

Awareness and Practices in Designing and Implementing Development Projects Among Secondary School Teachers Towards Coaching and Mentoring Projects

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Abstract

This study examined the level of awareness and practice of teachers in designing and implementing development projects, specifically research, innovation, and professional development (PD) initiatives, at Canabuan National High School as the basis for developing a coaching and mentoring program. Guided by the premise that awareness alone does not ensure successful implementation, the study was anchored on the concepts of professional support and participatory mentoring. A descriptive correlational research design employing quantitative and qualitative approaches was utilized. Total enumeration sampling was applied, involving all permanent teachers with at least one year of service during School Year 2024–2025. Data were collected using a validated researcher-made Likert-scale questionnaire, supplemented by open-ended questions, focused group discussions, and interviews. Quantitative data were analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and Pearson correlation, while qualitative responses were examined through open and axial coding. The findings showed that teachers possessed a very high level of awareness but a low level of practice in designing and implementing development projects. Most respondents had neither proposed nor implemented division-accepted research, innovation, or PD initiatives, and the relationship between awareness and practice was found to be very weak and statistically insignificant. The study further identified limited institutional support, heavy workload, inadequate mentoring, insufficient training opportunities, and limited access to research resources as major barriers to teachers' participation. Based on these findings, the study concluded that continuous capacity-building, structured mentoring, institutional support, and sustained professional development are essential to strengthen teachers' competencies and increase their engagement in development projects. The study recommends implementing school-based coaching and mentoring initiatives, including Project MENTOR, to enhance teachers' research capabilities. The study aligns with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4: Quality Education by promoting teacher capacity building and continuous professional learning. It also contributes to educational and institutional sustainability by strengthening school-based research culture and supporting continuous school improvement through effective development project implementation.

Keywords: Awareness, Coaching and Mentoring, Development Projects, Innovation, Professional Development, Research, Secondary School Teachers, Teacher Capacity Building

1. Introduction

Development projects in education, including research, innovation, and professional development (PD) initiatives, play a vital role in improving school performance and teacher effectiveness. However, despite teachers' awareness of research and development initiatives, the successful preparation and implementation of research and project proposals remain challenging due to technical, institutional, and workload-related constraints. At Canabuan National High School, these challenges have affected the implementation and approval of development projects despite the school's commitment to improving educational outcomes through its Enhanced School Improvement Plan (E-SIP). This study investigates teachers' level of awareness and practice in designing and implementing development projects as the basis for a coaching and mentoring program that strengthens research culture and project implementation.

1.1 Background of Teachers' Awareness and Practice in Designing and Implementing Development Projects at Canabuan National High School

Writing research and project proposals requires substantial knowledge, technical skills, and adherence to established standards (Castro, 2023). Castro (2023) further noted that teachers commonly experience difficulties in conceptualizing, writing, and preparing development project proposals because of gaps in knowledge and technical skills. Conducting educational research is likewise considered one of teachers' most demanding responsibilities because of workload and other professional obligations (Bullo et al., 2021). Although educators generally demonstrate high awareness of research, innovation, and professional development initiatives, implementation remains limited due to gaps between understanding

and practice (Garcia and Bual, 2022). Similarly, Garcia (2023) reported that educators' understanding of policies does not necessarily translate into effective implementation because of inadequate training and institutional support. Neethling and Nel (2021) further emphasized the importance of structured technical assistance in bridging theory and practice. At Canabuan National High School, programs and development projects are aligned with the Enhanced School Improvement Plan (E-SIP) to improve Access, Retention, Completion, and Achievement (ARCA) through initiatives focusing on access, equity, quality, resiliency, and enabling mechanisms. Despite systematic planning and implementation, analysis of previous Annual Improvement Plans revealed that only a limited number of research, innovation, and professional development proposals obtained division-level accreditation. Teachers demonstrated the ability to conceptualize projects but experienced difficulties in proposal preparation, approval requirements, and implementation. These findings prompted the conduct of this study to determine teachers' level of awareness and practice in designing and implementing development projects. The study also seeks to identify the need for technical assistance, mentoring, and structured interventions that will strengthen teachers' engagement in research, innovation, and professional development initiatives.

1.2 Related Literature on Teachers' Awareness, Practice, and Development Projects (Research, Innovation, and Professional Development Initiatives)

Related literature consistently indicates that awareness of research and development initiatives does not automatically result in successful implementation. Bullo et al. (2021) found that teachers recognize the importance of educational research but are constrained by workload, limited technical expertise, and time. Garcia and Bual (2022) likewise reported that although awareness among educators is high, institutional barriers and insufficient technical assistance restrict implementation. Garcia (2023) similarly observed that policy awareness alone is insufficient when institutional support and training are inadequate, a view reinforced by Guskey (2002) and Fullan (2007), who emphasized that effective practice requires sustained support, time, and incentives. Other studies identified institutional and personal barriers affecting teacher participation in research. Borg (2010) highlighted workload, limited motivation, and institutional constraints, while Tarrayo et al. (2021) reported that teachers' participation is influenced by research competence, workload, available time, and motivation. Galindo-Domínguez et al. (2022) further identified insufficient training, reluctance to leave comfort zones, and difficulty applying research findings in classroom practice as major challenges. The literature also underscores the value of coaching and mentoring in strengthening teachers' research capabilities. Culajara and Culajara (2024) demonstrated that structured mentoring improves teacher competencies through peer learning, feedback, and continuous guidance. Similarly, Jena and Barad (2024) emphasized that continuous professional development enables secondary school teachers to adapt to evolving educational demands through sustained learning and competency enhancement. Neethling and Nel (2021) emphasized participatory action learning and research-based mentoring to bridge theory and practice, while Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) stressed that continuous follow-up is necessary for professional learning to translate into actual practice. Collectively, these studies support the need for structured mentoring and institutional support to enhance teachers' capacity to design and implement development projects.

1.3 Local, National, and Global Context of Teachers' Development Projects in Research, Innovation, and Professional Development

At the local level, Canabuan National High School implements development projects through its Enhanced School Improvement Plan (E-SIP) and Annual Improvement Plan (AIP). Despite these initiatives, only a limited number of research, innovation, and professional development proposals have achieved division-level accreditation, indicating challenges in proposal preparation, approval, and implementation. At the national level, the Department of Education supports teacher-led research and innovation through capacity-building initiatives and funding opportunities such as the Basic Education Research Fund (BERF), which provides financial assistance and institutional mechanisms to encourage teachers to undertake education research (Department of Education [DepEd], 2015). Nevertheless, teachers continue to experience difficulties in proposal development, approval procedures, and project implementation, demonstrating the continuing need for technical guidance and mentoring. Globally, studies consistently report that although teachers recognize the value of educational research and professional development, effective implementation remains constrained by workload, insufficient training, institutional barriers, limited technical expertise, and inadequate mentoring (Bullo et al. (2021); Garcia and Bual (2022); Garcia (2023); Borg (2010); Tarrayo et al. (2021); Galindo-Domínguez et al. (2022)). These common challenges emphasize the importance of sustained institutional support and coaching programs.

1.4 Theoretical and Conceptual Basis of Teachers' Awareness and Practice in Designing and Implementing Development Projects

The study is anchored on the premise that awareness alone does not ensure successful implementation of development projects. Guskey (2002) and Fullan (2007) emphasized that professional knowledge must be reinforced through adequate support, sufficient time, and appropriate incentives to produce meaningful practice. Likewise, Neethling and Nel (2021) highlighted participatory learning and research-based mentoring as effective approaches for bridging the gap between theoretical understanding and practical application. The conceptual framework of the study illustrates the relationship between teachers' profiles, their level of awareness and practice in designing and implementing development projects, and the development of a coaching and mentoring program. The framework indicates that although teachers demonstrate high

awareness of research, innovation, and professional development initiatives, their actual practice remains limited because of technical and institutional challenges. These findings support the development of a structured coaching and mentoring intervention to improve teachers' competencies in proposal preparation and project implementation (Bullo et al. (2021); Garcia and Bual (2022); Garcia (2023); Borg (2010); Tarrayo et al. (2021); Galindo-Domínguez et al. (2022); Culajara & Culajara (2024); Neethling and Nel (2021); Darling-Hammond et al. (2017)).

1.5 Research Gaps and Rationale for the Coaching and Mentoring Project on Teachers' Development Projects

Existing literature consistently demonstrates that teachers possess substantial awareness of research, innovation, and professional development initiatives; however, translating this awareness into effective practice remains a persistent challenge. Previous studies primarily attribute this gap to workload, limited technical competence, insufficient training, institutional barriers, and inadequate mentoring (Bullo et al. (2021); Garcia and Bual (2022); Garcia (2023); Borg (2010); Tarrayo et al. (2021); Galindo-Domínguez et al. (2022)). Within the context of Canabuan National High School, limited division-level approval of development projects further highlights the need to examine teachers' awareness and actual practice in designing and implementing research, innovation, and professional development initiatives. The findings provide the basis for developing a structured coaching and mentoring program that addresses identified needs and strengthens teachers' capability to implement quality development projects.

1.6 Alignment of the Study with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4: Quality Education

This study aligns primarily with SDG 4 – Quality Education by supporting teacher capacity building in research, innovation, and professional development. Strengthening teachers' competencies in designing and implementing development projects contributes to improving educational quality through continuous professional learning and evidence-informed school improvement. This alignment is supported by the study's focus on enhancing teachers' awareness, practice, and institutional support for research and development initiatives.

1.7 Importance of the Study to Educational and Institutional Sustainability through Teachers' Development Projects

The study contributes primarily to educational sustainability by promoting continuous teacher development through coaching, mentoring, and technical assistance in research, innovation, and professional development initiatives. This is consistent with Prudente et al. (2024), whose systematic review emphasized that sustained professional development programs contribute significantly to improving teacher effectiveness and educational quality in the Philippine context. It also supports institutional sustainability by strengthening school-based research culture, improving project implementation processes, and encouraging systematic professional growth among educators. These contributions are consistent with the study's objective of enhancing teachers' capacity to design and implement development projects that support continuous school improvement.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study utilized a descriptive correlational research design to describe the variables and determine the relationship between teachers' level of awareness and level of practice in designing and implementing development projects without manipulating the variables. The descriptive component characterized the participants and their responses, while the correlational component examined the association between awareness and practice (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Quantitative data were analyzed using weighted mean and Pearson correlation (r), whereas qualitative responses from survey questionnaires, interviews, and focused group discussions were analyzed through inductive thematic analysis using Quirkos. The findings guided the development of a coaching and mentoring project for teachers.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at Canabuan National High School. The school served as the research setting for assessing teachers' awareness and practice in designing and implementing development projects and for identifying appropriate interventions to strengthen research, innovation, and professional development initiatives.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents were the permanent teachers of Canabuan National High School during School Year 2024–2025 who had at least one year of teaching experience in the Department of Education. These teachers handled advisory classes and various teaching and coordination responsibilities, making them appropriate participants for assessing awareness and practice in development projects.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study employed total enumeration sampling, wherein all qualified permanent teachers with at least one year of service in the Department of Education were included as respondents. This sampling technique ensured complete representation

of the target population and allowed the study to obtain comprehensive information regarding teachers' awareness and practice in designing and implementing development projects.

2.5 Research Instrument

A researcher-made Likert-scale questionnaire was used to gather data on the demographic profile of the respondents and their level of awareness and practice in designing and implementing development projects. The instrument was developed to measure teachers' competencies in research, innovation, and professional development initiatives. It underwent validation by the Schools Division Research Committee (SDRC) under the Planning and Research Unit of the School Governance and Operations Division (SGOD) and an external validator, an Assistant Professor III from Nueva Vizcaya State University–Bayombong Campus, to ensure its validity and suitability for the study.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

After identifying the participants, the researcher conducted an orientation to explain the objectives of the study. Permission to conduct the research was secured from the school head before administering the validated questionnaire to the respondents. The questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data on teachers' awareness and practice in designing and implementing development projects. Following the quantitative data collection, open-ended questions were administered, and focused group discussions (FGDs) and interviews were conducted to obtain qualitative data and validate the participants' responses. Throughout the data collection process, appropriate research protocols and procedures were observed to ensure the orderly conduct of the study.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

Frequency and percentage distribution were used to describe the respondents' profile. Mean and standard deviation were employed to determine the level of awareness and practice in designing and implementing development projects, while Pearson product-moment correlation (Pearson r) was used to determine the relationship between teachers' level of awareness and level of practice. For the qualitative component, responses from the open-ended questions, interviews, and focused group discussions were analyzed using open and axial coding. Open coding identified distinct concepts and categories from the data, whereas axial coding established relationships among these concepts to ensure accurate interpretation of the responses (Creswell, 2013). The qualitative findings were organized into themes reflecting individual factors, environmental and institutional factors, structural and policy-related factors, and recommendations.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical standards throughout the research process in accordance with the Research Management Guidelines under DepEd Order No. 16, s. 2017. Prior to data collection, approval to conduct the study was obtained from the school head, and informed consent was secured from all participants. Teachers participated voluntarily after being informed of the study's purpose, procedures, and their rights as respondents. Confidentiality and privacy were strictly maintained, and all collected information was used solely for research purposes. The study observed the non-disruption-of-classes policy under DepEd Order No. 9, s. 2015 and complied with the provisions of the Data Privacy Act of 2012 in the collection, use, storage, and protection of participants' personal information. The researcher likewise declared that no conflict of interest existed that could influence the conduct or findings of the study.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Teachers' Profile

3.1.1 Years of Service in the Department of Education

Most of the respondents had ten or more years of service in the Department of Education, followed by those with five to nine years of service, while the smallest group had one to four years of experience. This indicates that the teaching workforce is generally experienced and has been in the profession for several years. The distribution suggests that the school has a relatively stable and experienced faculty. Despite their years of service, experience alone does not necessarily translate into active participation in research, innovation, and professional development initiatives, highlighting the need for continued institutional support and capacity-building.

3.1.2 Proposed and Division-Permitted Innovation and Professional Development Initiatives

The findings revealed that almost all teachers had not proposed any division-permitted innovation or professional development initiative, while only one respondent had submitted a single proposal. No respondent had proposed more than one initiative. These results indicate a very low level of participation in innovation and professional development projects. Limited awareness, inadequate institutional support, heavy workload, time constraints, financial limitations, and insufficient motivation may have contributed to teachers' low involvement. The findings emphasize the need for training, mentoring, technical assistance, and recognition programs to encourage greater participation.

3.1.3 Implemented and Division-Accepted Innovation and Professional Development Initiatives

The results showed that nearly all respondents had no implemented and division-accepted innovation or professional development initiatives, with only one teacher having successfully implemented a project. The low implementation rate suggests that teachers continue to encounter challenges in completing innovation and professional development initiatives. Limited institutional support, insufficient training, inadequate resources, complex approval procedures, and competing professional responsibilities may have discouraged teachers from pursuing project implementation. These findings highlight the importance of strengthening administrative support, mentoring, and capacity-building programs to promote educational innovation and professional growth.

3.1.4 Proposed and Division-Permitted Research Projects

The majority of respondents had not proposed any division-permitted research project, while only one teacher had submitted a research proposal. None of the respondents proposed more than one research project. The findings demonstrate very limited participation in research activities. Factors such as limited research competence, institutional barriers, workload, time constraints, lack of funding, and insufficient incentives may have reduced teachers' willingness to engage in research. The results indicate the need for research training, mentoring, and stronger institutional support to encourage research participation and evidence-based educational practice.

3.1.5 Implemented and Division-Accepted Research Projects

None of the respondents had an implemented and division-accepted research project, indicating that no completed research initiative had been formally accepted at the division level. This finding reflects a complete absence of successful research implementation among the respondents. Challenges related to research skills, funding, institutional support, workload, and complex approval procedures may have hindered teachers from completing research projects. These results underscore the importance of sustained mentoring, administrative assistance, and research capacity-building programs to establish a stronger culture of educational research.

3.1.6 Research, Innovation, and Professional Development Training Attended

Most respondents had attended three training sessions related to research, innovation, and professional development initiatives, while a considerable number had not attended any training. Only a few had participated in more than three training activities. Although many teachers had received training, participation in development projects remained limited. This suggests that training alone is insufficient to improve implementation without continuous institutional support. These findings are consistent with Guskey (2002), who emphasized that professional development must be sustained and reinforced through institutional support. Borg (2010) likewise noted that limited time, insufficient motivation, and perceptions regarding the difficulty of research reduce teachers' engagement despite training. Desimone (2009) further explained that professional development should be interactive, collaborative, and content-specific, while Darling-Hammond, Hyler, and Gardner (2017) highlighted the importance of mentoring, institutional support, and access to research resources in translating professional learning into actual practice.

3.2 Teachers' Level of Awareness and Practice in Designing and Implementing Development Projects

3.2.1 Awareness and Practice in Designing and Implementing Research, Innovation, and Professional Development Initiatives

The findings revealed that teachers demonstrated a very high level of awareness but a low level of practice in all indicators of designing and implementing development projects. Respondents showed consistently high awareness in conceptualizing innovation and professional development programs, preparing proposals, implementing research and innovation projects, reviewing related literature, defining objectives, selecting appropriate research methodologies, setting measurable goals, complying with division memoranda, and sharing research results. Oestar and Marzo (2022) likewise observed that teachers often experience challenges in research methodology selection, data analysis, and interpretation despite possessing adequate theoretical knowledge. Despite this high level of awareness, the overall level of practice remained low, indicating that teachers possessed adequate knowledge but experienced difficulty applying it in actual research, innovation, and professional development activities. The disparity between awareness and practice suggests that teachers continue to encounter barriers that limit the application of their knowledge. Limited institutional support, insufficient technical training, complex compliance requirements, and inadequate resources appear to hinder the implementation of development projects. These findings are consistent with Garcia and Bual (2022), who reported that although awareness among educators was very high, actual practice remained inconsistent. Likewise, Garcia (2023) found that teachers' understanding of educational policies did not necessarily result in effective implementation because of inadequate training and institutional support. Similarly, Neethling and Nel (2021) emphasized that bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and actual practice requires participatory learning, continuous mentoring, and sustained institutional support. The findings indicate the need for strengthened capacity-building programs, mentoring initiatives, collaborative research opportunities, and streamlined administrative processes to enable teachers to translate their awareness into meaningful practice.

3.3 Relationship Between Teachers' Awareness and Practice in Designing and Implementing Development Projects

3.3.1 Relationship Between Awareness and Practice

The analysis revealed a very weak negative relationship between teachers' level of awareness and their level of practice in designing and implementing research, innovation, and professional development initiatives. The relationship was not statistically significant, indicating that teachers' high level of awareness did not correspond to a higher level of practice. These findings suggest that awareness alone is insufficient to improve teachers' engagement in development projects. External factors such as limited institutional support, workload, inadequate time, and insufficient incentives may hinder the application of teachers' knowledge. This finding supports Guskey (2002) and Fullan (2007), who emphasized that awareness alone does not ensure practice unless teachers receive proper support, time, and incentives. Likewise, Borg (2010) reported that institutional constraints, workload, and lack of motivation limit teachers' participation in research, while Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) stressed that professional learning requires continuous follow-up and structured support to become effective practice.

3.4 Contributory Factors Affecting Teachers' Awareness and Practice

3.4.1 Institutional, Professional, and Capacity-Related Challenges

The qualitative findings identified three major factors that contributed to teachers' low level of awareness and practice in development projects: lack of institutional support, overwhelming workload with limited opportunities, and the need for guidance and skill development. These findings are supported by Zurbano (2025), who found that teacher motivation and institutional support are significant determinants of teachers' engagement in research activities. Respondents reported limited updates on research policies, low prioritization of research, innovation, and professional development initiatives, excessive teaching and paperwork responsibilities, and inadequate opportunities to participate in research. Many also expressed the need for step-by-step coaching and continuous mentoring in preparing research and development project proposals. These findings indicate that institutional and professional barriers significantly influence teachers' participation in development projects. Similar challenges were identified by Bullo et al. (2021) and Garcia and Bual (2022), who reported that institutional barriers, time constraints, and inadequate technical assistance restrict teachers' engagement in research. Borg (2010) and Tarrayo et al. (2021) likewise highlighted workload and unclear research processes as major obstacles, while Garcia (2023) and Galindo-Domínguez et al. (2022) emphasized the importance of training and institutional support in improving implementation. The respondents' experiences further demonstrate the need for structured mentoring, technical assistance, and administrative support to strengthen teachers' research capabilities.

3.5 Support Initiatives Needed to Improve Teachers' Awareness and Practice

3.5.1 Capacity Building, Mentoring, and Institutional Support

The respondents identified several initiatives that could improve their awareness and practice in designing and implementing development projects. These included school-based training, research writing workshops, Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions, mentoring and technical assistance, collaboration with colleagues, dedicated time for research, financial and institutional support, access to research resources and sample proposals, and step-by-step guidance throughout project development and implementation. These recommendations are consistent with Labastida et al. (2021), who highlighted capacity-building programs as effective strategies for strengthening teachers' competencies and research engagement. The findings emphasize that strengthening teachers' competencies requires comprehensive institutional support beyond conventional training activities. Respondents highlighted the importance of continuous mentoring, collaborative learning, adequate resources, and administrative assistance in developing research capabilities. This supports the findings of Laureano and Manalang (2023), who reported that effective coaching and mentoring practices strengthen teachers' professional competence and encourage continuous improvement. These findings are consistent with Bullo et al. (2021), who emphasized the value of structured training in improving teachers' research engagement. Culajara & Culajara (2024) and Neethling and Nel (2021) likewise underscored the effectiveness of structured mentoring and participatory learning in translating knowledge into practice. Garcia and Bual (2022) further emphasized the influence of institutional leadership and supportive policies in promoting research culture, while Guskey (2002) and Fullan (2007) argued that awareness must be reinforced by sustained administrative support. Similarly, Garcia (2023) and Galindo-Domínguez et al. (2022) highlighted the importance of providing access to research resources and technical assistance, whereas Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) stressed that continuous professional development and follow-up mentoring are essential for sustaining teachers' engagement in research, innovation, and professional development initiatives.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concluded that although most teachers possessed considerable teaching experience, their participation in research, innovation, and professional development initiatives remained minimal, resulting in a gap between their level of awareness and actual practice in designing and implementing development projects. This gap was associated with limited training, inadequate mentoring, insufficient institutional support, workload demands, unfamiliarity with research policies, financial constraints, limited access to resources, and the complexity of research processes. The findings indicate that strengthening teachers' competencies through continuous capacity-building, structured mentoring, and institutional support

is essential to improve their engagement in development projects.

Schools should strengthen teachers' participation in research, innovation, and professional development initiatives by providing incentives, recognition, continuous capacity-building programs, structured mentoring, proposal-writing and research methodology training, simplified research guidelines, financial and institutional support, and access to research resources. Research and professional development initiatives should also be integrated into teachers' Individual Plans for Professional Development (IPPD), supported through collaborative research, peer-support groups, workload adjustments, and streamlined project approval processes. In addition, school-based initiatives such as Project MENTOR should be sustained to provide continuous coaching, mentoring, and technical assistance in proposal development and project implementation.

This study was limited to assessing the awareness and practice of teachers in designing and implementing development projects within Canabuan National High School. The findings reflect only the experiences and responses of the teacher-participants included in the study and served as the basis for the proposed interventions and dissemination activities. Consequently, the results may be most applicable to the study setting and similar educational contexts.

Compliance with ethical standards

This study was conducted in accordance with applicable ethical standards and established research protocols. Ethical principles were observed throughout the research process by obtaining the necessary permission prior to data collection, securing the voluntary participation and informed consent of all participants, maintaining the confidentiality and privacy of the information collected, and ensuring that all data were used solely for research purposes. The study also adhered to the relevant research management, non-disruption of classes, and data privacy policies governing the conduct of educational research.

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