

The Crucial Role of School Leaders' Administrative Support in the Research Capability of Teachers

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ABSTRACT

Research on educators' research capability has surged in recent years, as scholars and practitioners remain intrigued by how teachers develop investigative skills alongside pedagogical mastery. To ensure evidence-based decision-making, policy formulation, and program development, school leaders must inspire teachers to contribute empirical evidence. However, previous literature has often neglected the link between teachers' research capability and the administrative support provided by school leaders. To address this gap, an explanatory study was conducted to examine the crucial role of administrative support in enhancing these capabilities. The study was conducted in the Quezon II District of Bukidnon, Philippines, and involved 151 teachers who voluntarily responded to survey instruments. After analyzing datasets using descriptive and inferential statistics, the findings indicated that while administrative support was frequently observed across all dimensions, teachers demonstrated only moderate proficiency in writing research proposals and publishable papers. The tested models revealed a nuanced relationship between support and capability, and the dimensions of administrative support did not significantly explain research capability when analyzed individually. When these dimensions were integrated into hypothesized models, administrative support significantly predicted teachers' research capability, accounting for 10.9%-12.2% of the variance in research capability. Ultimately, school leaders' administrative support plays a vital role in enhancing teachers' capability in writing research proposals and publishable papers. The study infers that each component of support is indispensable; only through a holistic approach can school leaders effectively elevate teachers' research capabilities.

Keywords: administrative support, research capability, explanatory analysis, public school teachers, school leaders

In recent years, studies on educators' research capability have increased exponentially (Bonganciso, 2024; Gonzales et al., 2020; Manila et al., 2022; Pilongo, 2020; Tolentino, 2021; Weaver et al., 2013; Whitton et al., 2022). This trend reflects the growing interest among scholars and practitioners in understanding how teachers develop research capability within their professional environment alongside pedagogical mastery. Research capability, as a construct, refers to individuals' potential to conduct effective, efficient, and high-quality research (Caingcoy, 2020; Pilongo, 2020). This capability evolves as teachers accrue experience and participate in professional development, but it may eventually plateau at a certain stage in their careers. During their most productive years, school leaders can harness teachers' research capability, particularly for innovative school initiatives.

Research capability is vital to teachers' engagement in scientific inquiry and their overall teaching practice (Alake-Tuenter et al., 2012; Enderle et al., 2014; Hall, 2009; Herrington et al., 2016; Southerland et al., 2016). Specifically, Hall (2009) establishes a clear connection between research capability and active involvement in scholarly work. Building on this, Southerland et al. (2016) argue that relevant research experiences serve as a powerful force for informing a teacher's classroom work. Furthermore, Herrington et al. (2016) claim that these experiences significantly influence middle and high

school science teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and values regarding teaching science as an inquiry-based approach. Ultimately, when teachers demonstrate robust research capabilities, their engagement in scholarly endeavors yields numerous benefits, including personal growth, pedagogical improvement, and student impact.

Writing a research proposal may be easier than writing a publishable paper, as the latter requires a distinct set of knowledge and skills rooted in both science and art. Pickett and McDonnell (2017) highlight six areas that every author should be keen on when writing a publishable paper: 1) A well-written and easy-to-understand story, 2) A well-supported, robust, and reliable message and conclusions, 3) Appropriate and robust methodology and data analysis, 4) Clear explanations of how the article addresses existing knowledge gaps, 5) A comprehensive and up-to-date list of references, and 6) A message that is relevant to a wider audience.

Administrative support is pivotal to teachers' research capacity, particularly in tasks such as writing research proposals and producing publishable papers. This support may manifest in various forms, including emotional, informational, appraisal, or instrumental aspects (Watson, 2021). Institutionalizing research within the basic education sector is essential for supporting policy-making, decision-making, and program or project development. Consequently, every school system requires well-rounded leaders who can inspire teachers to embrace the responsibility of teacher-researchers. School leaders can cultivate an enabling environment that fosters collegial support and collaboration, especially in research proposal writing and paper publication, thereby embodying research leadership themselves (Turner, 2020).

Garrido et al. (2019) outlined 10 rules for providing optimal administrative support to team researchers, advocating for the enhancement of soft skills, proactive decision-making, effective communication, collaboration, curiosity about science, responsible data management, participation in onboarding processes, appreciation of cultural diversity, fair treatment, and active team participation. Adhering to these rules may help school leaders advance teachers' research capabilities.

However, previous studies have often overlooked the vital role of school leaders' administrative support in developing teachers' research capability. Research in this area has primarily focused on either research capability or administrative support independently, without establishing a clear link between these two essential constructs in the fields of research and school management. Consequently, administrative support has been largely absent from prior research on capability. For instance, administrative support has been identified as a predictor of teachers' job satisfaction (Tickle et al., 2011) and intent to stay (Peronto, 2013; Tickle et al., 2011; Yilmaz, 2016), while Brown (2019) examined administrative support in the context of implementing a teacher evaluation system.

In the Philippines, research capability has been extensively explored, with studies investigating its driving forces (Wong, 2019), correlates, determinants (Caingcoy, 2020), and mere assessment (Janer et al., 2022) via self-reporting. Wong's (2019) study found that institutional support improved research culture but not teachers' research capability. Only one study that the researcher is aware of reported that management support can lead to higher research capabilities among elementary school teachers (Gonzales et al., 2020). Hence, there is a pressing need to explore this promising avenue of research.

This explanatory study aims to examine the crucial role of administrative support from school leaders in shaping teachers' research capability, specifically in writing research proposals and producing publishable papers. This investigation seeks to uncover compelling evidence regarding the significance of administrative support in advancing teachers' research capability. The findings from this study will not only inform current and future school administrators about the importance of consistently providing administrative support to teachers but also guide curriculum developers and graduate program implementers in integrating advanced research knowledge and skills necessary for preparing future school leaders. The study aims to test the following null hypothesis:

The administrative support provided by school leaders does not significantly explain teachers' research capability in terms of writing proposals and publishing papers.

Framework of the Study

The study drew inspiration from previous research conducted by Agatep and Villalobos (2020), who investigated the research capability of graduate students concerning the composition of research proposals and the production of publishable papers. A component of their inquiry focused on the availability of administrative support.

Research capability is defined as the potential of individuals to undertake effective, efficient, and high-quality research (Caingcoy, 2020). It entails one's ability to "solve problems in a systematic way that brings transformation" (Ormond & Williams, 2013, p. 24). Both the writing of research proposals and the development of publishable papers fall under this conceptualization.

Additionally, the present research is rooted in Billingsley et al.'s (2020) assertion that teachers often work within supportive environments cultivated by supportive leadership. These studies lay the groundwork for the current investigation,

in which supportive leadership is posited to equip teachers with the emotional, appraisal, instrumental, and informational support essential to their engagement in research. Given that research endeavors are demanding and exacting, teachers must receive support from authoritative figures to thrive in their scholarly pursuits.

Watson (2021) delineated four distinct dimensions of administrative support: 1) emotional support refers to acknowledging teachers' work, valuing teacher input, and encouraging collegiality; 2) appraisal support denotes setting clear expectations and providing clear, consistent feedback while maintaining fairness in evaluation; 3) instrumental support pertains to providing necessary resources and assisting with classroom management while enforcing established norms; and 4) informational support includes providing useful information to teachers, sharing teachers' needs with authorities, and communicating a clear school vision.

METHODOLOGY

This research employed a predictive or explanatory design to examine the role of administrative support provided by school leaders in teachers' research capability in writing research proposals and publishable papers. Such a method analyzed the variances in teachers' research capability attributed to the administrative support of school leaders. The study was conducted in the Quezon II District of the Division of Bukidnon, Philippines, involving 15 schools and 247 teachers. The desired sample size was 171 teachers; however, only 151 teachers responded to the invitation and signed the informed consent forms. These individuals were selected using simple random sampling based on calculated values from a sampling table.

Data Collection

The study utilized two sets of instruments. The first instrument was designed to measure research capability and consisted of two sub-parts: writing research proposals and writing publishable papers. Both sections employed a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not capable at all) to 5 (highly capable). To ensure the instrument's quality, the items were derived from a comprehensive literature review and subjected to several validation steps: 1) a pilot test was conducted with 15 teachers from nearby districts within the same division, and 2) the entire instrument underwent content and expert validity checks to ensure alignment between the research problem and the data collection tool.

The instrument demonstrated exceptional internal consistency, as evidenced by the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients. The first subpart achieved an overall Cronbach's Alpha of .991, with Cronbach's Alpha values for its 25 items ranging from .983 to .985. The second subpart attained an overall Cronbach's Alpha of .991, with Cronbach's Alpha values for its 26 items ranging from .991 to .990. Sample items on writing proposals are as follows: "I can write a persuasive rationale in the introduction" (Item 3) and "I can spot the gaps in the reviewed literature" (Item 11). Another sample item on writing papers includes: "I can prepare a stand-alone abstract with representations from the major sections" (Item 2), and "I can write an introduction enriched with relevant literature on the topics" (Item 5).

The second research instrument used in this study, the Administrative Support Inventory Survey, was adopted from Watson (2021). This tool utilizes a 5-point scale from 1 (not observed at all) to 5 (always observed) and comprises 32 items categorized into four dimensions: emotional, appraisal, instrumental, and informational support. To illustrate the nature of the survey, sample items included the following: "recognizes my accomplishment publicly" (Item 12), "shows confidence in my action as a teacher" (Item 9), "enforces school rules" (Item 16), and "shares legislative updates and initiatives with staff" (Item 4). The entire instrument underwent rigorous reliability analysis to ensure its suitability for the study. As shown by these values (overall Cronbach's Alpha of .993 and Cronbach's Alpha values for items ranging from .992 to .993), the instrument demonstrated a high level of internal consistency, crucial for academic research, thereby ensuring unbiased results and a reliable measure of administrative support.

Researchers sought formal approval and permission from the relevant authorities prior to commencement. Throughout the pre-survey, implementation, and post-survey phases, researchers strictly adhered to established principles of research ethics regarding the treatment of participants, the confidentiality of provided information, and the systematic management of data. To ensure comprehensive data collection, the instruments were administered through a dual approach: during field visits and via email to participants who were unavailable during those visits. To facilitate the process, focal persons were assigned to oversee the retrieval of the instruments on behalf of the proponents. Based on the desired sample size, the study achieved an actual response rate of 88.30%.

Data Analysis

This inquiry applied both descriptive and inferential statistics to address the research objectives. The data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 26. Using mean and standard deviation scores, the study provided a comprehensive overview of the extent of teachers' research capability and administrative support, based on participants' perceptions. The datasets were primarily analyzed using simple and multiple linear regression to test four hypothesized models with corresponding specifications. Across these tested models, administrative support served as a predictor (exogenous) variable, while the research capability in terms of writing proposals and publishing papers was treated as a criterion (endogenous) variable.

RESULTS

Before delving into the pivotal role of administrative support in teachers' research capability, it is beneficial to preview the descriptive statistics for each variable under study. In this analysis, administrative support is examined both as a collective construct and as distinct dimensions. From the participants' perspectives, school leaders have consistently provided emotional ($M = 4.09, SD = .81$), appraisal ($M = 4.09, SD = .78$), instrumental ($M = 4.06, SD = .80$), and informational ($M = 4.07, SD = .78$) support to teacher-researchers. The overall administrative support provided by school leaders ($M = 4.08, SD = .78$) indicates a consistent pattern. In Table 1, the results indicate that teachers perceive themselves as possessing moderate research capability in writing research proposals ($M = 3.23, SD = .74$) and writing publishable papers ($M = 3.25, SD = .80$).

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables

Variables/Dimensions	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Qualitative Description
Emotional Support	151	4.09	.81	Frequently observed
Appraisal Support	151	4.09	.78	Frequently observed
Instrumental Support	151	4.06	.80	Frequently observed
Informational Support	151	4.07	.78	Frequently observed
Overall Administrative Support	151	4.08	.78	Frequently observed
Research Capability (WRP)	151	3.23	.74	Moderately capable
Research Capability (WPP)	151	3.25	.80	Moderately capable

However, one should note that research capability levels may improve when teachers receive the necessary support from school administrators. This is why the current study explores variations in teachers' research capability that can be explained or predicted by the administrative support provided by school leaders. Specifically, the study delves into the crucial role of school leaders' administrative support in writing research proposals and publishable papers. Looking at the model summaries in Table 2, both the original and adjusted R-squared values consistently indicate that Model 1 has better explanatory power. It can explain and predict 14.9% (original) and 12.6% (adjusted) variance in teachers' research capability. However, these statistics alone are insufficient to evaluate the model's fit or its superiority over other tested models.

Table 2

Models Tested in the Study

Models	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> Square	Adjusted <i>R</i> Square	<i>SE</i> of Estimates
Model 1	.386	.149	.126	.69468
Model 2	.331	.109	.103	.70348
Model 3	.364	.132	.109	.76333
Model 4	.349	.122	.116	.76024

ANOVA results (Table 3) indicate that all tested models are statistically significant at the .05 level, suggesting that each model adequately represents the sample data and reflects the teacher population. Thus, these models demonstrate a good fit for the data. This evidence provides a basis for further analysis to determine whether the overall school leader support and the corresponding dimensions predict teachers' research capability in writing research proposals and publishable papers.

Table 3

ANOVA Results

Models		Sum of Squares	<i>df</i>	Mean Squares	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Model 1	Regression	12.323	4	3.081	6.384	.000
	Residual	70.457	146	.483		
	Total	82.781	150			
Model 2	Regression	9.042	1	9.042	18.272	.000
	Residual	73.738	149	.495		
	Total	82.781	150			
Model 3	Regression	12.795	4	3.244	5.567	.000
	Residual	85.071	146	.583		
	Total	98.046	150			
Model 4	Regression	11.930	1	11.930	20.641	.000
	Residual	86.117	149	.578		
	Total	98.046	150			

Among the four tested models, the predictor variables in Models 1 and 3 do not have significant estimates, as shown in Table 4. In these models, the four dimensions of administrative support were treated as separate predictor variables. The results may suggest that when one or two dimensions of administrative support are not provided by school leaders, the remaining dimensions cannot significantly contribute to teachers' research capability. Individually, emotional, appraisal, instrumental, and informational support cannot account for any variance in teachers' research capability, as none of the estimates are statistically significant. Considering the model summaries, ANOVA results, and model coefficients, the study has identified Models 2 and 4 as statistically significant. These models pertain to the predictive role of the overall administrative support provided by school administrators in writing research proposals (Model 2) and producing publishable papers (Model 4). This means emotional, appraisal, instrumental, and informational support were combined as predictors. In Model 2, the administrative support of school administrators can significantly explain 10.9% (original) variance, while 10.3% (adjusted) variance in teachers' research capability in writing research proposals ($\beta = .331, t = 4.275, p < .05$). Meanwhile, in Model 4, the administrative support of school administrators can significantly explain 12.2% (original) variance and 11.6% (adjusted) variance in teachers' research capability in writing publishable papers ($\beta = .349, t = 4.543, p < .05$).

Table 4

Tested Model Coefficients

Models	Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	SE	Standardized Coefficients (β)	t	p
Model 1	Constant (WRP)	1.914	.304		6.290	.000
	Emotional Support	-.580	.299	-.634	-1.940	.054
	Appraisal Support	.057	.278	.060	.203	.839
	Instrumental Support	.459	.320	.498	1.435	.154
	Informational Support	.392	.273	.416	1.435	.153
Model 2	Constant (WRP)	1.959	.304		6.450	.000
	Administrative Support	.312	.073	.331	4.275	.000
Model 3	Constant (WPP)	1.825	.334		5.461	.000
	Emotional Support	-.131	.329	-.132	-.400	.690
	Appraisal Support	-.038	.306	-.037	-.123	.902
	Instrumental Support	.552	.351	.551	1.572	.118
	Informational Support	-.030	.300	-.029	-.100	.920
Model 4	Constant (WPP)	1.790	.328		5.452	.000
	Administrative Support	.359	.079	.349	4.543	.000

DISCUSSION

Based on the descriptive findings, this study revealed that teachers are moderately capable of writing research proposals and publishable papers. These results imply significant opportunities for further growth as researcher-teachers. Simultaneously, these findings present opportunities for school leaders to bolster administrative support. Although leaders are perceived to provide such support frequently, they must better sustain these efforts until teachers achieve higher capabilities in writing and publishing. Furthermore, school leaders can tap into and collaborate with experts, including experienced researchers, to assist in mentoring teachers. In one way or another, such collaborations would help leaders expand their administrative support beyond the four primary dimensions.

Araneta et al. (2020) found that school leaders demonstrated significant support for their teachers across the emotional, environmental, instructional, and technical realms. Similarly, Watson (2021) identified the top five most important administrative support behaviors: 1) demonstrating confidence in teachers' actions, 2) providing adequate planning time, 3) ensuring fairness in evaluations, 4) setting clear expectations for everyone, and 5) soliciting input from teachers when discussing performance. These support behaviors were frequently observed by teachers and deemed highly important. Therefore, school leaders must be mindful of these behaviors as essential components of their roles. As Nobles (2009) aptly stated, "Teachers appreciate administrators who support them by being visible, initiating frequent communication, and providing the resources they need to be successful" (p. 1). These studies corroborate the descriptive findings of the present inquiry.

The descriptive findings align with the study by Agatep and Villalobos (2020), which reported similar levels of moderate capability among teachers in writing research proposals and publishable papers. Furthermore, Pilongo (2020) corroborates that teachers exhibited moderate proficiency in the technical aspects of research and in the major components of publishable papers. Here, research capability is defined as the potential of individuals to undertake effective, efficient, and high-quality research (Caingcoy, 2020). In another study, teachers were found to have a slight capability in conducting educational research, often requiring close supervision from an expert when writing research proposals (Manila et al., 2022). Small-scale research reported that doctoral students possessed moderate capabilities in writing research proposals, while they felt neutral about their capabilities in writing publishable papers (Caingcoy, 2024).

The descriptive results in the present study relate to Gigante and Firestone's (2008) findings, which indicate that support tasks helped teachers in their work but did not contribute to teacher learning. Administrative support provides more opportunities for teachers to engage in professional development. Pilongo's (2020) research found a significant relationship between teachers' research capability and the degree of research support. However, it's important to note that the analysis

conducted in Pilongo's study was non-causal. The claim in the framework is somewhat confirmed by the present findings, which show that teachers reported working in supportive environments stemming from supportive leadership. This means supportive leadership ensures a supportive working environment, whether teachers are engaged in teaching-related tasks or research activities (Billingsley et al., 2020).

While the findings in the current study lack direct parallels in existing literature, given that previous research has often measured administrative support more broadly or through different frameworks, related studies offer significant contextual alignment. For instance, Uy and Callo (2023) found that the relationship between teachers' research readiness and their research skills, including research writing, is mediated by a supportive environment. Similarly, Pablo et al. (2025) found that receiving instrumental support, such as financial assistance, increased science teachers' motivation to conduct research and publish papers, suggesting an indirect link between instrumental support and research output.

Furthermore, Oancea et al. (2025) found that an institution's ability to adjust ongoing responsibilities, as a key element of administrative support, can determine its involvement in capacity-building initiatives such as writing and publication support. This idea aligns with the claim by Pentang and Domingo (2024) that institutional support, including financial resources and manageable workloads, is crucial for success in research writing. More specifically, Ahmad (2021) noted that sustained technical and publishing support, such as research training and software tools, can directly address teachers' challenges in proposal writing. Ultimately, these findings confirm Hall's (2009) earlier claim that a clear and significant connection exists between research capability and active engagement in scholarly work, specifically in writing research proposals and publishing papers in reputable journals.

CONCLUSION

The study examined the crucial role of administrative support from school administrators in teachers' research capabilities. Participants were found to be moderately capable of writing research proposals and producing publishable papers, while they frequently observed administrative support from school administrators across all dimensions. Therefore, the null hypothesis, that administrative support provided by school leaders does not significantly explain teachers' research capability in writing proposals and publishing papers, is rejected. The findings provide sufficient empirical evidence that as school leaders increase administrative support, teachers become more likely to demonstrate substantive research capability in writing research proposals and publishable papers.

Implications

These findings carry several implications for school leadership and management. Chief among these is the need for school leaders to equip themselves with research writing and publishing skills; by doing so, they can provide more targeted support to teachers on writing and publishing tasks. Such support has the potential to transform teachers' engagement in research when they feel adequately supported. When the dimensions of administrative support are considered individually, they fail to significantly explain teachers' research capability, whether in writing research proposals or producing publishable papers. Thus, it is concluded that each component of school leaders' administrative support is indispensable in elevating teachers' research capability.

The provision of emotional, appraisal, informational, and instrumental support by school leaders can significantly enhance teachers' research capabilities, particularly in crafting research proposals. By acknowledging teachers' work, valuing their input, and encouraging collegiality; setting clear expectations and providing consistent feedback while maintaining fairness in evaluation; providing necessary resources and assisting with classroom management; and communicating a clear school vision while sharing teacher needs with authorities; leaders play a crucial role in making teachers more capable of writing research proposals. Furthermore, these dimensions of support are pivotal in enhancing teachers' capability to produce publishable papers. These findings suggest that holistic administrative support from school leaders is necessary to advance teachers' professional development in research writing and the subsequent publication of their work in reputable journals. These results imply that school leaders should upgrade their skills to extend these supports more frequently and effectively. To sustain, these supports and capabilities can result in viable research productivity in the future.

Limitations

The study encountered limitations due to a small sample size that did not reach the desired number of participants and a lack of literature on similar constructs to support the current findings. For future inquiries, researchers could include more

teachers or even involve school administrators in evaluating the administrative support they provide to teacher-researchers. Such an approach would allow for cross-checking and validation of the extent of administrative support from teachers' perspectives. Likewise, researchers could develop an instrument for administrative support specifically aligned with teachers' research capabilities, using exploratory factor analysis for construct validation and an exploratory sequential mixed-methods design. Furthermore, research coordinators at the district or school level could collaborate with school leaders to cultivate a more supportive work environment. This collaborative effort could help teachers progress from being moderately capable of writing research proposals and publishable papers to becoming highly capable researchers, thereby increasing research engagement and publication output.

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Manuscript submitted: April 9, 2024

Manuscript revised: March 12, 2026

Accepted for publication: March 30, 2026