

Research training in the Philippines: exploring the issues for a nation striving to enhance research quality

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Abstract

Internationally, research training is changing face due to global changes affecting higher education. Higher education in the Philippines is also affected by these changes. Currently, the Philippines, through the Commission on Higher Education and higher education institutions, is embarking on new ways to enhance research and research training. To reach this objective, however, some areas of research and research training require attention. Thus, the purpose of this paper is two-fold: (1) to identify areas for scrutiny and (2) to propose possible strategies to enhance research training in the Philippines.

Introduction

It was more than a decade ago that the OECD (1995) highlighted the changing face of research training internationally. Today, research and research training remain under pressure to address a broad array of societal demands. This is due to changes globally and to how nations and universities position themselves as shareholders in a complex knowledge society. If relevance and viability were the language of the past, now and into the future issues of quality, accountability, and internationalisation of research will come to the fore.

In the Philippines, higher education pushes for ways to ‘[promote] research to push forward the frontiers of knowledge and to develop a culture of research among higher education institutions’ (Commission on Higher Education [CHED], 2007a, para. 2). To reach this objective, however, some areas of research and research training require inquiry and evaluation. Thus, the rationale for this paper is two-fold: (1) to identify areas for scrutiny and (2) to propose possible strategies to enhance research training in the Philippines.

The effects of globalisation place necessary demands upon higher education generally. In particular, the effects are felt in the areas of teaching, research, and postgraduate research training. Marginson (2007) maintains that higher education supports ‘multiple connections across the range of teaching, research, doctoral training, and business activities’ (p. 3) and universities will continually compete to occupy global spaces to position themselves strategically. Part of this global positioning strategy is advancing research. One way of doing this is by pursuing developments in postgraduate research training. Thus, research training in the future will increasingly play an important role.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the field of research training. The range of research objectives is quite diverse. However, it is observed that research into research training primarily involves the development and evaluation of practices across specific disciplines and institutions. In the Philippines, however, little has been done in this area, much less on the analysis and appraisal of national and institutional research training policies.

This is why research training in the Philippines needs examination and, I will argue, development.

For a country where research is at the periphery of higher education curricula and where universities are mostly 'teaching universities' as opposed to 'research universities' (Bernardo, 2007), the Philippines faces one of the greatest challenges in restructuring its higher education to compete globally, or even with its closest neighbour countries, in areas of research. In the past years, the country's competitive advantage has largely been its human capital due to the substantial economic gains that dollar remittances from overseas workers bring in. The emphasis in higher education has been on the education and training of nurses, teachers, engineers, and computing specialists and this could well be explained by employment opportunities in the Asia-Pacific region and across the globe. This is evident in the statistical reports published by the CHED (2007b) which reflect (1) Business & Administration, (2) Medical, (3) Education & Teacher Training, and (4) Engineering & Technology courses remain as top disciplines of choice for most students in recent years. However, there has been less attention placed into the education and training of undergraduate and postgraduate students in the area of research. Research remains a peripheral component of undergraduate and postgraduate curricula whilst research training continues to be an under-developed activity.

The influx of students from other countries also influences higher education in the Philippines. This is especially so now that neighbour countries like South Korea increasingly view Philippine higher education institutions (HEIs) as hubs for undergraduate education. One reason for this is because English is one of the two official languages of the Philippines. However, the Philippines has thus far not positioned itself as a preferred choice for postgraduate education despite English language advantage. Perhaps some areas that need development are the HEIs' readiness for research, their research capabilities, and the strength of their academic staff in research and research training. The Philippines remains relatively unsuccessful in attracting postgraduate students from Asia-Pacific compared to countries from non-English speaking backgrounds such as Singapore or Malaysia.

It has been the national policy of the CHED to enhance research in the Philippines. To do this, examining and developing research training is critical. Research training is at the core of enhancing and promoting research within HEIs. There are even more reasons to develop research training in the Philippines given the strategic directions that HEIs currently take. First, amongst HEIs, one of their aims has been to attract international students due to insufficient funding on public universities as well as to move away from over-dependence on tuition fees from local students for private universities. Second, universities increasingly find it important to integrate research into their postgraduate education curricula and moving towards becoming 'research universities'. Finally, HEIs push for local accreditation and international quality standards benchmarking to mark their place in Asia-Pacific. Thus, it is a critical part of this transformation and positioning to examine research training structures, policies, and practices.

This paper focuses on presenting briefly the higher education system in the Philippines and the context of postgraduate education and research training within HEIs. It concludes with an exploration of some important areas for scrutiny and possible strategies to develop research training in the country.

Higher education in the Philippines: an overview

The education system in the Philippines is regulated by three government agencies: the Department of Education (DepEd), the CHED, and the Technical Education, Skills and Development Authority (TESDA). This so-called 'trifocalization' of education in 1994 refocused the regulation of education in the country where DepEd covers elementary, secondary and non-formal education, including culture and sports. TESDA administers the post-secondary, middle-level manpower training and development whilst CHED is responsible for higher education (DepEd, 2007). Collectively, these three agencies are responsible for the regulation of higher education in the Philippines.

The CHED is a government agency established under the authority of the Office of the President of the Philippines. It was established on May 18, 1994 through Republic Act 7722, known as the Higher Education Act of 1994, for the purpose of 'formulating and implementing policies, plans and programs for the development and efficient operation of the system of higher education in the country' (CHED, n.d.a, para. 1). It regulates public and private higher education institutions as well as all degree-granting programs in all tertiary educational institutions in the Philippines.

Primarily, government legislation mandates CHED undertake the following tasks (CHED, n.d.a, para. 2):

- to promote quality education
- to take appropriate steps to ensure that education [is] accessible to all, and
- to ensure and protect academic freedom for the continuing intellectual growth, the advancement of learning and research, the development of responsible and effective leadership, the education of high-level professionals, and the enrichment of historical and cultural heritage.

Since its inception, CHED identified four 'development cornerstones' from where policy decisions and reforms have to focus: (1) promoting quality and excellence, (2) promoting relevance and responsiveness, (3) broadening access, and (4) improving efficiency and effectiveness.

The following statistics provide a brief sketch of higher education in the Philippines, with particular emphasis on postgraduate enrolment data. Comparing data for academic year (AY) 2000-2001 and 2004-2005 (CHED, 2007b), enrolment (all disciplines, both public and private providers) grew by 122% (from 1,082,646 to 2,402,315 students). At the postgraduate level, based on the 2004-2005 figures, female postgraduates at the master's and doctoral levels surpass their counterparts in number in both public and private HEIs. In total, female postgraduates exceed males in number by 76.6% in Masters (56,420 versus 31,953) and 56.3% in doctoral studies (6,311 versus 4,038). Masters and doctorate students represent only about 3.7% and 0.4%, respectively, of all higher education students. Overall, based upon most recent figures, there are approximately twice as many postgraduate students enrolled in private than in public HEIs. The data further show that higher education in the Philippines is comprised largely of young students at the undergraduate level and a few number of postgraduates who do research, specifically those doing Masters with thesis or doctorates and PhDs.

There has been an observed increase in the number of education providers, particularly private HEIs, further widening the gap between public and private institutions. For example, the number of universities doubled in a span of 14 years (AY 1990-1991 to AY 2004-2005): 811 (174 public, 637 private) to 1,619 (176 public, 1,443 private). Though historically there was a greater public/private divide amongst HEIs, this grew even larger during the recent years.

Postgraduate education and the development of research training

Postgraduate education in the Philippines follows the American tradition in some ways. Postgraduate degrees are generally offered by public and private universities' Graduate Schools. Generally, the path to Masters is successful completion of an undergraduate degree whilst the path to PhD and other doctorate studies is a Masters. Both Masters and doctorate degrees follow a 'coursework+research' scheme. This means that Masters and doctorate degrees involve coursework by fulfilling some academic credits (i.e., unit points) plus the submission of a thesis or dissertation. Normally, on a full-time basis, Masters usually take two years whilst PhDs and other doctorate degrees three years. In the Philippines, it is generally understood that 'thesis' is to Masters as 'dissertation' is to PhD and doctorate research. Universities have residency rules (the maximum allowable time to complete a degree) in completing postgraduate degrees. For example, a university may have seven years for a PhD. This means that the student must be able to complete both coursework and dissertation within seven years. In some cases, where students have gone past their residency periods without completing their research, they may have to take 'refresher courses' (few units in Research Methods or other subjects as determined by the faculty or department).

The development of research and research training in postgraduate education has received little attention in recent years. This is despite an important finding in the 1991-92 Congressional Commission on Education report (known as EDCOM) that described higher education in the Philippines as having 'limited and underdeveloped graduate education' (Borromeo, 2005, p. 8). Research training remains an unexplored area in research much less a documented practice. However, there are some notable developments in postgraduate education and research that are worthy of mention. For example, one important policy action to note related to the expansion of research and research training is the identification of (1) Centers of Excellence (COE) and Centers of Development (COD), and perhaps more importantly, by the creation of (2) Zonal Research Centers (ZRCs) within a selection of HEIs. However, the scope and nature of research training practices within COEs/CODs, ZRCs, or within HEIs in general, remain unexplored. There is little information available to describe the nature and scope of research training 'as it happens' in educational settings, particularly as experienced by academic staff and research students across disciplinary areas and across institutions. Further, the expansion of research training activities within institutions has largely been a result of universities' independent agenda and practices.

COEs and CODs within public and private HEIs are those who have shown 'the highest degree or level of standards along the areas of instruction, research and extension...[and] provide[d] institutional leadership in all aspects of development in specific areas of discipline in the various regions...' (CHED, n.d.b, para. 1). In AY 2004-2005, there were 110 COEs (65 from public and 45 from private) and 159 CODs (54 from public and 105 from private) across 44 different disciplines, the highest numbers of which were from Information Technology (23 HEIs), Teacher Education (21 HEIs), and Civil Engineering (18 HEIs)

combined (COEs & CODs). COEs and CODs receive funding from CHED for ‘student scholarships, faculty development, library and laboratory upgrading, research and extension services, instructional materials development, and networking of existing COEs and CODs’ (para. 2). However, little is known on the extent of research training practices under the term ‘research and extension services’. Understanding this could well provide some information on the capabilities of staff and research students to undergo quality and industry-responsive research with likely positive socio-economic implications.

The CHED’s creation of ZRCs across the country through the 1998-launched National Higher Education Research Agenda (NHERA) further strengthened research activities nationally. A ZRC is a unit hosted by an HEI headed by a Director appointed by its host HEI. As it stated, the ‘NHERA provides the policies, priorities and procedures as well as guidelines on the research environment required to promote, encourage and support research in Philippine higher education institutions’ (CHED, n.d.c, para. 1). This led to the expansion of research and research training activities within universities particularly by providing a mechanism by which these institutions evaluate and recommend research proposals from its academic staff and postgraduate research students for funding within national priorities. Nine institutions (formerly 12) with strong research capabilities have been identified across the three island groups:

Luzon:

- Mariano Marcos State University
- University of the Philippines – Diliman campus
- University of the Philippines – Los Baños campus
- De La Salle University;

Visayas:

- University of San Carlos
- Leyte State University
- Silliman University; and in

Mindanao:

- Notre Dame of Marbel University
- Mindanao State University – Iligan Institute of Technology

ZRCs receive one million pesos each year for use in research, including the review of proposals within the national priority research areas for funding by CHED. ZRCs also receive funding from the CHED for implementing the research needs of their respective zones through their Zonal Research Plans (ZRP).

Despite the recent developments in postgraduate education in the country, particularly the identification of research-intensive HEIs and the provision of funding support for ZRCs, research training in the Philippines is still in its developmental phase. There are many areas in which it needs growth, such as, for example, the development of supervisor expertise and raising the standards of postgraduate research.

Research training and skills development

In the context of doctoral research, McWilliam et al. (2002) described research training as ‘an attempt to develop ‘skills’ which are inclusive of both ‘generic’ capabilities, and more specific occupational competences’ (p. 42). By referring to ‘skills’, here they strongly relate these to (1) literature search and evaluation, (2) methodological sophistication, and (3) academic

discourse and etiquette whilst 'specific occupational competences' are associated with the (1) development of habits of inquiry, and (2) critical, ethical, practical and innovative sensibilities. Thus, much emphasis is on the range of desired attributes, set of skills and competences, that research students need to acquire during the process to successfully belong to a community of academics and practitioners who undertake specific investigations in their respective fields. In the discussion of 'generic skills', Hager, Holland, and Beckett (2002) posit that there are pertinent generic skills needed for postgraduate study and further conclude that these have effects on postgraduate pedagogy and supervision. They identified (1) autonomy, (2) critical thinking, (3) communication skills, and (4) research skills as particularly important. Although both groups of authors are describing research and research training in Australia, these skill sets may also apply in other settings.

Information regarding research training skills and competences developed through postgraduate study in the Philippines remain scant. Research training has not been a topic of interest amongst researchers in the Philippines and it has not gained ground as a subject of inquiry despite its practice and policy implications. National and institutional research aims tend to focus on the importance of research to socio-economic gains. However, little has been devoted to explore the readiness of academic staff and research students to undertake research based upon these skills and competences.

Exploring some issues and challenges

On a broader perspective, the CHED's higher education priorities have been anchored through its mission to:

- promote quality education
- improve access
- uphold academic freedom
- advance learning and research
- develop responsible and effective leadership
- educate high level professionals, and
- enrich historical and cultural heritage

In 'advancing learning and research', in particular, a number of research priorities have been outlined in its research agenda which were categorised according to disciplines and research emphasis (Memorandum Order 25, series of 1998, *Priority Research Areas*). None of these, however, specifically point to investigations into improving the conduct of research training in the Philippines. In addition, the provisions for appropriate professional development of supervisors and academic support for research students are scant. Abueva, Canlas, and Magadia (2004), in the context of public-funded HEIs, suggest that though education receives the largest allocation out of the national budget, most of these funds are for payment of salaries and personnel services and 'only a small fraction to direct services and benefits to students; much less is allocated to research and development' (p. 19).

In view of the structure of postgraduate education in the country and the needed development for research training, there are some areas in research and research training that need to be examined, primarily for their policy and practice implications. Albeit HEIs may have different agenda at managing their own institutional businesses and affairs, particularly private and autonomous HEIs, it is hoped that these areas can provide a lens to assess institutional readiness and capacities. The CHED and HEIs might plan for appropriate

actions to take now and into the future to effectively respond to these areas given the possible strategies proposed.

Area 1: The development of national and institutional policies to support the advancement of research training

The development of national and institutional policies to regulate the conduct of research training in postgraduate education in the Philippines may be an area that the CHED and HEIs can examine. Although the NHERA outlines the national research aims, it does not specifically outline policies intended for research training amongst institutions. This can be an area worthy of examination and development. The CHED allows for greater independence amongst HEIs to set and adhere to the latter's own development of policies. However, institutions, even ZRCs, have limited policies of their own on the conduct of research training. For example, there may be a need to develop policies to shape the conduct of thesis supervision, the management of research higher degrees, the participation of academic staff and postgraduate students in research, the supervision of current and future international postgraduates, and others.

Strategies:

The possible strategies for the CHED and HEIs to undertake are the following:

- The CHED can design the appropriate structure for research training in the country and develop some policies for HEIs
- HEIs can develop and align their institutional policies with that of the CHED's

Area 2: The provision of support for research higher degree students

The transformation of research students into 'licensed academics' or 'professionals' in their fields of practice requires some forms of support. These can include organisational support as well as professional help from supervisors. It also involves a complex set of personal relationships with peers and fellow postgraduates, friends, and family members. Often, these personal circumstances impact on the progress of the student's progress.

Organisational support can include workspace provisions, computing facilities, learning resources, and a combination of academic and non-academic programs specifically designed for research students (e.g., research colloquia, symposia, social clubs). Supervisors also provide professional support because the necessary support in the supervisory process is fundamental to the overall quality of students' research training experience. The commitment made by supervisors often involves both professional and personal support. These often overlap because maintaining a line between personal and professional affairs can be difficult (Benaquisto, 2000).

Funding is another concern for most postgraduates. In Australia for example, PhD students are reported to have no solid financing of their studies (Buttery, Richter, & Filho, 2005). In turn, this influences their decision to find employment that may prolong the duration of their training. This case might be similar to the Philippines. Often, postgraduate students need to keep their employment to meet the financial challenges of postgraduate study. It is of considerable assistance to some when institutions offer support for expenses related to travel and general expenses associated with their research such as office supplies, printing

and photocopying, Internet connection, and others. Whilst some can take advantage of the dissertation grant from the CHED, this is limited to specific disciplinary priorities that limit access to those who work in other fields. Further, institutional and outside funding sources for student research are often limited.

The growing number of international students taking interest in Philippine universities also poses a challenge for support. HEIs can assess the readiness of their existing structures and systems to support the research training needs of local and international students.

Strategies:

The possible strategies for the CHED and HEIs to undertake are the following:

- HEIs may need to look into strengthening their current support services as well as developing other forms of support for research higher degree students. Specifically, HEIs may find it worthwhile to intensify the following:
 - Research training support schemes
 - Funding for research students (e.g., scholarships)
 - Language skill support for a growing number of international postgraduates
 - Commercialisation of postgraduate research

Area 3: The need to ensure and maintain research quality on thesis and dissertation research

Certain issues impact on the quality of thesis and dissertation research. One of them is the examination and assessment of research by postgraduate students. In examining the PhD *viva* (oral examination) in the UK, for example, Tinkler and Jackson (2002) made the following conclusions: (1) the *viva* is highly variable, hard to predict and prepare for; (2) some aspects of the system of oral examining is problematic; and (3) the lack of transparency and clear guidelines about content and conduct provides the conditions for divergent and unconstructive practices. In a similar vein, Wallace (2003) also found that there was dissonance between the candidates' understanding of the purpose of the oral examination and that implicit in the behaviour of some examiners.

The UK *viva* can be compared to the Philippines' so-called 'panel defense'. Students also undergo the similar patterns of oral examination and similar issues may likely surface. A panel defense is one way of auditing a thesis or a dissertation. The challenge for institutions is to examine the mechanisms by which oral examination work and determine their preparedness to prevent or solve issues when they occur.

The quality of research outputs from research students is also affected by the preparedness of commencing research students. Students bring with them their own prior learning experiences and academic backgrounds, professional work ethic, and personal attitudes and idiosyncrasies. Often, not everyone is prepared for the demands of doing research at the postgraduate level. At the onset, institutions may need to examine their selection and recruitment policies for incoming students as well.

Perhaps, the advantage of UK and Commonwealth countries' policies in the selection and recruitment of candidates is the examination of the candidate's research proposal at the outset. This necessitates appropriate matching of cognitive interests with potential

supervisors as well as resource allocation requirements prior to acceptance of candidates. In the Philippines, student-supervisor matching and resource allocation comes later due to the curricular structure of most research degrees such as the completion of academic units prior to undertaking research..

Strategies:

The possible strategies for the CHED and HEIs to undertake are the following:

- HEIs can find ways to ensure quality research training in two phases: during coursework (e.g., in Research Methods) and during the research process. Sustaining quality along these phases can enhance research training experience and possibly influence the quality of thesis and dissertation research
- HEIs can find ways to audit its 'oral defense'/'panel defense' system and the assessment of postgraduate research
- HEIs can re-examine their standards in assessing postgraduate research (e.g., of publication quality)
- The CHED and HEIs can collaborate on maintaining a national and institutional database for thesis and dissertation research (e.g., in electronic form)
- HEIs can widen their collaboration with international universities to include the possibility of having outside experts participate in the assessment of postgraduate research

Area 4: The need for appropriate training in research of supervisors and research students

One of the many issues surrounding research amongst HEIs is the need for research training amongst supervisors (Brew & Peseta, 2004; Cryer & Mertens, 2003; Grant & Graham, 1999). Before supervisors become effective trainers, they also require the appropriate skills and competences to train others. This makes the notion of 'training the trainers' an important one. Academic staff can participate in a number of research training activities that can enhance their technical ('hard skills') and interpersonal skills ('soft skills'). The challenge for HEIs is to provide these opportunities in a manner that best optimises the skilful combination of these skills.

Since supervision also demands a balancing of roles (see also Vilkinas, 2002), professional development activities can also include leadership and management skills training for supervisors. As supervisors become 'managers' themselves, they must develop a combination of research skills, management skills, and interpersonal skills. Successful completion of postgraduate study (particularly PhD) relies heavily on supervision since supervisors have the prime responsibility in 'creating the new identity of the licensed academic' (Heath, 2002, p. 127).

On the other hand, research students need to develop certain graduate-level skills and demonstrate specific competences during study. It is argued that much of postgraduate work is building candidates' decision making skills based on independent inquiry. Thus, guidance should be able to develop amongst the candidates a sense of autonomy---one 'generic skill' (Hager et al., 2002, p. 3) important in postgraduate study.

Strategies:

The possible strategies for the CHED and HEIs to undertake are the following:

- HEIs can re-structure their thesis supervision arrangements to include appropriate academic match between supervisors and candidates
- Supervisors can routinely engage in professional development activities to develop expertise
- Research students can involve themselves in a number of research training activities throughout their postgraduate study
- HEIs can consider the possibility of moving into a curriculum where research is an essential part
- Learning resource services can be expanded to include materials intended for research

Area 5: The development of a framework for human and animal research ethics

Ethical issues need to be seriously considered in research. The Philippines might consider the need to respond to a more rigorous screening of proposals that involve humans and animals as participants. Salazar (2007) also proposes that a reconsideration of ethical values in research programs and processes in the Philippines is timely. Currently, the frameworks by which HEIs operate are less inclusive of the need for and consideration of research ethics. The Philippines can learn from the Australian experience as a case in point. For example, its National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), the body responsible for promoting the development and maintenance of public and individual health standards in Australia, asserts that 'the ethical and legal responsibilities which researchers have towards participants in research reflect basic ethical values of integrity, respect for persons, beneficence and justice' (2001, para. 1). Specifically, these responsibilities refer to:

1. Integrity - commitment to the search for knowledge, to recognised principles of research conduct and in the honest and ethical conduct of research and dissemination and communication of results.
2. Respect for persons - regard for the welfare, rights, beliefs, perceptions, customs and cultural heritage, both individual and collective, of persons involved in research
3. Beneficence - expressed in researchers' responsibility to minimise risks of harm or discomfort to participants in research projects.
4. Justice - requires that, within a population, there is a fair distribution of the benefits and burdens of participation in research and, for any research participant, a balance of burdens and benefits.

The Philippines, through the CHED and HEIs, can work towards putting in place the necessary structure by which research projects are evaluated by expert groups or committees to ensure that each research activity is anchored within similar acceptable ethical standards and principles. The challenge for the CHED is to create a national body or a unit with similar capacity that evaluates and monitors ethics in research emanating from HEIs. On the other hand, the challenge for HEIs is to strengthen their research ethics standards and develop ways to institutionalise ethical conduct as a fundamental part of university research.

Understanding ethics in research will have to be part of a student's research training experience. Being aware of ethical issues involved in human and animal research also pushes the standards for good research practice.

Strategies:

The possible strategies for the CHED and HEIs to undertake are the following:

- The CHED can develop appropriate policies and make recommendations to make research ethics a necessary component of staff and postgraduate research
- HEIs can establish ways by which staff and postgraduate research meet ethical standards

Area 6: The provision for funding support for research training activities

Currently, there is limited funding available for research training activities nationally and institutionally. The CHED's funds for HEIs are usually for ZRCs whose research activities are supported by some financial support. Other funds, such as a dissertation grant, are also in place on a limited basis. However, research training itself has received little funding from the CHED, much less from institutions. Although academic staff participate in a number of research training activities, there is not enough funding to fully support these activities or to try to broaden them. The same is true for research students. They also suffer the consequences of limited funding.

Strategies:

The possible strategies for the CHED and HEIs to undertake are the following:

- Increasing the CHED's and HEIs' financial support to research activities can be considered. In addition, this budget can include funds specifically intended for research training activities
- HEIs can continue to find ways to generate funds from private sources to fund their research activities
- HEIs can consider some ways to move from over-dependence on public funding or tuition fees as sources of capital

The six areas described above require attention. Note that these areas emanate from two streams: those associated particularly with existing policy frameworks within the CHED and those associated with existing structures within HEIs. Both reflect policy and practice dimensions, either in national or institutional terms. These research training areas also come from different facets, such as those associated with student development, supervisor development, institutional support, and national education agendas. Understanding these areas as well as some possible strategies for action is essential particularly given that the Philippines is seeking to build a strong research environment amongst HEIs and a strong reputation in the Asia-Pacific region.

The strategies posed here are considered achievable given the current system and structure of higher education in the country. These strategies reflect in part the attainment of national and institutional research aims. The areas identified are also in relative position and direction with that of the CHED's four development cornerstones, as mentioned earlier, and on its aims to expand the research capabilities of HEIs nationally.

Conclusion

This paper began with the importance of research training internationally and how universities position themselves as co-contributors in a knowledge society. This presents a particular challenge for Philippine HEIs, particularly in areas of research and building their reputation in the Asia-Pacific region. Postgraduate education in the Philippines continues to struggle to promote its position as a major player in the region. Academic staff and research higher degree students may not be getting enough support for research training which then impacts their and HEIs' research performance. Thus, a few key areas for scrutiny and possible strategies have been presented for consideration by HEIs as they struggle to gain ground and recognition in research. Given that the Philippine higher education is embarking on new ways to enhance research, developing research training policies and practices needs to be given high priority. Overall, research training in the country has potential for development in many areas. It is time to start examining and developing research training nationally and amongst HEIs.

Note

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