



Describing the Research Programs of the Selected Sectarian Colleges in Region IX: Case Analysis

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Abstract- Despite the mandates and programs of the Commission on Higher Education on the tri-focal functions of the universities as well as the colleges all over the Philippines, research productivity in the country is still at the minimal level. The primary objective of this research was to describe the research programs of the selected sectarian colleges in Region IX. This qualitative research employed a case study analysis. Research directors of the four cases were interviewed to elicit descriptions of the research programs of the selected colleges. The case analysis revealed that research program and policies of the four cases are at the developing stage. The colleges devised varied strategies for instructors to conduct and actively engage in research. However, personal and professional and organizational factors deter instructors to highly engage in research. Instructors' attitude, capability, and training were among the personal and professional factors. Research priorities, allocations, and incentives were among the top organizational factors. A quantitative study on the identified factors should be conducted in the future.

Keywords- *Research Programs, Research Directors, Case Study*

I. INTRODUCTION

The current situation of higher education research in the Philippines is still in the infancy stage where only a few of its faculty have actively engaged in research. The minimal involvement of faculty in research activities can be ascribed to the absence of coaching and intensive training from graduate studies that would enable them to consistently produce research studies. This may be because numerous colleges in the country are previously secondary schools which have been elevated to a tertiary level, therefore they focus largely on sustaining one of the tri-fold functions of HEIs which is teaching. In the Commission on Higher Education report, only 34 percent of the faculty members who are graduate degree holders have conducted research after completing their dissertations or theses (CHED, 1997).

Research is the sole instrument in uplifting the general public because people gain social, economic, cultural, and political benefits. Research provides concrete, accurate bases for the understanding of the needs of society. In other words, all activities for total advancement are based on research. As provided for in Republic Act 7722, all faculty and personnel

are encouraged to engage in quality research and all those instructors in colleges capable of producing quality research paper will have the reputation of scholastic supremacy and academic maturity (CHED and PAGE, 2002).

Teaching, research, and extension have long been identified as the three-fold role of Higher Education Institution (HEI's). Scholarship has been identified as the crucial important characteristics of higher education. The landscape of scholarship changed with Boyer's work which was published in 1990 where he redefined scholarship with four dimensions such as discovery, integration, application, and teaching. The scholarship of discovery involves research activities in the pursuit of new knowledge. In encouraging and promoting research in higher education and to bring closer support necessary to strengthen research and development roles and functions of all HEIs across the country, the different center for R&D have been mobilized to assist CHED. These centers are also commissioned to enhance the research efficiency of the HEIs in terms of generating an intellectual property (CHED Strategic Plan- 2011-2016).

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) through its mandate has long been requiring all colleges or higher education institutions on the establishment and institutionalization of a research program. In 2005, Carlito Puno, the acting chairman of the CHED, issued a Memorandum Order no. 41, series of 2005 in consonance with Section 8 of Republic Act 7722 mandating the Commission on Higher Education to enhance the research function of higher education institutions in the Philippines. Pursuant to CHED Resolution No. 638 of 2005, CHED issued the guidelines for the search for best HEI research program. This was to encourage all HEIs to come up with their institution's research program.

In line with the said mandates above, NHERA2-2009-2018 (2010) the following goals for higher education research were set for NHERA 2: (a) push the frontiers of knowledge across all the identified higher education disciplines in the country; (b) enhance instruction through original contributions in specialized disciplines thereby encouraging students to become themselves creative, innovative and productive individuals; (c) conducive policy environment for the management and administration of research; and (d) technical assistance for research; and funding/financial assistance for research in higher education in the form of block grants, grants-in-aid and commissioned research.

However, with the mandate of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), there is still minimal research output of the schools and colleges. Very little is known on the situation of the colleges, their research programs and instructors' engagement in research. This case analysis was undertaken to describe the research programs of the selected sectarian colleges in Region IX.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research design. Qualitative research is predominantly exploratory research. It is used to appreciate and understand the fundamental reasons, opinions, and motivations. It affords insights into the problem or offers the development of hypotheses for prospective quantitative exploration or analysis. It is also used to qualitatively disclose trends in thought and opinions, and dive deeper into the problem. Qualitative data collection methods vary using unstructured or semi-structured techniques. Some common methods include focus groups (group discussions), individual interviews, and participation/observations.

Case studies make use of in-depth data collection techniques that allow for the detailed study of all aspects of the case and the exploration of perspectives that may have been missed when using other methods. Case study design focuses on the data analysis of one phenomenon, which the researcher selects to understand in depth regardless of the number of sites, participants or documents for the study and provides a detailed description and analysis of processes of themes voiced by participants in a particular situation (Polit & Beck, 2008). The case study has been described as being simultaneously descriptive, exploratory and explanatory. The participants of the study were the research directors of the four sectarian colleges of Region IX. Each research director was invited to participate in the semi-structured interview to elicit descriptions of their research thrusts and programs. In conducting an interview, Interview Schedule was used. The schedule is composed of guide questions designed to elicit descriptions of the research programs of selected sectarian colleges. The schedule includes an engaging question, three exploratory questions, and an exit question. With the respondents' permission, the researcher audio recorded the interviews to ensure accurate transcription. The researcher also took notes during each interview, which enabled him to track key points to return to later in the interview or to highlight ideas of particular interest or importance.

As a first step in the interview process, the researcher reminded the respondent of the purpose of the study, research procedures, expected benefits, and protection of confidentiality. He also asked participants if they had any questions about the research study or research procedures. Participants were also provided information about himself to establish rapport and gain their trust. Open-ended questions were used throughout the interviews to encourage participants to respond freely and openly to queries. Probing and/or follow-up questions were used, when necessary, to encourage participants to elaborate on or clarify a response. The transcription process followed after each interview. To ensure transcript accuracy, the researcher reviewed each transcript

while listening to the audio tapes. The gathered data were examined and categorized to find patterns in them. Data were analyzed to uncover patterns, determine meanings, and construct conclusions. The identified patterns were presented and supported with social theories.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. *The Research Programs of the Colleges.*

All Research Directors from four colleges were newbies in the position and that the research programs of the colleges have to be approved for implementation and the research culture of all colleges have to be developed and inculcated.

Case 1. The director has been in the office for two years, and that seminars were conducted especially to those who submitted their proposals. The research proposals once approved it will have the budget for research funding and it calls for teachers to submit a proposal which can be individual or group and shall cover the high school department. It shall focus according to their area or specializations, for example, Education and Bachelor of Arts because the current research programs focus on student development. In light of this veracity, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) in the Philippines has been asserting and pushing for a formidable research consciousness in colleges all over the nation. Its National Higher Education Research Agenda (NHERA), crafted and publicized in 1996, enunciates goals of higher education research as well as the procedure and tangible schemes for attaining goals.

Case 2, on the other hand, is very new in the position of Research Director. He was forced to accept the position because nobody would like to accept it and as a challenge, he took the position. Their research program focuses on the cultivation of research climate of the entire academe which covers both the teachers and students. This is clearly shown on the students' research outputs wherein all are only for the sake of completion of the course requirements which are not useful. The current research program will call for teachers and students to conduct independent research with the utmost importance out of curiosity. Some teachers have undergone research but for the completion of their master studies only. Teachers are also required to strictly coordinate with research director before conducting research for approval and appropriate funding.

CHED Memorandum Order No. 30, series of 2010 clearly states that in accordance with the pertinent provisions of Republic Act (RA) No. 7722, otherwise recognized as the "Higher Education Act of 1994", and for the purpose of promoting/enhancing research function of higher education institutions pursuant to CEB Resolution No. 215-2010 Series of 2010, CHED hereby issues the Revised Guidelines for the best HEI Research Program Award states that research as one of the triad functions of higher education institutions (HEIs), enhances and expresses individuals capacity to conduct discipline-based, policy-based, technology-directed and innovative work. Since colleges and universities are among the primary institutions tasked to generate and disseminate knowledge, they are being encouraged to conduct research and

other scholarly investigation. Higher education institutions play an important role in developing and nurturing a “research culture” among the people.

The instructors' research role cannot be overstated in the college or university setting. Some individual qualities have been found to be contributory in motivating the research engagement in the academic community which includes a curiosity in their specializations, ambitions, self-esteem, age, career rank, academic qualifications, and a desire to collaborate with others about academic and level of central motivation (Lechuga & Lechuga, 2012).

Other studies with different individual attributes have also been found to vary according to academic disciplines (hard or soft); for instance, gender, years of experience, teaching time versus research time, level of multi-disciplinary cooperation, research style and workload are of relevance (Jung, 2012).

In the context of these four cases, the most quantifiable individual factor was the level of academic staff qualifications as an indicator for research output where almost all instructors of these colleges are negative in engaging research activities. This implies that there is a problem in the form of a research capability gap (Bunting et al., 2014) in all instructors of these colleges (Salom, 2013).

Case 3 is a special case wherein there is no clear research program but it is polished last year because the research director is very new and that the office is in its infancy stage. The research director will have to come up first with the research program and that a colloquium about research shall be undertaken every semester. The discussion will cover on the fundamentals of research to develop research capability among teachers as mandated by CHED. All instructors are encouraged to pursue masteral degrees in order to be upgraded and expose on to how research is done.

Case 4 research program is also in its infancy stage and the research director has been in the position since 2012. The current research program focuses on capability building among instructors and at the beginning, there was a lot of interest from the teachers but after presenting the proposal, only a few have pushed through their proposals and finished it. Most of the researches conducted were action researches and some focused on classroom-based and on the second year, it was focused on campus-based and in the third year, the research director proposes on tying up with the Community Extension Program priority areas and only one research conducted.

B. The Instructors' Nature and Level of Involvement or Engagement in Research.

Conducting research can be an essential facet in teachers' professional lives and that there is a growing amount of teacher statement about the positive outcomes of research.

However, in Case 1, the level of teachers' engagement towards research on a scale of 1-10 is one because they have just started the capacity building and do not have the actual research done by the instructors either individual or group research. Some teachers have done research on their master or doctoral as a requirement of the course only and some teachers were not able to finish their researches. In Case 2, the

teachers' level of engagement is not so healthy because there is no existing research program. The current research program has been submitted for approval and once approved, it will be implemented. Case 3, however, has one research conducted by the research coordinator himself in the graduate program while the dean of the college of teacher education is currently enrolling in the doctoral degree and came up with her book about poetry because she is an English major and as of the current time, there is no institutional research conducted because there is no other person assigned in the office to help the research director but planning to come up with a research journal. On the other hand, Case 4, the level of teachers' research engagement is also very low that is why a research capacity building seminar is being conducted to all teachers. There is an existing research program but only a few conducted research.

The instructors engaging researches revealed that their participation in research had sometimes reached a point when they left or somehow disregard their other responsibilities and functions as instructors. Sometimes they lack time in preparing for their classes and teaching suffers because of their active involvement in research. The study shows that good researchers may not essentially be good teachers, disagreeing to the assertion that research augments teaching performance. One respondent attested that research may possibly improve teaching if the topic is significant to the subject matter. The subject being taught and the conducted research must be relevant so as to enhance learning. This will strengthen the teaching-research interconnection notion and proposes disciplinary changes in the configuration of relationships.

Case 1, research director followed the model of the University of Mindanao where instructors are encouraged to submit their proposals for approval and for appropriate funding. It will be scrutinized and will be approved according to areas making sure the instructors have research agenda. The research panel is created to approve the title and the content to see to it that there is funding as regards to the research agenda. Once approved, it will then be submitted to the treasurer's office for funding. This is to build a culture and platform of research in the college because CHED requires all HEIs to conduct research. Hence it is mandated by CHED, the panel will then iron out some of the cases/studies and budget will depend on the number of factors or indicators in the study and the scope should be wider for example school-wide or campus-wide. Instructors rely solely on the internet depending on their title. The research director plans to meet the instructors in order for them to be more concerned about getting facts from research studies.

Case 2, on the other hand, encouraged instructors are to engage in research through an attractive financial grant and will be reloaded if they conduct research either short term the college will grant twenty thousand pesos financial assistance and teachers will be given lesser loads. For long-term research, it can be individual or group and the instructors will be given a financial grant of forty thousand pesos and will be given a lesser load equivalent to four loads. However, even with the very attractive research program financial assistance and privileges, instructors were still negative.

Case 3 has also full support for instructors who will conduct research as indicated in their research policy. The financial assistance is released on a staggered basis. The policy was already active since 2004, however, nobody was qualified to head the research office. It was then attached in the Human Resource Office because there was no research director in the previous years, and no research was conducted. At present, the research director encourages instructors to engage in research and to focus on student services areas for both the high school and college due to incidents or cases of dengue outbreak. A study related to such incident is now being undertaken with the questionnaire is ready to be distributed.

In Case 4 on the other hand, instructors who are students of the research directors are engaged in research in their thesis writing. Instructors started out in their thesis writing class and expand it to action research. A research funded by the DILG was conducted by 16 instructors of the college. The research director headed the team, and the instructors were then distributed to work on the data gathering, data analysis, and two teachers were assigned as field supervisors. This was the only research conducted and funded by the DILG and there are many individual types of research conducted related to the classroom.

As we can see the responses of the four research directors, the colleges as mandated by CHED to have a triad function which is Instruction, Research and Extension shall be observed and thereby practiced as part of their function as academe and a source of knowledge as the academic core of any country.

C. Reasons for Instructors' Engagement or Non-Engagement in Research.

Research culture is assumed to be a sub-culture of the broader organizational culture that refers to research culture, such as observed behavior regularities, the beliefs on the guiding the organization's research policies; and the climate or feeling that the organization conveys on research.

As regards the reasons why the instructors engage or not engage in research activities, Case 1 aptly said that instructors need books related to their studies which their college does not have. It will help them as part in the requirements in the completion of the master or doctoral degrees. The researcher was informed that the best source of literature is the Ateneo de Zamboanga because they have an online library and master and doctoral copies of theses and dissertations. The research director wanted to meet all instructors to be able to come up with instructors' proposal, and if instructors are still negative, the research director will have to come up research on his end. Accordingly, there are many reasons why instructors of Case 1 cannot engage in research such as instructors are fully loaded and have five to seven (5-7) preparations. So, teachers are busy, they do not have extra time for research aside from teaching. Teachers will not be given less teaching loads because the college lacks funds to finance for another teacher to take over for unloaded subjects. As of the interview time, CHED requires the college to teach the new course like Bachelor of Arts and they do not have books for example if teachers will conduct research about tourism, they do not have the provision of learning resources like books in the library.

The same situation for Case 2 wherein it is very difficult for them as a small college to engage in research because students are not proficient of the English language in both oral and written. They also do not know how to look for references. That is why the office of the research director will inculcate the culture of research from the first year and it will be part of the syllabus. Instructors will also be encouraged to conduct research using available materials in the college. At present, the office has pending marketing research wherein, the checking of statistics will be done by the research director. As to the reasons why teachers engage or not engage in research activities, the director forms his rough observation and feedback from instructors, conducting research is tiresome because it is tedious. However, in the school year 2014-2015, the research director started a paper presentation for both students and instructors. In the school year 2015-2016 research conference was planned not only for the St. Vincent community but for all Diocesan Schools. The purpose of involving teachers outside college is to encourage their instructors to engage in institutional research not only for completing their masters for the purpose of raising their salaries. Research according to the research director requires arm twisting because even if the research policy is attractive and already approved for implementation like reducing loads of teachers of at least four loads from eight regular loads, still the attitude of instructors towards research is still negative. Because of these reasons, the research director insisted on the mandate of CHED that colleges across the nation must engage in research.

A number of studies have disputed that organizational issues have a significant effect on research productivity. A vast number of organizational factors vital for research productivity, including the transparency of the institution's research expectations; the availability of student research assistance; financial incentives for conducting research; and access to internal and external research funds (McGill & Settle, 2012).

Different institutional components ranging from financial assistance and incentives (allowances, salaries), to non-financial incentives (improved research management, modern infrastructure, promotions) have been employed by different universities to encourage the research production of their academic staff members (Ubogu & Van den Heever, 2014).

In Case 3 situation, according to the research director the first factor why instructors are not engaged in research activities is mainly because it is expensive and being a poor college, it cannot afford to conduct research. Another reason is that instructors are not yet capable to conduct research based on the research capability conducted by the research director. Because of these reasons, a colloquium for all instructors and students shall be conducted to enhance research capability. To make sure that teachers and students will be engaged in research activities, the research director organized a Javerian Research Volunteers where members are oriented in the administration of the questionnaire. The current research program reduces teaching loads of instructors if they conduct research and will be part of the ranking procedure where research involvement or engagement will have corresponding points in ranking and promotion. However, in the policy, only

one teacher will be allowed to conduct research because the college lacks funding and every semester the enrolment will decrease so the college doesn't have the budget to fund the teacher. Another reason why teachers are not engaged in research activities is that of the K-12 where instructors are overloaded and they don't have time to conduct research other than teaching and research is very tiring and needs concentration and focus.

Case 4, on the other hand, reveals the following reasons why teachers are engaged or not-engaged in research activities. Conducting research will take time, it will take years for one research to complete and in terms of monetary rewards, it will also take years. So teachers prefer to have overloads/overtime instead of conducting research. The research director noticed that instructors conducted research in their first year were also the same instructors that finished their research. In 2014, one instructor presented a paper in a research forum in Zamboanga City and in the experience, instructors are now encouraged to conduct research. In the current year, the research director sent six instructors to attend the research forum in Zamboanga City for the purpose of warming up and getting to know research before an instructor can say he/she is capable of doing research. The research director also revealed that as of this writing, there are no priority areas set by the college. The instructors are not motivated and attracted to conduct research because the funding is very minimal. The research director is planning to propose an increase of the research grant to attract instructors to engage in research. There are three major hindrances to research productivity. These include deficiency of resources and an appropriate incentive system; the absence of Ph.D. mentorship programmes and incentives; and the rivalry for the time between undertaking research and teaching in private universities (Salom, 2013).

Some barriers such as attitudinal, conceptual, and procedural also stop teachers to be research-engaged. Thus, one issue to understand from the sample in their study is that teachers' understandings of what research is are not in the form which they can feasibly and productively engage in. This reveals the need for awareness-raising work among teachers through which their viewpoints on research can be revised. Furthermore, teachers may not have enough knowledge and practical skills. Considering this problem combined with unsupportive institutions makes clear why for teachers being research engaged is not possible and desirable activities. Having the plan to encourage teachers being research engaged is not possible without the organizational, practical and intellectual support which are needed not only to be research engaged but also to improve its quality (Tabatabaei & Nazem, 2013).

This study identified personal and professional factors and organizational factors of the research productivity of the selected sectarian colleges.

D. Personal and Professional Factors.

Research programs/ policies are not in place and still for approval but in other colleges, the research policy has already been approved and existing but the attitude of the instructors towards conducting research is negative. Individual factor is

another factor where instructors are not motivated because of time constraints, busy preparing the lessons, having five to seven preparations, overloaded, organizational factors such as lack of support from the administration in terms of finance, and research culture – funding has been found to have a major impact on the nature and sustainability of research capacity in all four colleges consequently, on the four colleges' research productivity.

E. Organizational Factors.

Human resource policy should go beyond stimulating academic staff members with masters and Ph.D. degrees to, in the first place, engage in teaching. As for now, tenured academic staff members have no accountability to the institution with regard to engagement in research thereby forgetting the triad functions of HEIs as mandated by CHED. Then again, the four participating institutions could stimulate the strengthening of an institutional research culture by introducing sufficient financial rewards and incentives for the instructors who engage in research. Policy on faculty support and inclusion of points on their involvement in research in the ranking and promotion be established.

Most of the cases acknowledged the role of individual factors in engaging instructors in research is their motivation and exposures in doing research. However, in their specific institutional framework, financial support has a superior part of its impact on creating a sense of research culture for individual researchers which do not attract the instructors to conduct research.

Exposure of teachers in research activities is also needed such as requiring them to attend research symposia and presentations of outputs. Their experience can motivate them to also conduct research and fulfill the CHED mandate as an instructor of the HEIs in the Philippines. Setting priority areas could also motivate instructors to conduct research hence the priority areas can be related to their specialization. However, in all four colleges, it was revealed that even there is an existing policy requiring the teachers to conduct research with appropriate funding, still, the attitude is negative. The administrators of these four colleges shall therefore include in the faculty manual and require instructors to engage in research activities in the college before they can be promoted or even in a permanent status as CHED requires all institutions whether public or private as Tri-fold functions, instructors whether they like it or not shall perform his/her triad functions such as teaching, research and extension service.

There should also be a clear policy for research incentives or benefits in all research programs of the four colleges. Due to the low income or salaries of the instructors in some colleges in the country and particularly the four respondent colleges such as Marian College, Saint Columban College, St. Vincent College, and the Colegio de San Francisco Xavier giving enough incentives and rewards becomes a key factor in fulfilling and enhancing research productivity. Institutions should make stronger research remuneration and incentives which may possibly function as motivational elements for doing or engaging in research.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study provides information that the research programs of the selected colleges are at the developing stage. Colleges have their own strategies at engaging instructors to conduct research and increase research productivity. However, most instructors do not involve themselves in research as they are much involved in teaching. Some factors are identified that hindered instructors to engage in research. The paper provides further evidence that personal and professional and organizational factors affect the implementation of the research programs of the colleges. The study recommends that further research is conducted using the identified factors as constructs.

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