 shared that the mentorship helped improve academic writing by breaking down tasks into manageable steps. Interestingly, Participant 5 expressed that they did not experience significant challenges, crediting the mentor's clarity and dedication, which facilitated smooth learning.

These findings echo Ploessl and Rock (2014), who found that mentorship helps novice researchers overcome barriers in academic writing and design through scaffolded support and feedback. Moreover, Bai and Hudson (2011) emphasized that mentoring in research provides opportunities to address difficulties in methodology and writing while building persistence among mentees. This indicates that the mentorship program served not only as a corrective mechanism for technical challenges but also as a motivational source to persist in research endeavors.

Theme 3: Influence on Confidence and Skills in Planning, Writing, and Completing Research

Mentorship initiatives had a profound impact on teachers' confidence, research skills, and motivation. Participant 1 described how their initial doubts were replaced with confidence in viewing research as a tool for

improving teaching and learning rather than just compliance. Participant 3 reported that mentorship enhanced their ability to plan systematically, set objectives, and articulate findings, while Participant 4 stressed the importance of feedback in developing academic writing skills. Participant 2 highlighted how consistent guidance enabled them to refine their proposals, and Participant 5 noted that continuous encouragement from mentors boosted their confidence from the proposal stage to oral defense, motivating them to sustain research engagement.

These results are consistent with Wang and Odell (2007), who found that mentorship enhances novice teachers' confidence by providing emotional support and professional expertise, thereby strengthening their ability to complete complex tasks such as action research. Likewise, Gutierrez (2016) revealed that mentorship programs in Philippine schools increased teachers' self-efficacy and competence in conducting classroom-based research, motivating them to pursue further scholarly work. This suggests that mentorship serves as both a capacity-building strategy and a motivational factor that drives teachers to continuously engage in research activities.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

The results revealed that teachers initially demonstrated low to very low competence in problem identification, methodology, technology, and ethics. After the mentorship, their competence significantly improved to a moderate level across all domains, with the overall mean increasing from 1.83 to 2.91. This shift indicates that structured mentorship effectively equips teachers with essential skills needed for action research, particularly in aligning research problems, applying methodologies, and incorporating ethical standards.

The graph illustrates a notable increase in teachers' research productivity between School Year (SY) 2024–2025 and SY 2025–2026 after the implementation of the mentorship initiatives. The number of approved action research titles rose from 7 to 21, research proposals from 3 to 8, and completed research from 4 to 7. This upward trend clearly demonstrates that the mentorship program effectively encouraged and supported teachers to engage more actively in research activities.

The significant difference in competence before and after mentorship was confirmed by statistical analysis, with all variables yielding highly negative t-values and p-values less than .001. This demonstrates that the improvement was not incidental but a direct result of the mentorship program. Similar to findings by Crespí et al. (2023) and Dingal (2023), this study affirms that mentorship interventions lead to statistically and practically significant gains in professional competence.

Similarly, the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test ($T = 0$, $p < .001$) in Table 5 revealed a significant difference in teachers' research productivity before and after the mentorship implementation. Figure 1 further illustrated this improvement through the substantial rise in approved action research titles, proposals, and completed studies. These findings collectively demonstrate that the mentorship program served as a transformative professional development strategy that not only improved teachers' research competence but also increased their engagement and output in research activities.

The qualitative findings provided nuanced insights into how mentorship enhanced teachers' competence. Teachers described mentorship as transformative, supportive, and motivating, highlighting how guided feedback, workshops, and encouragement helped them overcome barriers in research writing. Challenges such as framing research problems and structuring proposals were mitigated through personalized and scaffolded guidance, enabling persistence and skill growth. Importantly, mentorship boosted teachers' confidence and motivation, empowering them to view research as a tool for professional growth rather than mere compliance. These experiences resonate with Hudson (2016) and Gutierrez (2016), who emphasized that mentorship fosters self-efficacy, resilience, and sustained engagement in research.

The study demonstrates that mentorship initiatives are a powerful capacity-building strategy for enhancing teachers' competence and productivity in research. By improving skills, addressing challenges, and

strengthening confidence, mentorship not only develops individual teacher-researchers but also contributes to cultivating a sustainable research culture within schools. These findings highlight the need for educational leaders to institutionalize mentorship programs as part of continuous professional development, ensuring that teachers are empowered to engage in evidence-based practices that ultimately improve the quality of teaching and learning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations emerge for consideration and action.

Teachers are encouraged to actively participate in mentorship programs and view research as a professional growth opportunity rather than an added burden. They should sustain the competencies acquired by continuously engaging in research writing, collaborating with colleagues, and applying evidence-based practices in their classrooms.

Mentors should provide consistent and scaffolded guidance that addresses the unique needs of each mentee. Constructive feedback, encouragement, and modeling of best practices in research are essential to sustaining mentees' motivation and confidence. Mentors are also encouraged to update their knowledge in current research trends to provide relevant support.

Mentees are advised to embrace a growth mindset, remain open to constructive criticism, and persevere in overcoming challenges encountered in research writing. They should maximize the mentorship experience by asking questions, practicing independently, and collaborating with peers to strengthen their research skills.

School leaders are encouraged to institutionalize mentorship initiatives as part of the school's professional development programs. They should allocate time, resources, and incentives for teachers to conduct research, organize capacity-building workshops, and create a supportive environment where research outputs are valued and disseminated.

Policy makers should consider integrating structured mentorship programs into the professional development framework of teachers at the division and national levels. Providing funding, clear guidelines, and recognition for teacher-researchers will help sustain a culture of research across schools and enhance the overall quality of education.

Future studies may explore mentorship in different contexts such as subject-specific areas, digital or online mentorship, and cross-institutional collaborations. Research may also focus on long-term impacts of mentorship on teachers' classroom practices, student outcomes, and school improvement. Expanding the scope to larger samples and diverse settings will provide a more comprehensive understanding of mentorship effectiveness.

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