Case Study of Technical-Vocational-Livelihood Students' Experiences in Research Writing

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Abstract. This study explores the writing challenges faced by TVL students in Practical Research. It aims to understand students' difficulties during the pre-writing, writing, and post-writing stages and how these affect teaching strategies. Using a Multiple Case Study design, structured interviews were conducted with students, a research teacher, and a school head. Thematic analysis and comparative data analysis were used to interpret the findings. Results show that students struggle with research due to limited knowledge, lack of resources, and group cooperation. They face difficulties in topic selection, research question formulation, data analysis, and writing mechanics, leading to academic pressure. These issues impact the teaching of Practical Research by making it harder to achieve curriculum goals and affecting students' language skills and school performance. The study highlights the need for improved learning materials to help students develop better research writing skills. The findings suggest that enhancing students' writing abilities can improve overall academic performance and better equip them for future research endeavors, potentially leading to improved outcomes in technical vocational education.

Keywords: Academic performance; Multiple Case Study; Practical Research; Thematic Analysis; Writing Challenges.

1.0 Introduction

Since implementing the K to 12 Curriculum in the Philippines, there has been a heightened focus on equipping students to be competitive globally. A key component of this curriculum is the introduction of Practical Research Writing for senior high school students, aimed at fostering critical thinking and problem-solving abilities through research activities. However, students on the Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) track often encounter significant challenges in writing research papers, undermining the curriculum's objectives. Unlike their counterparts in other academic tracks, TVL students prioritize technical skills over academic writing, evident in the considerably fewer hours dedicated to research subjects.

The importance of developing foundational skills in research writing has been emphasized by scholars such as Sellars et al. (2017) and Showman et al. (2013), who suggest that researchers must strengthen their skills in various aspects of academic writing to produce quality output. These skills are regarded as essential competencies in Practical Research, and their absence can lead to significant challenges for students and professionals. This is particularly relevant in the Philippine context, where Lander et al. (2019) observed a resounding need to improve research writing across the educational system. At the same time, Jaype (2017) found that most students viewed research merely as an academic requirement, Belen and Ramirez (2014) positioned research output as an assessment of learned knowledge and skills in the Research Subject.

Teachers have raised concerns regarding TVL students' struggles to meet the Performance Standards for Practical Research, identifying inadequate writing skills as a significant contributing factor. Research has long been recognized as essential for innovation and societal advancement, with scholars such as Zarah (2019) and Freedman (2011) highlighting its critical role across various domains, including business, agriculture, and technology—fields in which TVL students are likely to pursue careers. Despite these acknowledged benefits, many TVL students find research writing daunting due to insufficient instructional materials and a diminished focus on written assignments within their applied subjects. In fact, in a study published by Cuayzon (2024), it is recommended that instructional quality be improved to improve the students' research writing skills.

While existing studies have established the importance of research writing skills and identified general challenges in the Philippine educational system, there remains a notable gap in addressing the specific needs of TVL students. Current literature has not adequately explored the development of contextually appropriate teaching materials that align with TVL students' vocational training and career aspirations. Given this gap and the absence of contextualized lesson plans and appropriate learning resources for Practical Research, this study intends to create lesson exemplars specifically designed for TVL students. These exemplars will build upon the students' competencies and backgrounds, making research writing more relevant and accessible to their vocational training. By directly addressing the obstacles that TVL students face in research writing through tailored educational resources, this study aims to enhance their research skills, ultimately contributing to their academic and professional success.

2.0 Methodology
2.1 Research Design
This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach to explore students' experiences and challenges in the three phases of research writing: pre-writing, writing, and post-writing. According to Lambert and Lambert (2012), such research effectively captures detailed accounts of experiences, highlighting the nuances of phenomena as they naturally unfold. This method aligns with the study's aim to better understand the specific difficulties students face and their broader implications for teaching research skills.

2.2 Research Participants
Sixteen senior high school students in the Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) track were selected. These participants were selected based on their involvement in research projects and their leadership roles within their respective research groups. Purposive sampling was used to identify the participants. The teacher responsible for teaching practical research and the school principal were also interviewed to validate the student responses. Their input was crucial in providing additional perspectives on the implications of the student's writing challenges for instruction and curriculum design.

2.3 Research Instrument
The primary data collection instrument was an interview guide developed based on the researcher's observations and the research objectives. As Bird (2016) explains, an interview guide provides a framework for the researcher to explore relevant topics in depth while allowing for flexibility in probing the respondents' answers. Separate interview guides were designed for the different respondent groups (students, teachers, and the school head), ensuring each group provided relevant information to their specific roles. The questions focused on the student's difficulties in the research writing process and the implications for teaching practical research. The Interview guides were developed and underwent rigorous validation by experts in the field to ensure the appropriateness and effectiveness of the questions.

2.4 Data Collection Procedure
A carefully structured interview process was implemented to ensure data quality and ethical research practices. Interviews were conducted separately with students, the teacher, and the school principal, an approach that fostered authentic and unbiased responses while enabling data triangulation for robust validation of findings. During these sessions, follow-up questions were strategically employed to delve deeper into students' specific challenges in research writing. To protect participant privacy and maintain ethical standards, all participants were provided with consent forms translated into their preferred language, ensuring a complete understanding of their

involvement in the study. Additionally, codenames were assigned to all respondents to maintain their anonymity throughout the research process. This comprehensive approach to data collection and ethical considerations allowed for a thorough and responsible investigation of the research problem while safeguarding participant confidentiality.

2.5 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis, as described by Villegas (2023), involves the identification of recurring patterns or themes within qualitative data. This approach allowed the researcher to organize and interpret the participants' responses into meaningful categories, grouped under general themes such as pre-writing, writing, and post-writing stages. Sub-themes were also identified through coding, facilitating a more granular data analysis.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Experiences of TVL Students in Practical Research Writing

This research aims to analyze the experiences of the TVL-AFA Senior High School students at San Isidro National High School in Practical Research Writing. Experience refers to the student's involvement in or exposure to the process of Practical Research Writing. This research also characterizes it as firsthand observation or involvement in events to gather information. It also involves the respondents' know-how in Practical Research Writing. To fully understand and analyze the respondents' experiences, the salient and prevailing experiences were presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. *Experiences of TVL-AFA students in practical research writing*

Codes/Sub-themes	Frequency n=16		
	2018-2019	2019-2020	Total
Pre-Writing Stage			
Lack of Background Knowledge	6	2	8
During Writing Stage			
Employing Proper Writing Mechanics	8	8	16
Lack of Available Resources	3	6	9
Poor understanding of research concepts	5	3	8
Uncooperative Groupmates	2	2	4
Post-Writing Stage			
Academic Pressure Felt During Research Defense	6	5	11

Through analyzing student responses, several sub-themes have emerged. These sub-themes are categorized into different stages of the writing process for a deeper comprehension of the student's experiences. The identified sub-themes provide insight into the students' difficulties throughout the research writing process and shed light on areas that require further attention and support. A thorough analysis of the student's experiences is discussed in the succeeding paragraphs.

Lack of Background Knowledge
Participants lamented the difficulty of writing a research paper due to their lack of background knowledge. They admitted to not having enough background knowledge in research writing and that their struggles in research writing are attributed to their lack of schema. This experience was primarily attributed to the need for more academic writing activities in Junior High School.

Some participants mentioned: *"We do not know what to write; even if we ask our groupmates, they only say they do not know. We do have ideas, too, but we do not know how to start because we have never experienced doing this in junior high school."*

"My experience as a researcher has been challenging. In addition to running out of time, I do not have enough background knowledge to do my research."

Others echoed this lack of preparation, finding themselves both pressed for time and without the necessary knowledge to conduct research effectively. Background knowledge is crucial for connecting prior learning with new concepts, validating existing knowledge, and fostering student engagement. Its absence becomes particularly problematic in Senior High School, where academic standards require the production of research outputs aligned

with curriculum expectations. Students struggled to articulate their ideas clearly and cohesively without a solid foundation.

The present study revealed an urgent need to promote research skills in students despite some improvement in background knowledge between the two cohorts. This deficiency significantly impacts their academic performance, particularly in research writing. As Lander et al. (2019) observed, there is a resounding need for improving research writing in the Philippine Setting. Adequate education to help develop basic research skills is a pressing need in country studies, including those by Chitra (2019) and Reddy (2016), who emphasize research's critical role in various fields such as academia, medicine, and governance. Developing research writing skills is thus essential for students to make meaningful contributions to society. However, the present study reveals a gap between students' research skills and the expected outcomes as they struggle to build sufficient background knowledge.

Collie et al. (2015) research suggests that successful writing outcomes depend on students' attitudes, actions, and emotions toward writing tasks. A lack of background knowledge may lead to frustration, negatively affecting these factors and hindering the ability to produce quality research. Similarly, Jamieson and Saunders (2020) highlight that many students lack research skills due to unfamiliarity with the research process. In this study, participants noted that groupmates who lacked an understanding of research writing contributed little to the project, further eroding their motivation and interest. This finding reinforces the need to build background knowledge in research to foster engagement and ensure students are better prepared for the demands of Senior High School research writing.

Difficulty in Employing Proper Writing Mechanics
Mastery of writing mechanics is essential for clear communication and effective research writing. Proficiency in grammar, sentence construction, paragraph development, and the organization of ideas enables writers to articulate their thoughts accurately and cohesively. However, the respondents in this study consistently struggled with these fundamental aspects of writing. All participants reported grammar, sentence structure, paragraph coherence, and formal language usage difficulties.

Some participants noted: *"Our grammar made it difficult to translate our data into paragraph form, and we also had difficulties organizing our data. We have weak writing skills, and even writing sentences is difficult. It was hard because we could not use proper grammar."*

These challenges are significant, as writing mechanics form the structural foundation of clear and persuasive writing. Without them, even the best content ideas remain ineffective if they are not appropriately communicated. The study revealed that Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) students struggled significantly with writing mechanics, hindering the research process and developing essential research skills. Numerous studies have highlighted the importance of writing skills in research. Scholars such as Sadeghi and Khajepasha (2015), Anderson (2017), and Jamieson and Saunders (2020) emphasize that poor writing skills, particularly in syntax and formal language use, are common obstacles students face. Fazdillah (2013) concluded that persistent difficulties with language mechanics often result in subpar writing performance, which can impede academic progress and future career prospects. The role of teachers in addressing these challenges is crucial. Anderson (2017) stresses that educators should prioritize the writing process over the final product to help students build essential writing skills. By focusing on developing language proficiency, educators can support students in mastering academic writing, which is foundational for research and lifelong success. The findings underscore the importance of strengthening students' writing mechanics to align with curriculum goals and improve their research and writing capabilities.

Lack of Available Resources
The study highlights that limited access to essential materials and resources significantly impedes students' ability to conduct thorough research and integrate diverse perspectives into their work. Participants expressed frustration over their inability to strengthen their research papers due to inadequate resources, attributing these challenges to the school's location and associated limitations.

Several students noted: *"We find it quite challenging to find information because we do not have a library, and the signal is very weak. We have to go up a hill to access the Internet."*

"The lack of a library and reliable internet connection made finding relevant literature and sources challenging, greatly hindering our research efforts."

These findings align with Mohammed (2016), who identified obstacles such as limited resources, time constraints, and financial issues as significant barriers to successful research. The absence of a library and reliable internet access compromises students' ability to engage in comprehensive research, affecting their capacity to explore their topics in depth. Despite technological advancements, students in remote areas face a digital divide that limits their access to information compared to their urban counterparts. This disparity highlights the urgent need to address these gaps to ensure that students from remote areas are not disadvantaged in acquiring 21st-century skills necessary for higher education and the workforce.

Supporting this, the Research Coalition (2013) reported that barriers to accessing academic resources result in students settling for insufficient information, undermining their educational experience. This coalition emphasized the critical role of academic journals in research and the need to overcome access barriers to provide a comprehensive education. The study underscores schools' need for better research facilities and resources to enhance students' research skills and academic performance. Addressing these resource limitations is essential for developing robust research capabilities and equipping students with the skills needed for future academic and professional success.

Poor Understanding of Research Concepts
Participants reported significant difficulties grasping research concepts, which adversely affected their analyses' depth and quality. They struggled with complex methodologies and theories, which led to challenges in understanding the importance of research and applying it effectively.

For example: *"We do not know what to write. Even when we ask our groupmates, they say they do not know. Although our teacher covered the lessons, we still found them hard to understand."*

"While doing my research, I felt overwhelmed and stressed because I was unsure about some parts and the appropriateness of our research instruments for data collection."

These challenges highlight the need for research writing instruction to be simplified and tailored to students' existing strengths. The difficulty in understanding research concepts appears to be linked to students' limited reading habits and comprehension skills. Studies by Zarah (2018), Chen, Wang, and Lee (2015), Ligembe (2014), and Kazemian et al. (2015) emphasize the importance of cultivating reading skills, noting that inadequate comprehension significantly impacts students' academic performance. Although these studies focus on reading abilities, they shed light on how poor reading skills hinder students' understanding of complex research concepts. Most respondents identified improved reading and comprehension skills as essential for better understanding and executing research tasks. Enhancing these skills could facilitate a more precise grasp of research methodologies and improve writing abilities. Addressing these foundational issues will be crucial in supporting students in developing the necessary research skills and succeeding in their academic endeavors.

Uncooperative Groupmates
Collaborative projects often encounter challenges due to conflicting schedules, varying work ethics, or communication issues among group members. In this study, uncooperative behavior among groupmates was primarily attributed to a lack of basic research knowledge, limited writing skills, and poor understanding of research concepts.

Participants reported: *"They did not have enough knowledge of writing academic papers, so it was difficult for them to give suggestions during our research."*

"Even though we are a group, it is challenging because some members are not contributing. It feels like I am the only one generating and sharing ideas, which makes the process difficult."

The absence of essential skills significantly hampers effective collaboration, as students with limited research knowledge struggle to contribute meaningfully. This lack of foundational skills often results in discomfort and reluctance to engage, leading to unproductive group dynamics. Jamieson and Saunders (2020) highlight that self-management, a key "soft skill," is crucial for effective collaboration. Students lacking fundamental research skills may experience frustration and disengagement, negatively impacting their collaborative efforts and overall performance. Improving students' basic research skills and understanding of research concepts is vital for fostering more effective group work and enhancing research outcomes. Addressing these skill gaps can help students better navigate collaborative tasks and contribute more effectively to group projects.

Academic Pressures

The pressures experienced during research defense highlighted the significant stress and anxiety students faced when defending their work before peers and educators. This added complexity to the research process, as participants struggled with language barriers and self-confidence.

Some noted: *"It was nerve-wracking during the defense because all the questions were in English. We found it hard to understand because we are bad at English."*

"We had difficulties during the defense because we could not answer many questions."

Vallejo (2023) defines academic pressure as the stress and unease that arise from external factors during a student's educational journey. Respondents reported feeling overwhelmed during their research defenses, which hindered their ability to respond confidently to the panel's questions. These pressures were attributed to students' lack of confidence in their research work and difficulty articulating their thoughts, particularly in English. Research writing can be a significant source of stress for students, as highlighted by studies from Herr and Anderson (2015), Savello (2018), Villanueva (2017), and Qasem and Sayid (2019). They emphasized the importance of providing adequate support throughout the research process—from pre-writing to post-writing stages—to help students manage stress and maintain motivation. Cultivating interest in writing is crucial to helping students handle research demands without becoming overwhelmed. The findings also revealed that the heavy workload associated with Practical Research courses can be detrimental, with some students finding the pressure incapacitating. While technical writing skills are essential, it is equally important to structure tasks to prevent students from becoming overburdened. Dividing lesson activities to balance workload and allow students to explore their interests can alleviate overwhelm, enhancing enjoyment and engagement in the research process.

3.2 Difficulties Experienced in Practical Research Writing

Table 2. *Difficulties encountered by TVL students in practical research writing*

Difficulties	Frequency n= 16		
	2018-2019	2019-2020	Total
Pre-Writing			
Determining a Good Research Topic	8	8	16
Formulating a Research Title	8	8	16
Formulating Research Questions	8	8	16
During Writing			
Distinguishing related literature and related studies	6	8	14
Writing Citations	6	5	11
Formulating Research Instruments	8	5	13
Analyzing and Interpreting Data	8	5	13
Writing Conclusions	6	5	11
Writing References	6	5	11
Post-Writing			
Research Presentation	8	5	13

The most common difficulties in research writing are related to pre-writing, during, and post-writing stages. In the Pre-Writing stage, all the respondents experienced difficulties determining a good research topic, formulating a research title, and developing research questions. The respondents mostly attribute all these difficulties to the need for more background knowledge and information on practical research writing. Meanwhile, both respondents struggled with writing. The respondents identified distinguishing related literature from related studies, analyzing and interpreting data, writing citations, formulating a research instrument, writing conclusions,

and writing references were among the most challenging skills that the respondents struggled with. In the Post Writing Stage, the respondents identify research presentation as the most challenging writing process. Table 2 presents the writing difficulties encountered by the respondents while undergoing research problems.

Bueno (2016) mentioned that skills such as defining the limit of the problem, gathering and interpreting data or information relevant to the problem, analyzing and interpreting findings, and formulating conclusions and recommendations are the foundations of research writing. These skills are necessary for a research paper to be complete. Through the analysis of the results, the writing difficulties that emerged from the data collected are embedded in the skills mentioned by Bueno. Bueno asserted that these skills should be the foundations of research writing and that aside from the language abilities of the students, these technical skills should be the focus of instruction. On the other hand, some identified skills that need to be enhanced can be categorized as "hard skills," as perceived in the study by Jamieson and Saunders (2020). Hard skills are the technical skills that students must possess to succeed in research writing, and they are likely the skills identified in the present study. Such skills are also mentioned in the recent study of Maruskivich (2021), where he emphasized the significance of cultivating essential competencies in research writing, including defining the problem, sourcing accurate information, and selecting appropriate research methods, which are underscored as skills that are needed to be developed. The researcher warned that a lack of proficiency in these areas could lead to student confusion and additional challenges in conducting research. This warning is reflected in the present study as several respondents determined these skills as the writing difficulties they encountered while researching. The findings also revealed that deliberate interventions to improve students' research abilities may positively influence their academic success, and highlighting the value of developing these fundamental skills for students' overall educational achievement is necessary. Following the words of Bueno (2016), Jamieson and Saunders (2020), and the findings of Maruskivich (2021), the present researcher also asserts that teachers must focus their instruction on the development of technical writing skills needed to produce research papers as it will develop competence among the learners.

3.3 Implications in Teaching Practical Research
Difficulties in Achieving Competencies
The student's difficulties in Practical Research mean that various learning competencies take time to achieve. The difficulties encountered by the students in Practical Research Writing hinder the achievement of the identified learning competencies, making the subject difficult to teach and learn. The identified difficulties spread across the learning competencies of Practical Research. In addition, learning content and performance standards from each identified learning competency lead to developing the final required output in Practical Research, a Practical Research Paper. Poor writing skills resulted in more significant problems in the student's academic lives and the institution's performance.

Belen et al. (2022) asserted that when competencies are not met, students may struggle to grasp new concepts and be stuck reviewing essential previous topics necessary for understanding the current lesson. This finding deepens the need for methodological approaches that address the issues of compromised competencies due to the difficulties encountered by students in Practical Research Writing. In addition, it has been widely recognized that developing foundational skills in research writing is crucial. Research by Sellars et al. (2017) and Showman et al. (2013) has highlighted the significance of enhancing skills in various aspects of academic writing for researchers to generate high-quality research output. These skills are considered essential competencies in the field of Practical Research. Neglecting these skills could lead to failure for researchers, students, or professionals. The study above strengthened the idea that comprehensive learning material must be produced to address these issues.

Targeting Goals Due to Time Constraints
Practical Research is divided into two subjects, each with an allotment of 80 hours per semester. Even though both subjects are the same in Course Title, each subject had a different focus, yet both require a research output. Practical Research 1 focuses on Qualitative Research and requires a Qualitative Research Output, while Practical Research 2 focuses on Quantitative Research and requires a Quantitative Research Output. Teacher A said that since the students are not equipped with the skills to produce two different research papers, he only requires them to write one. The research writing begins from the second semester of Grade 11 until the first semester of Grade

12. If the students still need to finish their research papers, they continue writing them until the Second Semester of Grade 12 in Inquiry, Investigations, and Immersion.

These difficulties prevented students from producing sound output. Since they needed better writing skills, the paper had to undergo several revisions, compromising the output's quality and completeness. Since we need more time, I will ask the students to produce Chapters 1-3 in PR1, while Chapters 4-5 will be produced in PR2. If the students failed to finish, we continued doing the paper in 3I's. This practice not only compromises the learning competencies of the three subjects but also lessens opportunities for students to gain varied research skills best suited for each subject's required output. When asked what he felt about this situation, Teacher A revealed that this is being done at his and other schools. He narrated that although the competencies were compromised, the teachers had no choice. As a result, producing a research paper is a requirement to graduate. Although the competencies are compromised, we do not have a choice since the students cannot do it. Other schools have also used this practice so that students can produce an output because it is a requirement to graduate.

Mohammed (2016) cited time constraints as one of the external factors affecting a research project's completion. As every research project follows a strict timeframe, time constraints present itself as a factor that may limit research findings. To address these issues, students must balance their workloads, have abundant financial support, and be skilled in research writing; however, TVL students need help to avail themselves of these solutions. Villanueva's (2017) study concluded that several students dropped out of college before completing their thesis as it is time-consuming and requires extensive writing knowledge, affecting most of the working students at the University where the study was conducted. This study tells us that external factors such as time constraints, heavy workloads, financial incapacity, and low level of skills in writing hinder the learners and teachers from achieving target goals specified by the Curriculum Guide in Practical Research.

Difficulty in Employing Varied Teaching Strategies
When asked about the teaching strategies the respondent typically employed in teaching Practical Research, the respondent shared that he usually used the Traditional teaching method, such as discussion and Socratic strategies. Teacher A usually delivers the lesson and asks the students to write their research papers afterward. The respondent shared that since the subject is highly technical and most of his time is attributed to research lessons to be taught in Practical Research and other teaching loads, he barely has time to think about other strategies to use in his Practical Research Class. Although Teacher A recognizes the importance of employing varied teaching strategies to get the learners interested in Practical Research, he also reasoned that the student's research skills limit him from using varied teaching strategies.

"I find it hard to incorporate teaching strategies in research because, aside from the fact that it was not my major, approaches to research are very technical. The strategies should also be anchored to the level of students, and I need help finding strategies that I can simplify to fit research. So, I need help writing a lesson plan for Practical Research. Also, I am loaded with subjects to teach and am expected to write lesson plans. I am glad that teachers are not required to submit LPs if they teach subjects far from their primary subject."

This practice contradicts the belief of Bouslog (2019), as the researcher affirms that teaching strategies assist students in engaging, making connections, and bringing enthusiasm to the presented information. As students become accustomed to teachers' different strategies, some may utilize them when exploring new material. While it is true that students must familiarize themselves with Practical Research concepts and that it can be viewed as a highly technical subject, several teaching strategies can still be incorporated to make the subject interesting and fun. This finding highlights the role of the teachers in the teaching-learning process. Lo and Hyland (2007) noted that motivated students who have set writing goals learn quickly and are more persistent than those required to complete a writing task. They also found that students tend to excel in writing when they can connect with the subject matter or have a genuine interest in the writing assignment.

Additionally, setting incremental goals helps students experience a sense of accomplishment, leading to enhanced motivation in writing. This is also supported by Rozenshine's (2013) study, which mentioned that teachers must employ varied strategies to supplement gaps in skills and knowledge among learners. He explicitly stated that prompts, modeling, and examples that have been tried and tested in subjects like math, science, writing, and

reading comprehension can be highly beneficial. Using these strategies helps convey many skills typically covered in school. Students can progressively become more self-sufficient in their learning journey by giving prompts, illustrating their use, and giving direction. These findings also added weight to Hayes and Flowers' Cognitive Process Theory of Writing and Brown's Process-Oriented Approach, which believe that writing is further enhanced using teaching strategies that guide a writer in developing ideas regardless of the writing stage the writer is in.

Low Academic Performance of the School in Language and Literacy
The interviewee expressed concerns about the poor performance of Senior High School students in Language and Literacy. Based on the turn-over results of grades, most students have lower grades in language-related subjects compared to the core, applied, and specialized subjects in senior high school. Specifically, students need help in subjects requiring reading and writing activities, such as English for Academic and Professional Purposes, Reading and Writing, Practical Research and Inquiries, Investigations, and Immersion. The Annual Accomplishment Report submitted by the Senior High School Coordinator from the year 2018 to the present revealed that the mean score of the student's final average in Practical Research only ranges from 78% to 84%, which is still low considering that this mean score is described as Fairly Satisfactory to Satisfactory as stated in DepEd Order No. 8 s. 2015 titled Policy Guidelines on Classroom Assessment for the K to 12 Basic Education Program.

The achievement disparities in low-performing schools have prevailed for many years. Ting (2022) attributed the reasons for low performance to a lack of resources, insufficient facilities, and a low number of teaching staff. These factors, in turn, impact the development of students in literacy and numeracy, which later affects the school's performance. UNESCO (2016) cited that approximately 60% of students worldwide struggle with fundamental reading skills, with adolescents being the most affected group. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) announces that 61% of adolescents aged 12 to 15 lack reading proficiency. Despite the widespread availability of education, with more students enrolled than ever, many still need to improve their basic reading abilities even when attending school. This inability to read proficiently resulted in the underperformance of schools. This problem is also experienced by San Isidro National High School, as asserted by the school head when asked why students have low turn-out grades in language-related subjects.

"Maybe because we have reading problems, during meetings, students' low reading skills are always a topic to be discussed. As the teachers say, this is an effect of Mass Promotion. If the students are weak in reading, they are also weak in writing. That may be the cause of why students have difficulties in these subjects."

Jamieson and Saunders (2020) asserted that the foundation of learning lies in developing skills in reading and writing. Reading and writing are macro skills that cannot be separated from each other. A student will easily learn how to write effectively if the student can understand what he reads. These thoughts also resonated in the study of Trojan (2013), where he recognizes the importance of strengthening reading abilities to help students master other macro skills such as writing, listening, and speaking. In addition, language and literacy struggles are only some factors that cause schools to continue underperforming.

Academic Pressures Among Students
During the interview with the school head, the respondent revealed that some students may have felt academic pressure from doing research activities. He shared that the school conducted home visitations to convince some students to continue schooling. One factor cited by the school head during his meeting with the student and parent was that students felt they could not proceed with Senior High School anymore as they struggled with many requirements like their practical research output.

"We have cases where we had to conduct home visits since some students tend to stop attending school in the middle of the school year. Some parents stated that their child had difficulties adhering to the school requirements like accomplishing projects in their subjects, doing work immersion, writing research papers, and many other things."

According to Savello (2018), a research endeavor holds significance for students when it stems from curiosity and passion. However, it can become burdensome and purposeless if seeking approval or acknowledgment is the

primary motivation. In many cases, students would only write a research paper as a form of compliance. Moreover, Herr and Anderson (2015) mentioned that the graduate research journey consists of excitement and success, yet it. May also include phases of deep exploration and possible standstill. Similarly, high school seniors new to research writing might encounter challenges like graduate students despite their varied experience levels. Belen and Ramirez (2014) also mentioned that research is a form of assessment of the student's knowledge, and this statement provides a reason why students feel academic pressure in research writing. Aside from the fact that research output is a requirement for graduation for senior high school students, the findings that TVL students lack research skills and have difficulty employing basic writing mechanics added weight to the academic pressures the students feel.

4.0 Conclusion

The findings underscore the crucial role of research writing as a fundamental experience for Senior High School students. However, both internal and external factors, particularly language proficiency, significantly impact their ability to excel in this area. Students from the Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) strand face notable difficulties in acquiring essential research writing skills, which could hinder their academic development and future progression. These challenges not only obstruct students' learning but also present barriers to effectively teaching Practical Research, ultimately affecting the overall quality of education. Addressing these issues is vital to ensuring that students, especially those in the TVL strand, are equipped with the necessary research skills to thrive in their academic and professional careers. Through the findings of the present study, it is recommended that the level of writing abilities of the students must be assessed before Practical Research Writing so that writing interventions and programs can be done to prepare the students for the curriculum standards of Practical Research. Guided learning and a step-by-step assessment of the student's writing outputs in Practical Research must be prioritized to address the difficulties experienced by students during their research writing journey. The result of this study may also be used to craft contextualized lesson exemplars in Practical Research Writing to make the subject easier for students in the TVL Strands. Furthermore, schools must strengthen the implementation of policies on professional development among teachers to improve teaching pedagogies and to promote quality teaching, especially in research. Any gaps found in the present study may be subject to another study by future researchers whose research topics are relevant to the present study.

5.0 Contribution of Authors

Sole author.

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