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BRIDGING THE GAP: RESEARCH THEORIES AND PRACTICE

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ABSTRACT
The association between research theories and practices is critical in the advancement of knowledge and improvement of methodologies in various fields such as education, management, supervision and social sciences. This study described and examined the alignment of theoretical frameworks with practical applications to enhance the effectiveness of researches and their implications. It utilized a descriptive correlational research design. Thus, it was participated by 200 purposively selected public school teachers in the Philippines. The study used a researcher-made survey-questionnaire. Results of the study showed that teachers strongly agreed that connection of research theories and practice were significant elements to institute highly impactful research studies in terms of alignment, feedback loop and interdisciplinary collaboration. Also, the study revealed that teachers strongly agreed that research practices significantly involved systematic data collection, comprehensive data analysis and sound discussion of findings. Hence, the study found out that there was a positive correlation between research theories in terms of alignment and research practice in terms of data analysis which suggested as teachers align their teaching practices with established research theories, their proficiency in data analysis also improves. Further, the results showed that teachers' comprehensive understanding on formulating theoretical frameworks enhanced teachers' ability to engage in rigorous data analysis which was critical for the evaluation on the effectiveness of their teaching practices.

Keywords:
Research, theories, practice, alignment, sound discussion, findings, depth, quality, training program

INTRODUCTION

Research is an indispensable part of advanced studies. The value of research lies in every aspect of human's daily living. With the technical and scientific credence of research, not all individuals specially in the academic communities have strongly expressed their willingness to undertake research works. In fact, with the long lines of published studies, there are different levels of anxiety where academicians encountered when conducting a research work primarily because of its highly scientific structure and technical processes. While others view research work as tedious and difficult scholarly work, there are also great numbers of academicians are fascinated in conducting research as their way of expressing their thoughts, ideas and scientific expressions. Today, among academic institutions, conducting research becomes a huge factor not only for promotional opportunities in their career but also an extensive manner of discovering the truth, answering identified problems and contributing to the furtherance of their respective disciplines. It is in this line, in educational settings, the conduct of educational researches has been one of the major criteria in determining the performance and contributions of teachers in the field of education. Administration of educational researches lies heavily on the current phenomena or conditions which teachers observed as they practice the teaching professions.

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Educational settings and the conditions governing the educational system brought serious concerns for teachers and that they considered these conditions as threshold to pursue a research work. Teachers administer research works in order to significantly contribute for the development of educational system. As research work presents data and scientific interpretations, these serve as logical baseline in order for teachers, create a research-based and highly impactful teaching and learning program interventions that may help not only their learners but also, the entire educational system, to address certain concerns as experienced by teachers in a contextualized educational settings.

In this line, the conduct of research does not only end in understanding the theories, there are strong relations between research theories and practice. The value of structural framework has a significant contribution for the formulation and production of highly impactful research works. Research theories are used in quantitative studies whereas the researcher tests such theory if it validates the conditions they observed in the current educational landscape or tests such theory if it really evident in the conditions or contextualized settings. The researchers observed as they have experienced writing research works, numbers of teachers have misinterpreted the use of theories which are operated within a certain research work. In addition, there are also teachers and graduate school students, when they are conducting researches, they only value research theories as way of presenting only certain theories without emphasis of testing such operated theories or validate the same. These conditions observed by the researchers ignited their interests to pursue this study.

All researchers should consider the theoretical basis for their studies very early in the planning stage. Theories can be applied at many stages of quantitative studies including in the rationale of the study, defining the aim and research questions, considering methodological stance and developing the data collection and generation (Freeman, 2019). The challenge of evaluation of theories in research caused by the prevalence of prescriptive theories and descriptive use of theory that even the most detailed use of theory does not currently meet (King & Alkin, 2018). Focusing on new constructs, theoretical propositions involving antecedents and consequences have implicated the validity and limitations of the study (Zeithaml et al., 2019). On one hand, theories is a systematic exposition of why it is believed in a research study. The notion of research-informed teaching practice corresponds on the use of research evidence (Brown & Flood, 2020). Also, theoretical framework is a contribution for guiding a highly impactful educational researches. The framework shows a actual integration of findings into practice (Aparicio et al., 2016).

Most published studies focused on the examination of theoretical framework and its structural value in a research study. The researchers examined that there are less number of researches that examined how theoretical frameworks practically implicated the current practices influencing a system or an organization. So, this study filled this gap. Consequently, this study described and examined the alignment of theoretical frameworks with practical applications to enhance the effectiveness of researches and their implications.

OBJECTIVES

This study described and examined the alignment of theoretical frameworks with practical applications to enhance the effectiveness of researches and their implications. Specifically, it answered the following questions:

1. How the connection of research theories to the current teaching practices in the formulation of current research studies be examined in terms of alignment, feedback loop and interdisciplinary collaboration?
2. How teachers' research practices be examined in terms of data collection, data analysis and discussion of findings?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the connection of research theories to the current teaching practice and the teachers' research practices?

Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between the connection of research theories to the current teaching practices and the teachers' research practices?

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METHODOLOGY

This study utilized descriptive correlational research in order to describe and examine the alignment of theoretical frameworks with practical applications to enhance the effectiveness of researches and their implications. Apparently, the study used a researcher-made survey-questionnaire which was subjected to content validation and reliability test. Thus, it used a 4-Likert Scale. The developed survey-questionnaire contained two (2) parts. For part, it presented items relating to the connection of research theories to the current teaching practices in the formulation of current studies while part 2, contained items relating to the teachers' research practices. The items under part 1 obtained a Cronbach Alpha result of a=.712 while items under part gained a Cronbach Alpha result of a=.715, both were verbally described as "acceptable." On one hand, the study selected the participation of 200 public school teachers in the Philippines. The researchers used purposive sampling technique. As to the data analysis employed in the study, the researchers used mean, standard deviation and general weighted mean in order to examine the connection of research theories to the current teaching practices in the formulation of current studies and also, to examine the teachers' research practices. Further, the researchers used Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r) in order to examine the relationship between the connection of research theories to the current teaching practice and the teachers' research practices. In the actual administration of the study, the researchers used a Google Form link which was sent to the respondents' email addresses. Then, after all the respondents have successfully filled the form, the researchers organized and prepared the raw data for statistical computation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research theories present the fundamental principles which guide researchers to inform comprehensive and highly credible inquiry. Commonly, in a research work, research theories are presented using frameworks that are created formally by the researchers based on the theories' propositions. This study examined teachers' examinations through their perception relative to the value of these theories as they are effectively presented and translated into the teaching practices. Teachers often disregarded the value of research theories in the conduct of educational researches and other education-related studies. There seemed to be a complex structure which teachers ought to follow when translating such theories into teaching practice based their research works' findings. The results presented teachers' examination based on their perception in relation to the alignment of theoretical frameworks with practical applications to enhance the effectiveness of researches and their implications.

1. **Connection of Research Theories to Current Teaching Practices in the Formulation of Current Research Studies.** The result showed that alignment obtained the highest mean score of 3. 64, described as strongly agree. Also, feedback loop gained a mean of score of 3.56 and interdisciplinary collaboration gained a mean score of 3.48, both described as strongly agree. The result showed that teachers' strongly agreed that a significant connection between theoretical frameworks and their practical applications in educational settings were an important practical value of research works. In addition, the results further indicated that teachers were not only aware on the propositions, value and use of the theories they used in their research works, but they also effectively integrate them into the comprehensive presentation of their research methodologies, making their research work, well-founded and structured. On the other hand, the result also showed that teachers emphasized the contribution of an effective feedback in refining their practices based on the theoretical validation and tests made as presented in the results of the studies they have conducted. Further, the results also indicated that teachers strongly agreed on the value of research theories imposing strong interdisciplinary collaboration across disciplines. The results suggested that teachers' strongly agreed on the value of research theories in their current teaching practices as they formulate their education-related studies. Results of the study supported the study of Risan (2020) which concluded that creating theory-practice linkages emanated from strong alignment of research theories.

2. **Teachers' Research Practices**. Results showed that data analysis obtained the highest mean score of 3.78, described as strongly agree. Meanwhile, results also revealed that data collection gained a

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mean score of 3.62 while discussion of findings gained a mean score of 3.60, both were described as strongly agree. The results implied that teachers strongly agreed that they immensely emphasized their ability to analyze the data. Such emphasis on data analysis revealed that teachers reflected comprehensively on the critical impact in interpreting research outcomes and providing informed presentation. Further, the results showed that teachers strongly agreed that they recognized the importance of gathering relevant information to meet their established research objectives. Similarly, the results showed that teachers' strongly agreed that they also put strong emphasis in the comprehensive presentation and discussion of the research works' findings. Thus, results revealed that teachers strongly agreed on the consistency and rigorous practices they have undertaken in order to create highly impactful research that could effectively contribute to their research competence as well as to their teaching practices. Results of the study supported the study of Tarrayo et al. (2020) which concluded that teachers had positive perception towards research and high receptivity to and interest. Similar study showed that teachers had high level of engagement in translating their research findings into practice.

3. **Significant Relationship Between the Connection of Research Theories to the Current Teaching Practices and the Teachers' Research Practices**. The results showed that was a positive correlation between research theories in terms of alignment and research practice in terms of data analysis (r=.512). This indicated that as teachers align their teaching practices with established research theories, their proficiency in data analysis also improves. Further, the results showed that teachers' comprehensive understanding on formulating theoretical frameworks enhanced teachers' ability to engage in rigorous data analysis which was critical for the evaluation on the effectiveness of their teaching practices. Additionally, the positive correlation also implied that teachers who actively integrate research theories into their practices are more likely to adopt more systematic approaches to data analysis. Results of the study supported the study of Korthagen (2010) which revealed that integrated approach was needed to fill the gap between theory and practice under a research-based intervention. The study practically implicated that strengthening the connection through program intervention in the form of training may lead to the development of educational outcomes as teachers would be more exposed at utilizing their researches to inform effective and efficient teaching processes.

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CONCLUSION

The study found out that teachers strongly agreed that connection of research theories and practice were significant elements to institute highly impactful research studies in terms of alignment, feedback loop and interdisciplinary collaboration. Also, the study revealed that teachers strongly agreed that research practices significantly involved systematic data collection, comprehensive data analysis and sound discussion of findings. Hence, the study found out that there was a positive correlation between research theories in terms of alignment and research practice in terms of data analysis which suggested as teachers align their teaching practices with established research theories, their proficiency in data analysis also improves. Further, the results showed that teachers' comprehensive understanding on formulating theoretical frameworks enhanced teachers' ability to engage in rigorous data analysis which was critical for the evaluation on the effectiveness of their teaching practices.

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