Potential of Newly Hired Faculty Members of PSU as Researchers Assessed through the Lens of Pragmatic Inquiry

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Abstract *- Pragmatism is a philosophical and epistemological framework for interrogating and evaluating ideas and beliefs in terms of their practical functioning. Pragmatism holds that the value and meaning of opinions and facts captured in research data are assessed through examination of their practical consequences which gives them a warranted assertibility. This study investigates the potential of newly hired faculty members to become researchers through the lens of pragmatic inquiry. The study found that although the newly hired faculty members had very little research output, they had above-average levels of pragmatic inquiry that adhered to the ideas of emphasizing knowledge that could be put to use, acknowledging the connections between experience, knowing, and acting, and viewing inquiry as an experiential process. Additionally, the faculty members' level of pragmatic inquiry is a key predictor of their capacity to do research that may be applied to enhance teaching and learning. As a result, the amount of pragmatic inquiry among faculty members is helpful in determining the training needs of faculty members who focus on research as well as supporting the value of pragmatism as a paradigm for research.*

Keywords *– Pragmatic Inquiry, Research Competency, Research Productivity, State University.*

INTRODUCTION

Pragmatism is a philosophical and epistemological framework for interrogating and evaluating ideas and beliefs in terms of their practical functioning. Pragmatism holds that the value and meaning of opinions and facts captured in research data are assessed through examination of their practical consequences which gives them a warranted assertibility. [1] Since it is premised on the idea that research can steer clear of metaphysical debates about the nature of truth and reality and focus instead on 'practical understandings' of concrete, real-world issue, this approach provides emphasis on interrogating the value and meaning of data from research through the assessment of its practical consequences. [2] This is particularly helpful in organizational settings where the practice is closely intertwined with the ways in which knowledge is produced, causing several classical pragmatists to move away from using nouns, to focus on 'know-ing' and 'learn-ing'. Thus, using pragmatism, researchers working in organizational settings can move beyond objectivist conceptualizations, which have dominated research in the organizational sciences, to exploring and understanding the connections between knowledge and action in context. [3] Pragmatism's focus on the production of actionable knowledge is of

particular benefit to research with non-government organizations, ensuring that research is contextually relevant as well as informed by theory. Educational institutions are an example of an organizational setting wherein knowledge is produced, and thus can reap the benefit of pragmatism.

Kelly and Cordero (2016) identified three principles of critical relevance to research organizational processes. These principles are (1) an emphasis on actionable knowledge which helps researchers develop agenda anchored in respondent experiences and ensure the research is of relevance., (2) recognition of the interconnectedness between experience, knowledge, and acting which helps researchers holistically address the knowing, acting, and experience occurring in organizations. and (3) a view of inquiry as an experiential process which addresses a key challenge in organizational research to develop a mediated understanding of complex organizational processes. [4][5] These three methodological principles for pragmatic inquiry serve as a critical lens for researchers to conceptualize and manage research projects in line with classical pragmatism. [5]

Thus, pragmatism can be extremely useful in public colleges providing a particularly worthy paradigm to guide research that seeks to provide benefit through the improvement of teaching practice and policy while

remaining faithful to the quality-driven rigors of academic research. This is supported by the diverse studies written about the importance of action research in teacher education [6][7] and its effect on quality classroom instruction. [8][9] The belief that teachers are active participants in the development of education shows that by knowing the problem in the classroom; and by taking an action regarding that problem, teachers become the catalysts for change and responsible agents for the improvement of their own classroom teaching and for uplifting students learning. Doing classroom research is knowing what the problem is in the classroom and how that problem can be addressed to improve the teaching and learning process. Job promotion is the primary motivation why teachers to do research work. However, reported challenges such as lack of research knowledge and skills, heavy teaching loads, and lack of financial support from the schools obstructed them from doing it. Attending and participating in research training, receiving research incentives, and having a lighter teaching timetable were what the teachers perceived they need to do research. [10]

This study will be helpful in examining the level of pragmatic inquiry among newly hired PSU faculty members and identifying inherent competencies which can be targeted for assessment and formulation of policy directed towards professional development anchored on the enhancement of research capabilities and implementation of learning programs which boosts teachers' competencies on research and improving research productivity and outcomes.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aims to gauge the adaptation of pragmatism as an educational philosophy among newly hired faculty members of PSU by determining the level of pragmatic inquiry and its relationship to their research productivity. Specifically, it will present answers to the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the newly hired faculty members of PSU along:
a. age
b. gender
c. civil status
d. total research output
2. What is the level of pragmatic inquiry among the newly hired faculty members of PSU along the principles of:
a. emphasis on actionable knowledge.

b. recognition of the interconnectedness of experience, knowing, and acting; and
c. inquiry as an experiential process
3. What is the relationship between the level of pragmatic inquiry to the research productivity of the newly hired faculty members of PSU?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study employed of quantitative research design using both descriptive and correlational methods. The questionnaire is based on Kelly and Cordero's (2016) "Three principles of pragmatism for research on organizational processes" adapted to be able to be specifically applied to teachers. [5] The questionnaire was administered through Google Forms. It made use of the five-point Likert Scale rating to measure the level of agreement of teachers to statements that measure their level of pragmatic inquiry.

Table 1. Likert-scale rating

Scale	Range	Interpretation
5	4.21 - 5.00	Strongly Agree
4	3.41 - 4.20	Agree
3	2.61 – 3.40	Neutral
2	1.81 – 2.60	Disagree
1	1.00 – 1.80	Strongly Disagree

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 presents the profile of the newly hired PSU Faculty members who are the respondents of the study. The average age of the group is 26.21 years (SD=7.96). Twenty (20) of the respondents or 51.28% fall below the mean age, while the rest (48.72%) are above the mean. A sizable majority of the respondents are Female (82.05%) while only seven (7) or 17.95% are males. Most of the respondents are also Married with twenty-five (25) or 64.10%, while the rest (35.90%) are Single. Twenty-two (22) or 56.51% of the respondents have not published any research, thirteen (13) or 33.33% have declared that they have one research published, while four (4), or 10.26% have two (2) published research. Low research output among the faculty members surveyed is evident as most of them have not produced any published research and two (2) is the maximum number of published research among those who have.

Table 2. Profile of the Respondents

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Age	Below Mean	20	51.28%
	Above Mean	19	48.72%
Gender	Male	7	17.95%
	Female	32	82.05%
Civil Status	Single	25	64.10%
	Married	14	35.90%
Number of Researches Published	0	22	56.41%
	1	13	33.33%
	2 or more	4	10.26%

Table 3 presented the level of pragmatic inquiry among newly hired PSU Faculty members along the principle of emphasis on actionable knowledge. Based on the results the respondents incurred an average weighted mean of 3.96 along the said principle. This indicates that newly hired PSU Faculty members exhibited an above-average level of pragmatic inquiry in terms of the first principle and values emphasis on actionable knowledge. Among the indicators, the teachers registered the highest weighted mean for "I desire to produce useful and actionable knowledge" with a weighted mean of 4.13, while the indicator of "I am able to develop research agenda anchored in my experiences" registered the lowest weighted mean with 3.82. This means that the faculty members possess the ability to shape the scope of academic research agendas in applied fields such as international and community development in agreement with the assertion of Morgan (2014). [11] Further, this supports the conclusion of Kelly and Cordero (2016) as college instructors can unpack research problems and identify elements of the problem that were the most relevant enabling teachers to achieve research outcomes that are relevant, transferrable, and contribute to both the theory and practice of performance management and evaluation in state universities. [5]

Table 3. Level of Pragmatic Inquiry among Newly Hired PSU Faculty Members along the Principle of Emphasis on Actionable Knowledge

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent	Rank
1. I desire to produce useful and actionable knowledge	4.13	Agree	1
2. I desire to solve existential problems or redetermine indeterminate situations	3.97	Agree	3
3. I am able to develop research agenda anchored in my experiences	3.82	Agree	5
4. I am able to engage with multiple experiences of the same phenomena	4.00	Agree	2
5. I am able to orient inquiry towards problem solving through the reconstruction of habits and continuation of vital and social experience	3.87	Agree	4
Composite Mean	**3.96**	Agree	

Table 4 presented the level of pragmatic inquiry among PSU Faculty Members along the principle of recognition of the interconnectedness of experience,

knowing, and acting. Based on the results the respondents incurred an average weighted mean of 3.98 along the said principle. This indicates that the faculty members exhibited an above-average level of pragmatic inquiry in terms of recognizing the interconnectedness of experience, knowing, and acting. Among the indicators, the faculty members registered the highest weighted mean for ". I document actions and experiences of staff" with a weighted mean of 4.05, while the indicators of "I am able to surface complex themes and issues" and "I am able to go beyond theory and act on it to give voice to those impacted by organizational researches" registered the lowest weighted mean with 3.90. This means that teachers have the ability to guide sampling strategies, identify information-rich respondents, ensure the sampling process uncovered a range of perspectives, and gain a more detailed understanding of the phenomena under investigation. [5]

Table 4. Level of Pragmatic Inquiry among Newly Hired PSU Faculty Members along the Principle of Recognition of the Interconnectedness of Experience, Knowing, and Acting

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent	Rank
1. I seek better understanding of the organizational processes	4.03	Agree	2.5
2. I document actions and experiences of staff	4.05	Agree	1
3. I am able to surface complex themes and issues	3.90	Agree	4.5
4. I am able to go beyond theory and act on it to give voice to those impacted by organizational researches	3.90	Agree	4.5
5. I am able to analyze organizational practices through experience as well as action	4.03	Agree	2.5
Composite Mean	**3.98**	Agree	

Table 5 presented the level of pragmatic inquiry among newly hired PSU Faculty Members along the principle of recognition of the interconnectedness of experience, knowing, and acting. Based on the results the respondents incurred an average weighted mean of 3.98 along the said principle. This indicates that the newly hired faculty members exhibited an above-average level of pragmatic inquiry in this principle with the teachers exhibiting that inquiry is an experiential process. Among the indicators, the faculty members registered the highest weighted mean for "I am of the belief that there is no distinct boundary between everyday life and research"

with a weighted mean of 4.10, while the indicator of "I am able to link beliefs to action" registered the lowest weighted mean with 3.79. This supports the findings of Kelly and Cordero (2016) that college instructors can be flexible and adaptive throughout the research process. [5]

Table 5. Level of Pragmatic Inquiry among Newly Hired PSU Faculty Members along the Principle of Inquiry as an Experiential Process

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent	Rank
1. I am able to map the consequences, experiences, or meanings of social action for different individuals in an organization.	4.03	Agree	2.5
2. I am able to link beliefs to action	3.79	Agree	5
3. I am of the belief that there is no distinct boundary between everyday life and research	4.10	Agree	1
4. I encourage stakeholders such as students and parents to trace likely consequences of different lines of action	4.00	Agree	4
5. I am able to develop a mediated understanding of complex organizational processes.	4.03	Agree	2.5
Composite Mean	**3.95**	Agree	

Table 6 presents the result of the chi-square test conducted to determine the relationship between the level of pragmatic inquiry of public-school teachers to their research productivity. The results indicate that the principles of emphasis on actionable knowledge ($X2 = 26.189$, $p = 0.01$) and inquiry as an experiential process ($X2 = 26.574$, $p = 0.01$) have a significant association with research productivity. These results indicate that newly hired faculty members who exhibited a higher level of pragmatic inquiry are more likely to produce research over the course of their service. This is evidence of the usefulness of pragmatism as a particularly worthy paradigm to guide research. [5]

Table 6. Relationship of the Level Pragmatic Inquiry to the Research Productivity of Newly Hired PSU Faculty Members

Principle of Pragmatic Inquiry	x^2-value	p-value
Emphasis on Actionable Knowledge	26.189	0.01
Recognition of the Interconnectedness of Experience, Knowing, and Acting	19.566	0.08
Inquiry as an Experiential Process	26.574	0.01

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study revealed that the newly hired faculty members have very low research output, however, they exhibited an above-average level of pragmatic inquiry along the principles of emphasis on actionable knowledge, recognition of the interconnectedness of experience, knowing, and acting, and inquiry as an experiential process. Further, the level of pragmatic inquiry among the faculty members is a significant indicator of their ability to produce research that can be used to improve the teaching and learning process. Thus, the level of pragmatic inquiry among faculty members is useful in the assessment of training needs for the professional development of faculty members focusing on research and provides evidence of for the usefulness of pragmatism as a worthy paradigm to guide research.

To enhance the research productivity of faculty members, training and seminars focusing on developing research skills must be conducted. Existing policies must be examined, and new ones must be formulated if necessary to increase research output among faculty members. Further, future researchers may focus on investigating the influence of professional development and competencies of faculty members on improving research productivity.

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