

Development of research agenda of a teacher education institution in Central Luzon, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

This collaborative-participatory research aimed to develop the research agenda of the college of teacher education (CTE) of a state university in Zambales, Philippines from 2017 to 2021. The research involved the core research group, faculty researchers, campus and university officials, and stakeholders such as students, alumni, and partner agencies (department of education (DeEd) faculty and administrators). The study was carried out in the first quarter of 2017 to develop the CTE research agenda framework, identify the key research areas, and present to the stakeholders. During the third quarter of 2018, the developed research agenda was revisited and reformulated as the university was converted into a more comprehensive university. A total of six themes were included in the final CTE research agenda framework with corresponding theme descriptions and research topics. The use of participatory-collaborative research effectively develops a college research agenda of the CTE. The processes involved in research agenda setting can serve as a basis for other teacher education institutions (TEIs) in coming up with their respective research agenda geared towards uplifting the quality of teacher education. The study could also serve as a guide for other colleges in formulating and revisiting their research agenda.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Universities and colleges have a responsibility to educate, generate new knowledge, share that knowledge with the community, and create products that improve quality of life. Research is a key function of higher education institutions (HEIs), from the initial idea to the final dissemination, in order to help society move forward and thrive [1]. HEIs are expected to take the lead in conducting technology-driven, innovative, and creative research that is both locally responsive and globally competitive [2].

Research agenda setting refers to the process of identifying and establishing the key topics, thrusts, and priorities that researchers, institutions, or funding agencies plan to address in their future research endeavors. It is a critical step in shaping the direction of research activities and allocating resources effectively to tackle pressing issues or gaps in knowledge. Santos and Horta [3] cited that research agenda setting is crucial in creating knowledge since it serves as the initial step in a process that involves individual researchers and their communities. This process aims to uncover unknown topics, understand the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that drive motivation, and determine the scope and potential impact of the research endeavor [3]. Setting a research agenda of an institution is part of its quest to align its research directions to the thrusts and goals of the global, national and local research initiatives. This process unifies the direction and framework of research

endeavors, specifically within the college of teacher education (CTE). Agenda-setting is crucial to align the college's research and development initiatives with global, regional, and local development goals to enhance teacher education products and advance education in the country for global recognition and competitiveness.

In today's fast-paced and ever-changing society, the knowledge-based economy requires promoting innovation and generating new knowledge in teacher education. According to Reyes *et al.* [4], institutions of higher learning have traditionally been viewed as the primary source of knowledge generation. However, new knowledge providers are emerging and challenging universities' role in creating, producing, and translating knowledge. Globally, a myriad of studies was done regarding research agenda setting relative to education [5], disability research [6], community health [7]–[10], and factors influencing research agenda [11].

In the Philippine context, studies on research agenda setting have been conducted. These include research agenda for different topics such as social sciences [12], climate change and health research [13], climate change and mental health [14], health research agenda [15], [16], and English language teaching (ELT) research agenda [17]. However, a dearth of studies has been published regarding research agenda-setting for teacher education. Reyes *et al.* [4] developed the Philippine Normal University (PNU) research agenda through a collaborative-participatory approach. Ocampo and Lucasan [18] presented their perspective as a teacher educator on the research agenda for curriculum and assessment. Meanwhile, Murcia and Tamayo [19] focused their study on the attainability of research agenda of the University of Mindanao. This shows that although teacher education institutions (TEIs) have their research agenda, very minimal of these agenda were reported through research publication.

The current study was conducted in a state university in Central Luzon, Philippines. The university is composed of seven campuses across the province. One of its campuses in the southern part of the province offers teacher education programs. The campus conducts research and development initiatives to improve the quality of education, in consonance with the United Nation (UN) sustainable development goal 4.

However, the locale lacks a college research agenda which could guide the institution in the accomplishment of its research targets. Hence, the development of the CTE research agenda for 2017 to 2021 through a participatory-collaborative approach is necessary, which can serve as a blueprint for research agenda setting in other campuses and colleges of the university. Hence, the objective of the study was to craft a college research agenda which involved identifying the primary areas of research, selecting research topics, and proposing research projects based on the developed CTE research agenda.

2. METHOD

2.1. Research design

The current study utilized a collaborative-participatory research using qualitative approach. Collaborative-participatory research design is an approach to conducting research that emphasizes collaboration and active participation of various stakeholders throughout the research process [20]. In this design, researchers work closely with individuals or groups directly affected by the research topic, such as community members, organizations, or experts in the field. The goal is to co-create knowledge, share decision-making power, and ensure that the research is relevant, meaningful, and applicable to the real-world context.

2.2. Participants and instrumentation

In the present study, the researchers conducted workshops for area experts in the university and focus group discussions with stakeholders such as Department of Education (DepEd) officials, alumni, preservice teachers, and industry representatives to comprehensively gather the needed information for the research agenda formulation.

2.3. Data collection and data analysis

The agenda setting started with the initial development of the college research agenda. The higher education sector is part of the national innovation system that generates and mobilizes knowledge for enhancing productivity and addressing national development goals. As such, the university must not only produce research and development manpower but also actively participate in the implementation of the research and development plans not only in the innovation of Philippine education but also the research and development (R&D) plans of the science and technology, department of education, health, energy, agriculture and other sectors that are identified as priority in the national development plan.

The university specifically the CTE supports and complements the following international, national and local research directions. These include the commission on higher education (CHED) national research agenda (NHERA-2) 2009 - 2018 [21]; CHED strategic plan 2011-2016 [22]; DepEd research agenda 2016-2020 [23]; the K12 full implementation with the introduction of the kindergarten, mother-tongue-based multilingual education (MTBMLE) and senior high school [24], the 2017 teacher education curriculum

effective AY 2018-2019 [25], [26], the UN sustainable development goals (SDGs) 2015-2030 [26]; the PNU research agenda being the national center of excellence for teacher education or NCTE [27], [28], the university vision 2015 and 2018; the campus research agenda for education 2016-2020 [29], and the standards of accrediting agency of chartered colleges and universities in the Philippines (AACCUP). The initial development of the research agenda involved the core research group headed by the college research coordinator and select faculty researchers who were selected based on the following inclusion criteria: i) regular faculty of the university for at least two years; ii) implemented at least one research project; and iii) willing to take part in the agenda setting.

The formulation of the research agenda is further enhanced by organizing a workshop to identify the research thrusts and priorities of the university. A focus group discussion (FGD) protocol was used in the workshop proper. The FGD protocol was content validated by three research experts in the university. The stakeholders consist of university officials, faculty, staff, students, and representatives of national, regional, and local government lead agencies in research and development. At the workshop, the stakeholders are involved in reviewing the proposed thrusts and agenda, and in identifying and setting the priority thrusts and agenda. They also participated in clustering research priorities and identifying projects and activities.

The development of the research agenda on teacher education started during the first quarter of 2017 during the faculty forum. It was reformulated and finalized on September 12, 2018 during the reformulation of R&D agenda with different stakeholders such as DepEd representatives, private representatives, school principals, parents, students, faculty and staff. The purpose of the forum was to finalize and critique the pre-identified research topics or problems that can generate research-based knowledge useful in the different education sectors. The forum resulted to the finalization of the pre-identified research topics during the faculty forum in 2017 and was reformulated in 2018 when the university was renamed that form part the College of Teacher Education Research Agenda (CTE-RA). The final CTE-RA includes the six research themes.

Thematic analysis and documentary analysis were employed to analyze the qualitative data from the workshop and the FGD. The thematic analysis was used to identify the main themes of the research agenda, while the documentary analysis was used to analyze the alignment of the developed themes to the local, national and global agenda from different benchmarks. Ethical considerations were observed in the duration of the study. No minors participated in the conduct of the study.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Initial research agenda framework

In the early quarter of 2017, the initial research agenda framework was developed as shown in Figure 1. The initial research framework was presented to the multi-stakeholder's forum and was further enhanced in terms of research theme descriptions and corresponding research topics. Ten themes were included in the initial research agenda framework. These include curriculum and pedagogical innovations; teacher quality and standards; gender and development in education; product development; culture, arts and history; community service and extension; environmental sustainability; global citizenship education; internationalization of teacher education; and emerging trends in teacher education.

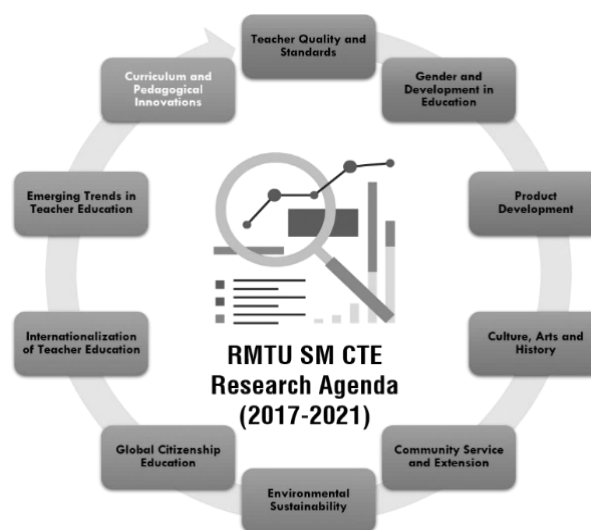


Figure 1. CTE research agenda framework developed in 2017

The themes are in line with the degree offerings present in the TEI. These programs include bachelor of elementary education (BEED), bachelor of secondary education (BSED) with specializations in biological science, English, MAPEH, physical science, science and social studies. Two of the initial themes have similarities with that of the PNU research agenda [4] which include the internationalization of teacher education, and emerging trends in teacher education. Table 1 shows the initial theme descriptions of the developed research agenda in 2017.

Table 1. CTE ten thematic areas of research

Research Area	Description
Curriculum and pedagogical innovations	Research on the emerging trends, issues or innovations in the development of basic education, higher education and teacher education curricula and pedagogical practices in the Philippines and abroad.
Teacher quality and standards	Research on the preparations, qualifications, and continuing professional development of both pre-service and in-service teachers, and teacher educators.
Gender and development in education product development	Research on gender and development in various aspects of education. Research on the development, design, implementation and evaluation of instructional materials and other products which respond to local and global issues and demands.
Culture, arts and history	Research on the promotion of culture and arts, local history, and indigenous peoples (IP) education.
Community service and extension	Research focused on community service and extension which respond to the needs and problems of the local community and industry.
Environmental sustainability	Research on the peoples' environmental literacy, ecological awareness and responsiveness to disaster risk.
Global citizenship education	Research on the different areas of global citizenship education which includes peace and human rights education, multicultural education, multilingual education, inclusive and special education.
Internationalization of teacher education	Research on international standards and global benchmarking which could strengthen international linkages.
Emerging trends in teacher education	Research on emerging trends, issues, and norms in teacher education.

As shown in the Table 1, the thematic areas are focused on teacher concerns, and teacher education issues. Interestingly, the gender and development in education is included as a separate research area to encourage students and faculty to conduct researches on this line. Global citizenship education has also been given a separate research area to give directions to the researches of the college pertaining to peace and human rights education, multicultural and multilingual education, inclusive and special education. This not only reflects an awareness of global educational trends but also emphasizes the institution's commitment to creating a well-rounded and socially responsible learning environment. Further, the development and refinement of the initial research agenda framework, as evidenced by the alignment of themes with degree programs and consideration of broader educational research priorities, underscore the institution's commitment to promoting relevant and impactful research in the field of teacher education.

Research agenda setting involves engaging stakeholders to identify, prioritize, and reach a consensus on the areas, topics, or questions that need to be addressed in research [30], [31]. One way to understand research agendas is to view them as a mixture of strategic problem-solving frameworks and practical steps taken to achieve research objectives [32]. Therefore, research agenda combines the theoretical underpinnings and strategic problem-solving frameworks with the practical implementation of actions and by unifying these elements, teacher education researchers can effectively pursue their research goals and contribute to the advancement of knowledge in teacher education discipline.

3.2. Revision of the initial research agenda

Figure 2 shows the process of reducing the 10 research themes to six research themes. As shown in the figure, the curriculum and pedagogical innovations; gender and development in education; and culture, arts, and history; and global citizenship education, remained in the reformulated version of the research agenda. The teacher quality and standards, international of teacher education, and emerging trends in teacher education in the earlier version are lumped under emerging trends in teacher education and teacher quality. Some research topics in the internationalization of teacher education is now under the global citizenship education. The product development was transferred under curriculum and pedagogical innovations. Lastly, the community service and extension, and the environmental sustainability concepts were removed and are now embedded in the six thematic areas of the reformulated version.

Research should aim at comprehending and impacting educational policies for the benefit of decision-makers, devising educational theories for scholars, and enhancing educational practice for practitioners [33]. At the start of research, involving stakeholders in the decision-making process of what to research is known as research agenda setting which brings research closer to the needs and concerns of stakeholders [34]. To better

understand stakeholder involvement in research priority setting, it is important to map out the complex landscape of this process [34].

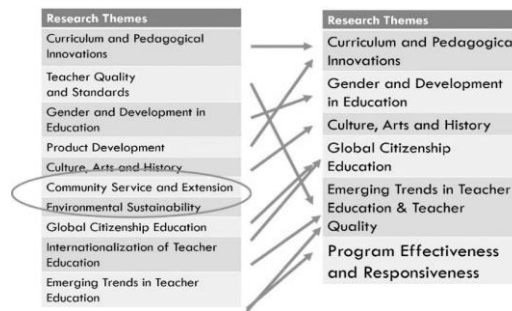


Figure 2. Reformulation of the CTE research agenda

3.3. Final research agenda framework

The final CTE research agenda framework which was reformulated in 2018 when the university was renamed. The final framework includes six thematic areas as shown in Figure 3. These are curriculum and pedagogical innovations; program effectiveness and responsiveness; global citizenship education; culture, arts and history; emerging trends in teacher education; and gender and development in education. The reformulated college research agenda 2017-2021 produced 6 research themes. The college research agenda has six research themes with the following descriptions shown in Table 2.

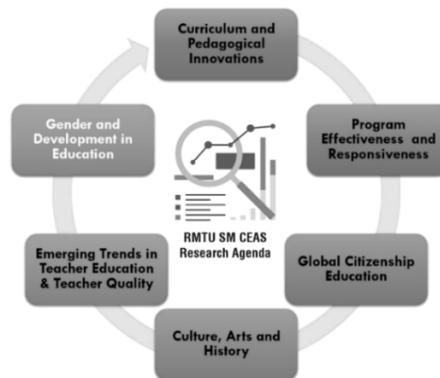


Figure 3. PRMSU SM CTE research agenda framework 2017-2021

The research themes encompass curriculum and pedagogical innovations, emphasizing current trends in education globally, covering basic and higher education, teacher education, and local and global issues. program effectiveness and responsiveness center on researching educational programs, community service, and industry solutions. Global citizenship education investigates aspects such as peace education, human rights, multiculturalism, multilingualism, inclusivity, and environmental literacy. The culture, arts, and history theme advocates for the importance of indigenous culture, arts, local history, and education. The overarching framework addresses diverse educational facets, including teacher trends, global standards, and gender and development aspects. These research themes collectively form a strong framework that positions the institution at the forefront of educational innovation and responsiveness. By spanning diverse facets of education, from curriculum development to teacher training, cultural integration, and gender equity, the institution demonstrates a holistic commitment to advancing education in a globally interconnected and socially conscious world. The findings imply a strategic roadmap for the institution, emphasizing the importance of adaptability, responsiveness, and inclusivity in education. By implementing the research agenda, the institution can solidify its position as a leader in educational innovation, promoting a holistic and socially conscious approach to education in the ever-evolving educational landscape. According to Nasser [35], the process of research agenda setting involves selecting and narrowing down a range of issues and concerns so that decision-makers can focus on them more effectively.

Table 2. Reformulated CTE research agenda with six thematic areas

Research Area	Description
Curriculum and pedagogical innovations	Research on the emerging trends, issues or innovations in the development of basic education, higher education and teacher education curricula and pedagogical practices in the Philippines and abroad. This also includes research on the development, design, implementation and evaluation of instructional materials and other products which respond to local and global issues and demands.
Program effectiveness and responsiveness	Research on the monitoring, assessing, and evaluating educational programs, projects, activities and policies. This also includes research on community service and extension which respond to the needs and problems of the local community and industry.
Global citizenship education	Research on the different areas of global citizenship education, including peace and human rights education, multicultural education, multilingual education, and inclusive and special education. This also includes research on the peoples' environmental literacy, ecological awareness and responsiveness to disaster risk.
Culture, arts and history emerging trends in teacher education	Research on promoting culture and arts, local history, and indigenous peoples (IP) education. Research on emerging trends, issues, and norms in teacher education. It included trends and issues on the preparations, qualifications, and continuing professional development of both pre-service and in-service teachers, and teacher educators. This also includes research on international standards and global benchmarking which could strengthen international linkages.
Gender and development in education	Research on gender and development in various aspects of education.

3.4. Research topics per research themes

From the generated themes, research topics are also suggested to provide direction and to guide the faculty researchers, staff, and the undergraduate students in the conduct of teacher education researches. The table below outlines research topics for each of the six research themes. The list is neither prescriptive nor exhaustive as shown in Table 3.

The research findings have several implications for educational practice and policy. The emphasis on curriculum and pedagogical innovations suggests a need for educators to stay updated with new teaching approaches, assessment tools, and emerging trends across various fields of education. Secondly, the focus on program effectiveness and responsiveness highlights the importance of conducting impact and needs assessment studies to ensure that educational programs and services are meeting the needs of students and communities effectively. This implies that educational institutions should invest in effective evaluation mechanisms to measure the effectiveness of teaching internships, licensure exam preparation, campus services, and school-community partnerships, facilitating continuous improvement and responsiveness to stakeholders' needs. The attention to global citizenship education underscores the imperative of enhancing students' awareness and engagement in global issues such as peace, human rights, civic education, multiculturalism, and environmental preservation. This implies that educational institutions should integrate interdisciplinary and experiential learning opportunities that promote global citizenship competencies, preparing students to become responsible and active global citizens.

The research findings carry significant implications for shaping educational strategies and policies. The emphasis on culture, arts, and history underscores the importance of prioritizing indigenous peoples' education and knowledge, preserving local languages and histories, promoting multicultural studies, integrating arts education, and infusing Filipino values into the curriculum. This suggests a need for educational institutions to incorporate diverse cultural perspectives into their programs, building a more inclusive and culturally rich learning environment. The identification of emerging trends in teacher education, including brain-based learning, gamification, new ecologies of learning, and international standards, implies that teacher training and professional development should evolve to incorporate these innovative approaches. This suggests the need for continuous investment in educators' professional growth, aligning teaching practices with the latest research-backed methodologies and global standards. The focus on gender and development in education indicates a need for a full examination of gender perspectives in educational policies, understanding the impact of gender on school performance, incorporating gender-sensitive health education, and promoting gender equality within educational settings. This suggests that educational institutions should adopt policies and practices that ensure gender inclusivity and equal opportunities, creating an environment that supports the academic success and well-being of all students.

Creating a research agenda for education ensures that research is in line with current education reforms and global circumstances [36]. Research agenda must "address specific complex educational needs that is knowledge-based, provide the validity of research needing study, generate practical application, and provide enough evidence to be effective in reaching the established aims and goals of the research agenda" [35]. An effective research agenda should not only be focused on theoretical exploration but also on generating actionable findings that can be practically applied in educational settings. Practical application of research outcomes allows for positive changes in teaching methods, learning strategies, curriculum development, and educational policies.

Table 3. Sample research topics in the CTE research agenda

Research Theme	Research topics
Curriculum and pedagogical innovations	New teacher education curriculum, curriculum contextualization and indigenization, mother tongue-based multilingual education, outcomes-based education, innovative teaching approaches/methods/strategies, 21 st century pedagogies, traditional and authentic assessment tools, emerging trends in science, mathematics and language education, emerging trends in early childhood education and special needs education, emerging trends in music education and physical education, curriculum alignment and harmonization, alternative learning system, distance learning program, technology integration in instruction, curriculum policies, multigrade teaching, instructional material development, instrument development, educational innovations and inventions, information and communications technology (ICT) utilization and integration
Program effectiveness and responsiveness	Impact studies, needs assessment studies, teaching internship, graduate tracer study, licensure examination performance, evaluation and assessment of campus services, school-based management, teacher education admission and retention policies, livelihood training materials, product development, utilization and commercialization, school-community partnerships, school-industry linkages, extension program impact and evaluation studies
Global citizenship education	Peace education, human rights education, civic education, multicultural education, multilingual education, inclusive and special education, disaster risk reduction management, climate change response and mitigation, environmental preservation efforts, environmental education and literacy, environmental studies, UN SDGs
Culture, arts and history	Indigenous peoples education, local language preservation, cultural/ multicultural studies, culture and arts education, local history, indigenous peoples' knowledge, Filipino values integration
Emerging trends in teacher education	Brain-based learning, gamification in education, new ecologies of learning, emerging values and norms in educational systems, ASEAN qualification standards in TEIS, international standards and global benchmarking, research capability, international research collaboration, international linkages, international scholarships and exchange programs, teacher training/ preparation, Philippine professional teacher standards, continuing professional development, research in pre-service and in-service teachers, teacher agency, CHED and DepEd policies on teacher education
Gender and development in education	Gender issues in education, gender perspective in education policies, gender and school performance, gender and student achievement, gender and development advocacies, gender and health education, gender fair language, gender equality and equity

Further, Cebu Normal University [37] stated that it is important to conduct research on training future teachers about effective pedagogies for this will help achieve the goal of promoting quality education. Additionally, it is crucial for the university to be responsive and relevant in the 21st-century by creating innovative pedagogies that adapt to the changing scenarios in education [38].

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study aimed to develop a college research agenda in a teacher education institution in Central Luzon, Philippines. The use of participatory-collaborative research is effective in developing a college research agenda of the college of teacher education. This approach not only ensures that the agenda addresses a wide range of relevant issues but also fosters ownership and commitment among stakeholders, leading to more effective and meaningful research outcomes with the potential to uplift the quality of teacher education and the education sector as a whole. Involvement of different stakeholders especially the students, alumni, partner agencies such as DepEd to include teachers and school heads, are found to be effective in coming up with an inclusive and harmonized research agenda.

Through the multi-stakeholder approach, the college was able to develop the initial research agenda framework with ten thematic areas. After a year, the university became a more comprehensive state university in which the college revisited its agenda. The review of the agenda reduced its thematic areas into six which adequately represents the research areas in teacher education. These areas include the curriculum and pedagogical innovations; program effectiveness and responsiveness; global citizenship education; culture, arts and history; emerging trends in teacher education; and gender and development in education. Sub-topics under each thematic area were likewise developed to guide both the preservice teachers and teacher educators in conceptualizing their researches based on the developed agenda.

By using a multi-stakeholder approach and adapting to changes brought about by the university's transformation, the CTE aimed to create a more focused and impactful research agenda, ultimately contributing to the improvement of teacher education and the broader educational landscape. Hence, the use of the processes involved in research agenda setting can serve as basis for other TEIs in coming up with their respective research agenda geared towards uplifting the quality of teacher education in the country and to keep abreast with the changing global landscapes. The study could also serve as a guide for other colleges in formulating and revisiting their research agenda.

For future studies, the actual implementation and the attainment of the research agenda may be documented. After setting a research agenda and conducting the studies within its scope, it is essential to

document the actual implementation of the research projects and the extent to which the defined research goals were achieved. This documentation allows for transparency and accountability in research efforts. It enables researchers, funding agencies, policymakers, and other stakeholders to assess the progress made, identify successes and challenges, and learn from the outcomes. Alignment of the research agenda to various national and global frameworks may be mapped as basis for the future revisions of the research agenda. By mapping the research agenda to these higher-level frameworks, teacher educators can ensure that their research addresses relevant and pressing issues that have practical and pedagogical implications beyond the local context. This alignment provides a broader context for the research and enhances its potential impact on educational practices, policies, and guidelines.

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