Achievement and Aspiration of Local Colleges and Universities on the Research Agenda of Funding Institutions: Basis for Research Capability Building

Maricel F. Mauricio[1*]

ABSTRACT

This study was conducted for a specific purpose: to assess the research culture in the local colleges and universities and to propose an enhanced research capacity-building program. There were sixteen informants of this study; four administrators and twelve faculty members in the local colleges and universities in the CAMANAVA area namely: The University of Caloocan City, City of Malabon University, Navotas Polytechnic College and Valenzuela City Polytechnic College. A Purposive sampling technique was used to identify the informants. The study made use of a qualitative research approach. The data were collected from individual interviews with the administrators and faculty members. Using open coding, six (6) themes were emerged from the interviews and analysis of the document: philosophical research perspective, impact on institution's growth and development, motivational components in research engagement, promoting the research culture, managing challenges and impediments and enhancing research capability. The informants identified the challenges in the development of the intensified research culture in the local colleges and universities which includes the scarcity of funds, research skills and expertise, network resources, and time constraint. These can be resolved through the enhancement of research capabilities and development programs. Generally, the study concluded that the research is indeed a powerful tool in addressing institutional problems and the utmost contribution of faculty members of the local colleges and universities in the academic and curricular programs and institutional growth and development. The institutional support will address the compelling need of the local colleges and universities to improve their research capability and research output.

INTRODUCTION

The challenge of globalization demands critical attention to research in order to generate knowledge and discover new strategies for improving the quality of human life. Thus, all faculty members and personnel are encouraged to engage in quality research, in accordance with Presidential Decree 1788 and as provided for in the Republic Act 7722. As stated by CHED (2016), "They who produce quality paper 'enjoy the prestige of scholastic superiority and academic maturity".

Research is a major function of higher educational institutions; presumably, faculty members should not only be aware of it but must be actively involved in the generation of knowledge. The Commission on Higher Education has been pushing zealously for a more compelling research orientation amongst HEIs, hence the advent of the National Higher Education Research Agenda in 1996, which formulated the goals of higher education research aside from its mechanics, and the concrete steps to comprehend its goals. About twelve Zonal Research Centers had been placed within the country to further foster and promote research in both state and private HEIs (CHED, 2016).

Research culture is a common perception of research convened by the members of an institution as the entire system of sharing common connotations about research. It is also the shared principles, ideals, mindsets, and norms that influence the bringing out of research tasks within an organization. The research culture may improve when the level of the individual attention will be devoted to motivation and incentive, developing the institution's bequest of research skills through recruitment, education, and training and the parallels amid the study of organizational and research culture.

However, Philippine HEIs face critical and urgent challenges in major fronts of the research and development, and extension (RDE) function. Essential issues necessitate to be addressed such as; improving capabilities of faculty as well as physical resources and infrastructure to carry out research, increasing research productivity and upgrading quality and impact, increasing linkages with the community, business and industry, and stakeholders. These are to further improve knowledge production, utilization, dissemination, and extension including product improvement and commercialization, as well as utilizing products of research as inputs to policy initiatives and reforms. It serves also for developing a steady pipeline of young proficient researchers who can carry on the task of unbridling innovations that can produce employment opportunities, create new businesses, for a new scheme of solving economic and social issues. In so doing, it assuages poverty and assure the success of the nation in the long term.

Meanwhile, section 8 of Republic Act 7722 entitled "An

[1] Faculty Member, Valenzuela City Polytechnic College, Valenzuela City, Philippines
* Corresponding author's e-mail: maricel.mauricio@valpoly.edu.ph

Act Creating the Commission on Higher Education, Appropriating Funds Therefore and for Other Purposes" specifically provides the powers and functions to the Commission, the responsibility to formulate and recommend development policies, plans, and programs on research. Such plans are endorsed to the executive and legislative branches, after which are given priorities, and grants on higher learning and research. The Commission also develops criteria for allocating additional resources such as research and program development grants, scholarships and other similar programs, provided, that there shall not detract from the fiscal autonomy already enjoyed by LUCs, and direct or redirect research by HEIs to meet the needs of agro-industrialization and development.

Republic Act 7722 created the CHED and states that as knowledge economy or knowledge society epitomizes that colleges and universities are not just a transmitter of culture, a producer of knowledge, and an educator of young minds, but also, as the main agent of economic growth. It should also be a research and development laboratory and a mechanism through which the country builds its human capital to enable it to keenly participate in the global economy. It is, therefore, fundamental to encourage Philippine HEI's to become platforms for innovation and drivers of competitiveness and economic growth.

The research agenda was finalized and executed in 1998 subsequently after a sequence of consultations with HEIs and stakeholders that are included in the essential provisions. The goal of National Higher Education Research is to establish and inculcate a culture of research in Philippine HEIs. The objectives of the national higher education research are; to establish rapport structures, upsurge the research productivity of Philippine HEIs and individuals, and establish a system of research-based policy environment through periodic commissioned researches that would ensure long term sustainability of research activities in Philippine HEIs.

The Commission hereby issues policies for the CHED Research Chair Award stated in the CHED Memorandum Order No. 18, series of 2015, and also under Resolution No. 324, s. 2009 authorizing the National Higher Education Research Agenda to provide the primary strategy towards enhancing the research productivity of HEIs as well as its institutionalization of a particular system of rewards for outstanding research outputs and undertakings of HEIs faculty/researchers.

CHED (2016) affirms the principle of inclusiveness in research and the optimum participation of the bonafide researchers along the career span, working in research groups or consortia. With this principle, grants-in-aids programs were formulated to optimize the participation of the researchers. The Grants-in-Aid (GIA) programs as two-fold strategic investment, is formulated in developing the country's human resources as researchers and innovators and providing opportunities for HEIs consortia or groups to develop a distinctive niche in research and innovation. Such principle was supported by the CHED Memorandum Order No.52, which presents three interrelated pathways namely, Pathways to Equity, Pathways to Relevance, and Pathways to Advancement which specify key principles, programs, and mechanisms. Additionally, research is a valuable tool to produce needed changes. It is a pathway to progress and development. One of the imperatives of modern living is conducting research to address problems that need to be resolved, to investigate situations that require improvements, to review policies that must be revised and programs of action that demand modifications, and to be truly responsive to complex human existence.

According to Faltaldo (2016), research is widely recognized as an important tool for solving man's various problems and making life more colorful and convenient. Hence, due to research man become progressive because man is innovating the products of research. This principle is supported by the progressivist educational philosophy, wherein the school must develop the way of life of the citizens through facing freedom and democracy in schools, shared decision-making, and planning of mentors with students.

To materialize the objectives of the CHED, research capability is enhanced by every HEIs. Research capability is the potential or capacity of individuals, organizations, and systems to implement and disseminate more efficiently and effectively high-quality research. It includes institutional consideration that covers the incentives, the economic, political, and regulatory context and the resource base on which the context is built.

Research capability is a logically distinct grouping of the entire research process, including the resources and technologies, in order to produce a discrete output. Once an organization defines its capabilities and understands how they function today, it is better positioned to improve its operations for the future. It can design its research and development networks and processes to support business objectives over the long-term, and becomes flexible enough to efficiently tackle new activities (Warwick Academic Center, 2012).

The research capability building programs seemed to have a greater impact at the institutional level rather than at an individual researcher level. There are three main areas of concern of research capability such as, the decentralization of the loci of research administrative operations, the enhancing of research productivity through direct support for research to individuals and institutions, and the increasing of the pool of capable researchers through a research capability building program (Pardo, 2018).

To optimize research agenda CHED NHERA 2 provides the policies, directions, priorities and thrusts of Philippine higher education research in the medium to long term. The goals and objectives of CHED NHERA 2 are as follows; enhancing research capability of Philippine HEIs to produce knowledge in relation to global competitiveness through research capability programs,

increasing graduate education in priority disciplines, increasing research productivity of the HEIs and its distinctive areas of expertise through research funding. The institutionalization of a scheme of rewards and incentive, and journal accreditation services, producing new knowledge essential for the advancement of higher learning aside from for national development through dovetailing HEIs with R&D initiatives of the DOST were also implemented. In addition, the establishment of zonal research laboratories through state-of-the-art facilities and equipment for sharp edge technology research, paved way for establishing external linkages, and creation of visiting scholars in addition to fellowship program, and promoting and accelerating dissemination then utilization of research outputs through research. Dissemination and utilization of multi-disciplinary research, policy orientation, participation, networking and balanced attention, were given to basic and applied researches (NHERA 2, 2019).

However, Techankee (2011) identified some challenges in building a research culture. These are; lack of theory/framework in producing research in the country and for HEIs doing and publishing needed scholarly research is not easy due to responsibilities such as teaching, administrative work and consulting and availability of funds especially for non-priority study areas.

Chen (2015) stated that the research has proved to be valued and prioritized over teaching for a long time in the academic world. This shows how important is teaching, research, and administrative service as the obligations of higher education teachers. Sahan and Tarhan (2015) affirmed that having research skills and a positive attitude about research are inseparable qualities of rising as citizens that reveal the necessities of the modern age in which research competencies and a positive attitude about research should be acknowledged and valued as essential features of modern individuals.

The CHED recognized the need to encourage HEIs and faculty to invest in and conduct research that could lead to the enhancement of academic programs as well as support to the nation's initiatives aimed at inclusive and internationally competitive development. Also, the CHED Research Chair Award is designed for recognizing and rewarding remarkable research achievements and promoting scholarly commitment to academic undertakings and pertinent research.

Therefore, research provides a possible solution to societal issues that are perceptible from within the community level right through the different government agencies. Consequently, most government agencies specifically state universities and local colleges are developing a research agenda to acquire solutions to prevailing problems experiential in the society. It also proposed a research capability building programs to propagate the culture of research at the institutional level.

In the higher education institution, research culture is not intensified, thereby producing so little output. Faculty members feared to indulge in research because

of the concept of hardship, limited funds and resources in conducting one. This study is done to help intensify the research culture of the faculty members of higher education institutions.

Foreshadowed Problems

The central problem of the study is: How do college administrators and faculty members of local colleges and universities cooperate for the realization of the research agenda of the institutions?

More specifically, this study sought answers to the following questions:

1. How do college administrators and faculty members define research?

2. How does research help in the academic development of LCUs?

3. How do LCUs motivate staff in conducting research?

4. What hindering factors are encountered during the formulation of research?

5. What challenges are met in the implementation of the research agenda in the HEIs?

6. What research capability building activities may be proposed to enhance the research agenda of LCUs?

METHODOLOGY

The researcher used a qualitative method research design. Qualitative research is used to understand or explore the meaning and the ways people make meaning, rather than to prove a theory to determine a relationship between factors (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Therefore, when a qualitative researcher gathers different sets of information from the participants, he would arrange them into a pattern, find themes, and from them, he can tell a story and develop a theory to explain various aspects of social life.

The qualitative method used a combination of in-depth interviews and document analysis. An in-depth interview will be conducted to the administrator and faculty of local colleges which is carried out with one informant at a time. It is purely conversational that provides an excellent opportunity to collect accurate data regarding the views, experiences, beliefs, and motivations of the individual informants. On the other hand, document analysis used as the prevailing reliable document which collects relevant data that could be used in the study.

The data generation was done through in-depth interviews and document analysis. In the depth interview, the researcher prepared a researcher-developed questionnaire to gather data from the informants. A personal interview was carried out with the informant one at a time. The process of the interview was done in such a manner as the researcher gave additional questions needed to make the research study more informative. The researcher also videoed or audiotape the responses of each informant.

Informant Identification Process

The informants in this study were four administrators and twelve faculty members in the LCUs in the CAMANAVA

area namely: The University of Caloocan City, City of Malabon University, Navotas Polytechnic College and Valenzuela City Polytechnic College. The criteria used in selecting the potential informants were the following: an administrator or research focal person and faculty members in LCUs, they must have completed research in any field of specialization and presented the completed research to the Research Committee for validation.

The purposive selection of informants was utilized in choosing the key informants. Purposive sampling is also called judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling. It is a non-probability approach where the researchers rely on their judgment when selecting informants to participate in the study (Palinkas, 2015).

Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method and it occurs when "elements selected for the sample are chosen by the judgment of the researcher. Researchers often believe that they can obtain a representative sample by using a sound judgment, which will result in saving time and money", (Thornhill, 2012).

Table 1: Distribution of the Informants of the Study

Universities/Colleges	Administrators (Research Focal Person)	Faculty Members
University of Caloocan City	1	3
Malabon University	1	3
Navotas Polytechnic College	1	3
Valenzuela Polytechnic College	1	3
Total	4	12

Data Collection Techniques
The initial data collection process started first on asking permission from the researcher's adviser and Dean of Graduate Studies of Bulacan State University to conduct the study. Then, an application for permission to conduct the study to the LCUs in CAMANAVA namely: University of Caloocan City, City of Malabon University, Navotas Polytechnic College, and Valenzuela City Polytechnic College.

The data was generated from the survey and were analyzed and summarized based on common themes and factors. Aggregation of data was aided in maintaining the anonymity of the participants using code names for them. The researcher interpreted and summarized the data to generate possible conclusions and suggest elements for future consideration.

Data Analysis
To start data analysis, the researcher manually organized the data from all interviews that she had videoed and transcribed. She repeatedly watched and listened to the videoed recorded interviews which formed the text for data analysis. Side comments were removed to cleanse the transcripts and to avoid compromising the privacy of the informants and confidentiality of the process.

Data interpretation was done using Tesch's approach of data analysis in which the researcher has read out and re-read the entire transcript prudently of all interviews conducted. A list of all the themes was made, then, clustering together similar themes followed. Subsequently, the researcher assigned the most descriptive phrasing for the themes and categorized them.

Qualitative meta-analysis was also used to analyze the data in the study. Ladislav (2009) stated that qualitative meta-analysis is an attempt to conduct a rigorous secondary qualitative analysis of primary qualitative findings. Its purpose was to give a more detailed description of the phenomenon and an evaluation of the influence of the method of investigation on findings is being discussed. The distinguishing features of conducting meta-analysis approaches were presented. Several considerations important for conducting meta-analysis were also discussed.

Finally, though the researcher is a novice in conducting qualitative research, the researcher pursued the work rigorously and withheld the identities of informants in the spirit of confidentiality as promised.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Based on the problems presented the findings of the study were summarized as follows:

How do college administrators and faculty members define research?
The philosophical perspective in defining research identified by the administrators, and faculty members were anchored on the educational philosophy and theories that serve as a guide in the conduct of research and instill the importance of searching for truth, sustainability through transformative education, formulating research agenda for organizational change, faculty research initiatives and opportunities, and the factors that affect student success. The school's mission and vision as their guide in the conduct of research and the three major educational philosophies: Social reconstructionism, Pragmatism, and Progressivism. The research endeavor must be bounded with the nature of searching for truth and looking for possible solutions to occurrences of the certain problem that arises within the academe along with the aspect of sustainability through transformative education as one of the main functions of faculty members of LCUs along with instruction and extension services is research. In formulating research agenda for organizational change, the researcher must take into consideration the institutional research agenda which is based on the philosophy, goals, mission, and vision of the HEIs.

How does research help in the academic development of local colleges?

The research has a great contribution to the institution's growth and development. In terms of research productivity, research capability, teaching effectiveness, curricular efficiency, research funding and application, and internal and external network support. It is an essential contributor to the improvement of society and mankind, develops the emblematic gauge for the institutional prestige, one of the essential resources any HEIs require for maintaining operation and facilitating growth and development. The research broadens the field of knowledge through discovering, generating, and understanding new concepts and practices. It serves as the impact on the academic and curricular programs of the college. Every research Endeavor of the college is to fulfill its' commitment to academic excellence.

How do local colleges motivate staff in conducting research?

There are ways to motivate staff to engage in research through engaging in research activities, encouraging researchers, professional growth and development, achieving success in research, and recognizing the hardships of the faculty members. The research has played an important role in the lives of the people for they pave the way to inventions and innovations. Another way to motivate staff is through strengthening the faculty research program by enhancing research skills and collaborating among teachers and administrators. Research is a significant factor in faculty performance evaluations, research grant awards, and promotion and salary decisions. Having recognition and prestige from their remarkable and notable performance is the way of appreciating their efforts from the management of colleges and universities. This can be part of their objective and gratification which motivates them to work productively and accomplished institutional goals and objectives.

What hindering factors are encountered during the formulation of research?

Some of the hindering factors encountered during the formulation of research is the formulated agenda to propagate institutional research, the publication of research and the achievements and accreditation of the program. The research agenda serves as guidelines for teachers in the conduct of education research and the utilization of the research results for the improvement of the learner's achievement and attainment of academic excellence. In publishing their research paper, one of the integral components that are vital to the enhancement of a research culture includes the researcher's knowledge and expertise. The accreditation is being utilized as an indicator of quality in distinguishing the programs and the institutions in terms of quality. The research achievements through collaborative research is an effective tool for curriculum implementation, problem-solving, and school improvement and developing a culture of teamwork and continuous improvement.

What challenges are met in the implementation of the research agenda in higher education institutions?

The challenges identified in the realization of the research agenda includes the scarcity of funds, research skills and expertise, network resources, and time constraint. The limited financial resources for conducting research, publication, and remuneration for publications, prevent some faculty members for publishing. Other than merely focusing on training and promoting the culture of publication in LCUs, it is also important to understand the root of the problem. The integral components which are crucial to the development of a research culture include the researcher's knowledge and expertise. Lack of training and knowledge needed to write for publication makes the faculty members unprepared for the daunting task. Network support can lead to numerous research output. Time for research is a major issue for all faculty members in HEIs, as they simultaneously handle teaching and service responsibilities.

What research capability building activities may be proposed to enhance the research agenda of LCUs?

There are suggestive ways to enhance the research capability building activities of the faculty members in the LCUs. The informants pointed out the possible solutions that can .enhance the research capabilities and design development programs which are acceptable and have standards to improve research contexts, faculty training, and exposure on qualitative and quantitative research, realignment of all the faculty research activities on the college research theme and agenda, identification and empowerment of the research team to conduct the prioritized research topics, prioritization of academe research along with the integration of research, instruction, and extension, a publication of researches and adaptation of college academic research program and provide research fund.

The informants suggested some of the possible ways of changing the current condition in the LCUs; obligatory production of research every year will address the exigency to produce more researches, conduct annual seminar workshops and engaged the researcher in the local, and international conferences, and seminars, workshops and intervention as a resolution to create improvement in research work and increase in the budget for research and equivalent teaching load for those faculty that will handle researchers.

CONCLUSION

Research is indeed a powerful tool for addressing institutional problems. Based on the findings, the utmost contribution of the faculty members in the LCUs in the academic and curricular programs, institutional growth, and development is necessary to implement quality research agenda. The enhancement of the research

culture of the faculty members of local colleges and universities should be considered to maximise research production.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the foregoing conclusion, the following recommendations are proposed.

1. Financial support from the administration should be adequate to encourage more researchers in local colleges and universities. The support and encouragement from within the immediate supervisor, peers, as well as other groups need to be extended to boost the morale of the researcher, and future researchers.

2. Administrators and faculty members must be sent for research training, seminar-workshop and presentations regionally, nationally. and internationally.

3. Awards and more incentives should be given to faculty researchers who present their research work and published their articles in referred journals.

4. The faculty must come up with valuable researches that may contribute to the development and welfare of the society and the country.

5. Government and other agencies must be supportive and become partners of the relevant local colleges and universities for they will also be benefited from the findings of the study.

6. Seminar consciousness and awareness of the significance of research collaboration and training for publication and online journals be initiated.

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