

Teacher Support on Students' Attitude Toward Research Writing

JAYSON S. DIGAMON

<http://orcid.org/0000-0003-1739-4395>

jayson212012@gmail.com

Gingog City Comprehensive National High School
Gingog City, Philippines

JEROME N. DE LA PEÑA

<http://orcid.org/0000-0003-3031-5444>

jdelapena@liceo.edu.ph

Liceo de Cagayan University
Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines

Originality: 100% • Grammarly: 100% • Plagiarism: 0%



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ABSTRACT

Discussions on research writing have always been associated with the teachers' role in influencing students' attitudes to pursue it. This study determined the teachers' role in students' attitudes toward research writing. This study was focused on the 124 Grade 12 students of Gingog City Comprehensive National High School, Gingog City, who took up Practical Research 2 subject using the mixed explanatory methodology research design. With descriptive statistics and linear regression analysis, the influence of teacher support on students' attitudes toward research writing was examined. The results revealed that students in their research writing experienced strong teacher support. Likewise, it was shown that teacher support directly impacts students' attitudes toward research. The study

concluded that while other factors may affect students' attitudes toward research writing, the teacher factor was among the most significant. This further implies the need for teachers to provide students with holistic support, specifically instructional, to handle the subject effectively and sustain the students' interest in writing their papers.

Keywords — research writing, teacher support, mixed explanatory, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

The focus on research writing in the Philippine Basic Education has been unprecedented as the educational system revamped of the curriculum known as the K to 12 that was implemented under The Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, or Republic Act No. 10533, signed on May 15, 2013. The curriculum for Senior High School includes different research subjects. One of which is Practical Research.

With the attention of the academe shifting to research writing, researchers have two diametrical findings concerning students' attitudes towards research writing. Some studies found that students regard research as challenging and thus have a positive disposition toward it (Adebule, 2013). On the other hand, other studies noted that students' attitude toward writing scholarly outputs, such as research papers, is generally not positive (Chiang, 2012; Huwari & Aziz, 2011). Some studies reveal that students don't appreciate the essence of research writing and regard it as difficult and dull. Thus, students feel anxious and eventually do not engage in the rigors of research writing, resulting in a lack of knowledge in basic research (Shaukat et al., 2014). Moreover, such anxiety hinders them from performing well in the subject and their belief in developing critical writing skills (Erkan & Saban, 2011; Sanders-Reio, Alexander, Reio Jr., & Newman, 2014; Woodrow, 2011).

To produce quality research outputs and eventually increase students' academic performance in Research subjects, teachers stand at the forefront of leading such causes. When teachers fail to extend adequate support to students, there is the possibility that students develop negative attitudes toward research writing (Huh, 2007).

As research teachers, the researchers observed that students' attitude in doing research tasks fluctuates to varying degrees. Considering the above premise, the

researchers attempt to explain the teacher's role. Moreover, this study hopes to establish the hypothesis that students' attitude toward research writing is the outcome of teacher-related factors. The results hold to extol the pivotal role of teachers in addressing students' apprehension in the seemingly negatively coated research subject.

FRAMEWORK

Students' attitude toward writing refers to the amount of engagement invested into writing which encompasses students' commitment to the entire writing process (McClenny, 2010). Such disposition may be hindered by intervening factors that induce anxiety. There are many definitions of writing anxiety. Specifically, Hassan (2001) defined it as a tendency to avoid writing situations or tasks requiring writing outputs, especially when they are subjected to evaluation. Moreover, Topuzkanamis (2015) described writing anxiety as the apprehension a person feels toward a writing task. Thus, Silva, McMartin-Miller, Pelaez-Moralez, and Lin (2012) emphasized that knowing how to improve students writing ability by addressing factors that make students apprehensive about writing is an essential endeavor for researchers.

What makes students' attitudes toward research writing poorly? Onwuegbuzie (2003) found several factors that increase students' regard in a research methods course. These are the amount of work required, the amount of material covered, test taking, the difficulty of the material covered in class, and preparing individual research projects.

Pinca et al. (2014) found that students have a negative attitude toward research writing because they lack knowledge and orientation. It triggers their stress which leads them to ignore the activity. Hence, a positive attitude must be established as it is one of the critical components in the conduct of successful research writing for students to persist despite difficulties (Wise, 2013)

Knowledge of research writing is critical when conducting the said scholarly work. The literature review of Alhumidi and Uba (2017) stressed that research is new to students and has many questions in their minds. Hence, a lack of the basic concepts of research can make students unmotivated, for they do not possess the foundation that facilitates the easy construction of paper for submission. When students know about doing research, they are driven to make it even without the teachers' instruction and discussion. Lack of knowledge tends to wane students' interest and affect their output (Alhumidi & Uba, 2017).

The development of writing skills among students starts from recognizing teachers' role in accomplishing a research output (Kuo, 2011; Kuo & Chiu, 2009). The same authors discovered a strong link between teacher-student interaction and the ability to achieve a given writing task. Therefore, it can be deduced that teacher competence matters not only in a research class but also in teacher support, as evidenced by the degree to which the teacher provides students with a comfortable atmosphere free from anxiety and worries.

In the study of Butt and Shams (2013), it was revealed that teachers are expected to involve in conducting research through deep evaluation and orientation about research methods, analysis, and discussion. Reading others' research is vital in learning, for teachers can teach students the proper format or writing of research. That is why, before teachers teach and handle students in a research writing class, they will have to equip themselves better through a teacher training program or do their research project

(Butt & Sams, 2013).

When teachers do not meet students' need for support, students' attitude toward the writing tasks becomes affected (Sanders-Reio et al., 2014; Hongisto & Sormunen, 2012). Most likely, students who have negative impressions towards their writing work tend to develop a distaste for the subject which demands writing outputs (Latif, 2007). Hence, it can be deduced that the amount of scaffolding by the teacher is commensurate with the expected performance in accomplishing the outputs in a Research subject.

Belgrave and Jules (2015); Memarpour et al. (2015); Magio et al. (2015) asseverated that for students to have a better research project, teachers should provide interesting strategies and methods. It is generally proven that students nowadays do not listen when they don't see the activities or lessons as captivating. Thus, teachers' instructional and emotional support is needed so that students do not feel anxious about doing research projects. Clarifying instruction and methods and giving guidance are ways teachers can support students. Ultimately, when students see that teachers do not show explicit interest in teaching the subject, students' focus and attitude tend to decrease.

Students' attitudes toward research writing have been deemed an outcome of teacher support (Sanders-Reio et al., 2014; Latif, 2007).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study investigated the role of teachers on students' attitudes toward research writing in Practical research 2 subject. Further, it aimed to, (1) determine

how students assess the teacher's support in writing the research paper, (2) identify the student's attitude toward the research subject, and (3) describe the teacher support on students' attitudes toward research writing.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed the probability sampling design specifically the simple random technique in the selection of the participants with the use of the Slovin formula. The respondents of this study were the 124 Grade 12 students of Gingoog City Comprehensive National High School who took up Practical Research 2.

To gather the data needed to answer the research questions, the researchers utilized questionnaires to complement with Focus Group Discussion. The FGD was a corroborative tool for analyzing data gathered from quantitative means. After conforming to all ethical considerations of the research, the researcher floated the questionnaires. The tools were retrieved after the specified time given to the students.

A focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted with 12 select student respondents (six students from each track) as a culminating task of the data-gathering procedure. It was held in the Audio-Visual Room to avoid interruptions in the recording and to provide an ambiance conducive to questioning and honest responses.

This researcher used modified questionnaire instruments. Instrument A determined the extent of teacher support. Instrument B specified students' attitudes toward research writing. All questions in the questionnaires come from the concepts discussed in the literature review. Survey questionnaires were piloted and subjected to a reliability test using SPSS 20. The reliability coefficient was .866 for teacher support and .756 for attitude toward research writing.

The researcher informed and secured permission from the school authorities to gather information from the students. After obtaining the necessary permissions, the questionnaires were floated to the target sample. After that, the data were tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted.

For problem numbers 1 and 2, the researcher used descriptive statistics analysis such as the mean, frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation distribution to determine the extent of student knowledge of research writing, teacher support, and student's attitude towards research writing.

For problem number 3, simple linear regression was utilized to determine the impact of the independent variables on the dependent variable.

All statistical treatments were carried out through the program SPSS 20.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Problem 1. How do students assess their teacher's support in writing the research paper?

Looking at the seven indicators, the students strongly agreed on two, which emphasized that they found their research advisers as teachers who adequately taught them the technicalities of research writing and gave them good examples ($M=1.49, 1.48$; $SD=.681, .704$). All the rest of the indicators received positive responses as all students agreed to statements relevant to the teachers' capacity to support the students in doing the scholarly task.

These descriptive results categorically imply that the students experienced strong teacher support in their research. A Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted to verify the quantitative information gathered through the questionnaires. One student said, *"I would say my teacher is good and competent."* It reflects the students' response to *indicator 1, my research adviser was able to explain the overall structure of the research clearly* ($M=1.49$; $SD=.681$). When the researcher made a follow-up question on how the teacher showed competence in guiding the students, one replied, *"The teacher gave us research writing guide by chapter."* It supports the students' affirmative response to *indicator 5, the textbook/teaching materials of my research adviser program were useful* ($M=1.70$; $SD=.675$).

One qualitative data says, *"The teacher discussed how the research process is done, gave us the chapter's guide, required us to submit the manuscript, checked and returned it to us for editing. We did this process in all the chapters of the research paper."* It proves the teacher's way of planning the procedures of the research process that students can easily deal with, as reflected in *indicator 4, my research adviser provided clear instruction on the writing of each section of the research* ($M=1.54$; $SD=.729$).

Since students in this study perceived their teacher support as strong, Hongisto and Sormunen (2012) indicated that one of the many reasons why students often get confused and anxious in research writing is that they are not provided with enough teacher support which can help them do their task observing right processes. Typically, when the research adviser cannot show their passion or interest, and does not produce materials for conducting the research paper, students are not attracted to research writing and will not be interested in pursuing it (Belgave & Jules, 2015).

Problem 2. How do students perceive their attitude toward research writing?

Most respondents (96 %) had a positive attitude toward research writing ($M=1.52$, $SD=0.48$). Looking at the eight indicators, the students strongly agreed on *indicator number 1, research is essential for me*, which obtained the highest rating ($M=1.32$; $SD=.549$). Qualitative response supports the finding as one student said, *"I think research writing is important because I can learn new things I have never known before."* It reflects the rating on *indicator 10, research can expand knowledge* ($M=1.35$; $SD=.653$) which students strongly agreed.

As revealed in the study of Wise (2013), students having a positive attitude toward research writing enables them to solve problems quickly and finish their research on time. A positive attitude is one of the key components for the students to strive and persist despite the difficulties.

Though numerous positive responses pertinent to their attitude toward research writing, the researcher wants to note that some students in the FGD stressed that research writing sometimes is burdensome. A student remarked, *"Many times, I was scolded by my parents because I could not attend to my assigned household chores or I always went home late."* Another advanced, *"I always had to do overtime after the end of the class."* The indicators reveal that some students regarded research writing as a *waste of time* ($M=1.65$; $SD=.699$).

Memarpour et al. (2015) confirmed that students tend to regard research writing as unimportant and attempt to abandon the work because the work and processes give them problems. Nonetheless, the study of Bandele and Adebulel (2013) asserted that some students view research subjects positively out of a sense of enjoyment and challenge. They advanced the idea that to sustain that kind of attitude of students. The teachers must captivate them by employing interesting strategies and methods, considering that students nowadays have a minimal listening attention span. Nonetheless, Bandele and Adebulel (2013) asserted that some students view research subjects positively out of satisfaction, which boosts their motivation to write research.

Problem 3. Does teacher support significantly impact their attitude toward research writing?

Another purpose of this study was to determine whether teacher support impacts the students' attitude toward research writing. Linear regression (LR) was used to compute the degree of impact of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

The R^2 value indicates that the regression model taking the variable *teacher support* as the predictor positively explains the variation of students' *attitudes*

towards research writing. The model is statistically significant given the P (0.000). It means that for every unit increase in teacher support, students' attitude toward research writing also increases by about 33.6 %. The model is summarized with this equation: $ARW = .710 + .503TS$.

Thus, the regression model rejects the null hypothesis, which means that teachers' support as perceived by the students impacts their attitude towards research writing.

Teachers' support is essential in developing the students' attitudes toward research. When teachers possess enough instructional competence to support students' research writing needs, students will also have a positive attitude in doing the task, develop their potential and willingness to listen and cooperate with their teacher in the research paper. It can also make their research strong (Butt & Shams, 2013).

The possibility of crafting a haphazard research output can also be attributed to the lack of support given by teachers. Belgrave and Jules (2015) asserted that the best papers naturally come from students who are motivated and appropriately guided by research advisers.

CONCLUSIONS

Research is an essential yardstick of the quality of the school. Some students love research, while others do not. Numerous factors may explain students' perception of research writing and their drive to pursue its completion. This study concluded that the teacher factor has a strong bearing on students' attitudes toward research. It reflects teachers' importance in ensuring that the schools produce quality research outputs. The teacher's crucial role in instilling in our students a love for research, as it is a helpful tool not only for their development but for the bigger society, should not be undermined. Therefore, teachers need to be conscious of providing students with holistic support, specifically instructional, to possess the sufficient motivation to sustain their interest in writing their papers. How they provide the necessary support depends upon them equipping themselves with the technical aspect of the scholarly work. It further emphasized the need for teachers to advance their capabilities before they can hope to motivate students to write.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The researchers arrived at the following recommendations for the entities: *To the School Administrators:* (1) Encourage teachers, especially teachers assigned to teach research subjects, to pursue higher studies. (2) If warranted, assign teachers with strong research backgrounds to handle research subjects. (3) Provide in-service training for teachers on research writing. *Future Researchers:* (1) Make or follow up research concerning students' attitudes toward research writing considering other variables.

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