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Research Productivity Profile of the Selected Implementing Unit Schools in Soccsksargen Region, Philippines

Terelene N. Eguac*, Maria Theresa P. Pelones
Mindanao State University-General Santos City, Philippines

*Corresponding Author Email: terelene.eguac001@deped.gov.ph

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Abstract. This study assessed the action research outputs of teachers from Implementing Unit (IU) schools in selected divisions of the SOCCSKSARGEN Region, Philippines. The completed researches were categorized according to the Basic Education Research Agenda (BERA) themes: Teaching and Learning, Child Protection, Human Resource Development, and Governance. Employing a descriptive research design, the study analyzed research productivity from the school years 2020 to 2023. Findings revealed that the Teaching and Learning theme dominated, comprising 62.37% of the total research outputs, reflecting a strong focus on teaching methods, curriculum development, assessment, and educational practices. In contrast, Child Protection accounted for the lowest share at 7.53%, while Human Resource Development and Governance themes each contributed 15.05%. These variations suggest disparities in research productivity across different areas and academic years. Additionally, the overall low research output and limited teacher engagement in research indicate the need for enhanced support and resources. Addressing these disparities will foster a more balanced and equitable research environment across all thematic areas.

Keywords: Basic education research agenda; Implementing unit schools; Research productivity.

1.0 Introduction

Teachers are encouraged to engage in educational research to develop innovations and solutions that enhance teaching and learning outcomes in the academe. These research efforts are aligned with the Department of Education's (DepEd) Basic Education Research Agenda. They are intended to inform planning, policy-making, and program development, supporting teachers as 21st-century learning facilitators (Capulso, 2020). However, despite DepEd's continuous efforts to promote teacher participation in research, the recorded output remains minimal. The study by Villarino (2022) uncovered that only 22.81 percent of teachers nationwide engaged in research. In the regional context of the Philippines, the performance of the South Cotabato, Sarangani, and General Santos City Divisions in the Regional Research Congress still needs to be improved. The study by Mapa (2017) revealed that despite the DepEd mandates, initiatives, and programs, the teachers' research productivity in the Philippines' basic education remains low.

Likewise, there has been no profiling of the completed research recorded for the Implementing Unit Schools in the region. Hence, the researcher wanted to know the research productivity profile in the SOCCSKSARGEN Region by collecting and analyzing the profiles of completed research conducted by teachers specifically in Implementing Unit (IU) schools, categorized by school size and Basic Education Research Agenda (BERA) themes,

drawn from the past three school years 2020-2021, 2021-2022, and 2022-2023. The significance of this study lies in its potential to provide valuable insights into the research productivity of teachers in the SOCCSKSARGEN Region, which could inform policy adjustments and capacity-building initiatives. By identifying trends, challenges, and factors influencing research engagement, the study will improve the research culture among teachers in the region. Moreover, this research will help the Department of Education better align support mechanisms and interventions to enhance teacher participation in research, ultimately leading to innovative educational practices that can improve learning outcomes.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The study utilized the descriptive design. Specifically, the researcher described the data the school administrators or research coordinators provided. Using a researcher-designed template to profile and analyze the research work, the researcher conducted a descriptive inquiry to summarize the patterns, trends, and characteristics of the research conducted over the past three years.

2.2 Research Locale

The study was conducted in the selected IU schools in the SOCCSKSARGEN Region, Philippines, specifically within its three Divisions: South Cotabato, Sarangani, and General Santos City.

2.3 Research Participants

The 219 respondents were the school administrators or research coordinators of the IU schools. They were selected based on DepEd Order No. 48, known as "2021 Brigada Eskwela Implementing Guidelines," which presents four (4) school categories based on the number of teachers employed in a particular school. The categories are Small School (40 and below), Medium School (41-80), Large School (81-120), and Mega School (121 and above). Since the respondents were delimited into IU schools, this study randomly selected one IU school to represent each category from the divisions of South Cotabato, Sarangani, and General Santos City. The sample of respondents was computed using the Raosoft online calculator (which utilizes a Cochran formula) with a 10% margin of error, a 90% confidence level, and a 50% response distribution. After establishing the suggested sample size, a systematic sampling based on the lists of plantilla positions extracted from School Forms 4 and 7 was used to extract the precise number of respondents per school.

2.4 Research Instrument

This study used a researcher-designed template in both printed copies and digital copies through Google Forms to provide options to the respondents and participants, whichever is more convenient to them. The instrument asked for essential details about the profile of the completed research in terms of the Basic Education Research Agenda (BERA) themes. Specifically, the first part asked about the demographic profile of the respondent. In contrast, the second part asked for essential details about the profile of the completed research of the respondent school, categorized per BERA theme and school category. This includes filling out the completed research title, category, level of dissemination and utilization, funding sources, and the year when it was completed. The school administrator or the school research coordinator filled out this instrument.

Furthermore, the identified experts in the Department of Education tested the instrument for content validity to ensure that it covered all aspects of the measured construct. Modifications were likewise made based on their feedback. Second, face validity was made by testing the instrument with a small sample from the target population to ensure that the questions were understandable and appeared to measure the intended concepts. Lastly, a reliability test was performed to test the instrument's internal consistency. It was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha to measure how well the items in the instrument correlate with each other.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

This study used specific steps to collect the data. The study's first phase was to write formal letters requesting authorization to conduct the research. Initially, the researcher dispatched formal letters of request to the DepEd Regional Office XII, the School's Division Superintendents of South Cotabato, Sarangani, and General Santos City, as well as the school heads of the selected schools, seeking authorization to undertake the study. Upon obtaining consent, the administrators of the involved institutions were personally informed and presented with the

authorized correspondence from the Division Office, subsequently coordinating a mutually agreeable timetable for the survey distribution.

In the second phase, the researcher personally administered the survey questionnaires to the participants at the designated date and time. Before distributing the questionnaire, the researcher comprehensively explained the aspects of the study to the respondents while elucidating the rationale behind the research implementation. The researcher requested that the respondents answer candidly and ensure their identities remain confidential. For respondents identified as facing accessibility challenges, whether due to geographical distance or personal preference, a questionnaire was crafted using Google Forms and distributed to facilitate the collection of their responses. Upon completing the answered questionnaire, the researcher automatically collected and tallied the data using Microsoft Excel and Microsoft Word.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

This research study followed ethical guidelines. The respondents and participants were aware that participation was entirely voluntary and that they were not obligated to respond to questions that made them uneasy or unpleasant. The respondents and participants were allowed to stop participating in the study at any time without repercussions or fines. The researcher abided by Republic Act 10173, often known as the Data Privacy Act 2012. As a result, personal data were protected and secured. The researcher obtained informed consent after clearly explaining the complete goal, the methodology, and any potential advantages to the subjects.

Since the school administrators and teachers of legal age are the study participants, they were considered mature enough and able to decide whether to participate; hence, they are not vulnerable. The utmost care and respect were required to protect their well-being and address their vulnerability. The researcher encouraged disclosure of the study findings to the districts and schools where the research was conducted and to the institution with which the researcher was affiliated. After gathering and analyzing the necessary data, the researcher returned to the chosen schools to perform the research. The ethics of plagiarism was also taken into account in this investigation. The researcher acknowledged, credited, and credited the author's earlier publications. Furthermore, accurate citations and quotations were used. Before the final version of this study was published, the work was subjected to a plagiarism check utilizing specific methodologies. The researcher only permitted a 1% similarity index of tolerance while using an online plagiarism detector for this work. The interpretation of their responses was accurate.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Research Productivity Profile

The results of the profile of completed research per theme, as well as a summary across themes, school categories, and divisions, are discussed as follows.

Teaching and Learning Theme

This theme responds to the needs of students and teachers. It focuses on the teaching-learning process's developmental, social, and behavioral effects on learners, including research projects related to assessment, instruction, and curriculum (DO 39, s. 2016). Table 1 depicts the profile of the completed research papers in the IU schools regarding the Teaching and Learning theme. It can be gleaned that for the past three years, only 57 research projects were completed by schools categorized into small, medium, large, and mega schools. During the past three school years, the data shows a higher quantity of research output in the SY 2021-2022, accounting for 23 research papers (40.36%), compared to SY 2020-2021 with 17 research outputs (29.82%) and SY 2022-2023 with 17 completed research (29.82%). This variation indicated fluctuations in research productivity across different academic years.

Among the three respondent divisions of SOCCSKSARGEN, the South Cotabato Division stood out as the most prolific in research output in the Teaching and Learning theme, producing 30 research papers, 52.63% of the total. Sarangani Division followed with 22 research papers (38.60%), and General Santos City Division had the lowest research output, contributing only five research papers. The data highlighted disparities in research productivity among the three respondent divisions in SOCCSKSARGEN, with South Cotabato leading, Sarangani making a substantial contribution, and General Santos City having the least research output.

Table 1. Profile of completed research in IU schools in terms of teaching and learning theme

Division & School Category	School Year Completed						Total	Percentage (%)
	2020-2021		2021-2022		2022-2023			
South Cotabato	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**		
Small	3	17.65	0	0	3	17.65	6	10.52
Medium	0	0	5	21.74	2	11.76	7	12.28
Large	1	5.88	4	17.39	4	23.53	9	15.79
Mega	1	5.88	1	4.35	6	35.30	8	11.03
Total	*5*	*29.41*	*10*	*43.48*	*15*	*88.24*	*30*	*52.63*
Sarangani								
Small	2	11.76	0	0	0	0	2	3.51
Medium	1	5.88	5	21.74	1	5.88	7	12.28
Large	4	23.53	3	13.04	1	5.88	8	11.03
Mega	2	11.76	3	13.04	0	0	5	8.77
Total	*9*	*52.94*	*11*	*47.82*	*2*	*11.76*	*22*	*38.59*
General Santos								
Small	2	11.76	1	4.35	0	0	3	5.26
Medium	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Large	0	0	1	4.35	0	0	1	1.76
Mega	1	5.88	0	0	0	0	1	1.76
Total	*3*	*17.65*	*2*	*8.70*	*0*	*0*	*5*	*8.78*
Grand Total	*17*	*100*	*23*	*100*	*17*	*100*	*57*	
Percentage (%)	**29.82**		**40.36**		**29.82**			**100**

It can be inferred that the South Cotabato Division has an established research culture, particularly in teaching and learning, which indicates a strong focus on research and innovation in this area. Although less productive, the Sarangani Division is still actively engaged in research, suggesting a commitment to scholarly endeavors. In contrast, the relatively low output from the General Santos City Division might imply potential areas for growth or challenges that need to be addressed to enhance their research capabilities.

Heaton-Shrestha et al. (2023) stated that barriers to research outputs fall into three broad categories: resource constraints, lack of priority for research, and barriers related to attitudes, knowledge, and skills. Hence, Niyazova (2021) suggested that a balance of interests in academic research can be achieved through a combination of simple and qualitative indicators and professional expertise, promoting long-term cooperation and individual academic productivity. To further improve research outputs, Jamali et al. (2023) recommended the implementation of new research incentive schemes and excellence initiatives that recognize and reward high-quality research.

Child Protection Theme

This theme aims for in-depth studies on the prevalence and effects of child protection-related cases in schools. It emphasizes the need to assess the effectiveness of previous interventions and the potential of new approaches to protect learners in schools better (DO No. 39, s. 2016). Table 2 presents the profile of the completed research in the IU schools regarding the Child Protection theme. Only seven research projects were completed by the 12 respondent schools from 2020 to 2023. Among the three divisions, South Cotabato produced the highest number of research papers, with four, while General Santos City had the lowest output in this category, with only one research paper completed. The total number of completed research papers over the past three years suggested that research activities related to the Child Protection theme have been limited during this period.

When analyzed according to school category, small and medium-sized schools in South Cotabato and Sarangani did not complete research, indicating a potential gap in research activities related to Child Protection in these school categories. This lack of research could imply several things. Firstly, these schools might not have sufficient resources, such as funding or personnel, to research child protection. Alternatively, it indicates that child protection may not be a priority research area for these divisions.

Table 2. Profile of completed research in IU schools in terms of child protection theme

Division/School Category	School Year Completed						Total	Percentage (%)
	2020-2021		2021-2022		2022-2023			
South Cotabato	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**		
Small	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Medium	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Large	0	0	0	0	2	33.33	2	28.57
Mega	0	0	0	0	2	33.33	2	28.57
Total	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*4*	*66.66*	*4*	*57.14*
Sarangani								
Small	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Medium	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Large	1	100	0	0	1	16.67	2	28.57
Mega	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	*1*	*100*	*0*	*0*	*1*	*16.67*	*2*	*28.57*
General Santos								
Small	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Medium	0	0	0	0	1	16.67	1	14.28
Large	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mega	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*1*	*16.67*	*1*	*14.29*
Grand Total	*1*	*100*	*0*	*0*	*6*	*100*	*7*	
Percentage (%)	**14.29**		**0**		**85.71**			**100**

The low overall research output and the absence of research in certain school categories highlight potential areas for improvement. Educational institutions and policymakers can use this information to identify specific gaps in research related to child protection and implement strategies to address these gaps. The data suggested an overall low engagement with the Child Protection theme in the respondent IU schools, with variations among divisions and specific school categories.

Consequently, Dulog (2024) stated that poor research facilities and a lack of incentives for research contribute to low-quality research output. Addressing these challenges requires investments in faculty development, research infrastructure, and financial support, as well as the establishment of legal regulations and ethical standards. Similarly, Ulla et al. (2017) support this finding. They revealed in their study that teacher respondents had a positive perception of doing research and its benefits to their teaching practices and students' learning processes. Nevertheless, several issues prevented them from conducting research, including a lack of research knowledge and skills, a heavy workload, and a lack of school funding.

Human Resource and Development Theme

This theme focuses on the career development concerns of the school's teaching and non-teaching staff, surfacing and addressing their capacity-building needs and examining various dimensions and determinants of their professional growth (DO No. 39, s. 20.16). Table 3 illustrates the profile of the completed research in the IU schools regarding the Human Resource Development theme. As depicted, only 14 research papers were completed by the 12 respondent schools from 2020 to 2023. Among the three Divisions, Sarangani produced seven papers, considered the highest number of papers. In contrast, South Cotabato and General Santos produced only four (28.57%) and three (21.43%) research papers, respectively.

When analyzed according to school category, no research output was recorded for small and medium-sized schools in South Cotabato, including small, medium, and large schools in General Santos City. Only Sarangani completed research papers in each category and produced seven papers, accounting for 50% of the total completed research of the three Divisions in the past three years. The data imply a relatively low overall research output during this period. Sarangani Division is the most productive in the Human Research Development theme, the highest among the three divisions. This Division emerged as the most active in research, contributing significantly to the overall output, while South Cotabato and General Santos show lower research activity, particularly in certain school categories. The data points to a need to encourage and enhance research efforts in the divisions showing lower productivity, such as South Cotabato and General Santos. It might be beneficial to study the approach of the Sarangani Division towards human research development, as they seem to have found a successful model and considered implementing similar strategies in other divisions.

Table 3. Profile of completed research in IU schools in terms of human resource development theme

Division/School Category	School Year Completed						Total	Percentage (%)
	2020-2021		2021-2022		2022-2023			
South Cotabato	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**		
Small	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Medium	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Large	0	0	1	12.5	0	0	1	7.14
Mega	0	0	1	12.5	2	66.67	3	21.43
Total	*0*	*0*	*2*	*25.0*	*2*	*66.67*	*4*	*28.57*
Sarangani								
Small	1	50	0	0	0	0	1	7.14
Medium	0	0	1	12.5	0	0	1	7.14
Large	1	50	2	25.0	0	0	3	21.43
Mega	0	0	2	25.0	0	0	2	14.23
Total	*2*	*100*	*5*	*62.5*	*0*	*0*	*7*	*50.0*
General Santos								
Small	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Medium	0	0	0	0	1	25.0	0	0
Large	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mega	0	0	1	12.5	1	25.0	2	14.23
Total	*0*	*0*	*1*	*12.5*	*2*	*50.0*	*3*	*21.43*
Grand Total	**2**	**100**	**8**	**100**	**4**	**100**	**14**	
Percentage (%)	**21.43**		**57.14**		**21.43**		**100**	

Additionally, the disparities in research output across different school categories might indicate the necessity for a more equitable distribution of resources and support, ensuring all schools have the opportunity to contribute to research. The results imply that these divisions or school categories may need to reevaluate their approach to research by allocating more resources or encouraging more research activity. According to Cochran-Smith and Villegas (2015), the limited research on Philippine public school teachers is due to divergent research practices, different economic, intellectual, and demographic developments, and different positions within and outside teacher education. Likewise, there are several reasons why teachers need help in doing research. Public school teachers' most frequent barriers to research production are time constraints, disinterest, lack of research experience, conflicting obligations, a full teaching schedule, and inadequate funding (Gomez & Catan, 2021).

Governance Theme

This theme covers planning, finance, program management, transparency, accountability, and evaluation, underscoring DepEd's commitment to ensuring that its structure, systems, and processes contribute to achieving basic education outcomes. It may also include concerns in Disaster Risk Reduction and Management, Inclusive Education, and Gender and Development (DO No. 39, s. 20.16).

Table 4. Profile of completed research in IU schools in terms of governance

Division/School Category	School Year Completed						Total	Percentage (%)
	2020-2021		2021-2022		2022-2023			
South Cotabato	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**		
Small	1	16.67	1	33.33	0	0	2	14.28
Medium	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Large	0	0	0	0	2	40.0	2	14.28
Mega	1	16.67	1	33.33	3	60.0	5	35.73
Total	*2*	*33.34*	*2*	*66.66*	*5*	*100*	*9*	*64.29*
Sarangani								
Small	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Medium	1	16.67	1	33.34	0	0	2	14.28
Large	2	33.32	0	0	0	0	2	14.28
Mega	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	*3*	*49.99*	*1*	*33.34*	*0*	*0*	*4*	*28.56*
General Santos								
Small	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Medium	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Large	1	16.67	0	0	0	0	1	7.15
Mega	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	*1*	*16.67*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*1*	*7.15*
Grand Total	*6*	*100*	*3*	*100*	*5*	*100*	*14*	
Percentage (%)	**42.86**		**21.43**		**35.71**			**100**

Table 4 displays the profile of the completed research in the IU schools regarding governance themes. As shown, only 14 research studies in the past three years were completed. South Cotabato Division had the highest research productivity, contributing nine research papers. It constituted a substantial portion, accounting for 64.29% of the total research output, while General Santos City had the lowest research completed, producing only one research paper. It accounted for 7.14% of the total research output, indicating a relatively limited research activity in General Santos City compared to the other divisions. On the other hand, Sarangani Division produced four research papers, representing a moderate contribution to the overall research output; however, it is lower than the contribution of South Cotabato.

The data suggest that the overall research output in the specified period is relatively **low** under the Governance theme. They highlight regional disparities in research productivity among the divisions, with South Cotabato being the most active, Sarangani making a moderate contribution, and General Santos City having the least research output. The results suggest that there might be a need for increased research undertakings in these areas. While there are some reports of research breakthroughs in the Philippines, other reports show that the country is moving slowly compared to developed Asian countries. Among the contributing factors to this slow pace is the Philippines' dismal 0.11% gross domestic product (GDP) allocation, which pales in comparison to the world average of 2.228% and Japan's allocation of 3.28% (World Bank, 2015). It is evident that meager funding results in fewer quality research outputs, thus fewer outputs to disseminate and even fewer to utilize by adopters (Clores, 2021).

3.2 Summary of Completed Research Profile

Table 5 depicts the profile of the completed research in the last three years in the Implementing Unit (IU) schools regarding the Basic Education Research Agenda (BERA) per category. Data showed that 92 completed research studies were recorded by the respondents in IU schools in SOCCSKSARGEN over the past three years.

Table 5. Summary of completed research in selected IU schools in SOCCSKSARGEN in the last three years

School Category	BERA Theme				Total	Percentage (%)
	Teaching & Learning	Child Protection	Human Resource Development	Governance		
Small	11	0	1	2	**14**	**15.22**
Medium	14	1	2	2	**19**	**20.65**
Large	18	4	4	5	**31**	**33.70**
Mega	14	2	7	5	**28**	**30.43**
Total	**57**	**7**	**14**	**14**	**92**	**100**
Percentage (%)	**61.96**	**7.60**	**15.22**	**15.22**	**100**	

Besides, it can be noticed that in the school year 2020 to 2023, the Teaching and Learning theme came out as the most researched area, constituting 62.37% of the total completed research. It indicates a strong emphasis on issues related to teaching methods, curriculum development and assessment, and educational practices. Meanwhile, the theme of Child Protection recorded the lowest number of produced research papers, accounting for only 7.53% of the total. Both Human Resource Development and Governance themes contributed equally, each catalyzing a rate of 15.05% for the past three school years.

4.0 Conclusion

The teaching and Learning theme stands out as the most researched area. It indicates a strong emphasis on issues related to teaching methods, curriculum development and assessment, and educational practices. At the same time, the theme of child protection was recorded as the lowest number of research papers produced. Both human resource development and governance themes have contributed equally for the past three school years. This variation suggests fluctuations in research productivity across different academic years. The overall low research output and the limited research engagement highlight potential areas for improvement. The disparities in research output across different school categories have indicated the need for a more equitable distribution of resources and support to encourage more research undertakings.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

AA – editing, writing, encoding, and data analysis; BA – supervising, reviewing, advising

6.0 Funding

Personal Fund was used to complete this research.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

No conflict of interest.

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