



Unraveling the Enigma: Understanding Educators' Rationales in Refracting from Research Publications

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ABSTRACT

One of the contributions of State Colleges and Universities is the generation of knowledge through the conduct of research and its dissemination. However, enigmas among educators in tertiary institutes hinder the blossoming of bountiful research publications were observed. Utilizing the exploratory-descriptive qualitative method of research, this study digs deeper into the emerging reasons as to why faculty members do not publish research articles. Participants of the study are the faculty members of the College to be identified utilizing maximum variation sampling. Total participants of the study were $n = 63$. Data were gathered using one-on-one in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and panel interviews depending on the choice of the participants. Data regarding the identification of the participants were disclosed for the ethical consideration of this study. Data were analyzed using a thematic approach and validated using the member audit and triangulation among the faculty of technology, academics, and administrators. Findings as to why they refract from publishing research are time and workload, incentives and recognition, support and resources, mentoring and collaboration, expertise and application, curriculum revisitation, and awareness on regulatory and statutory requirements in the conduct of research and publication. The study recommends the creation of a framework to invigorate and redirect the refracted appetite of the faculty in publishing research outputs.

RESUMO

Uma das contribuições das Faculdades e Universidades Estaduais é a geração de conhecimento por meio da realização de pesquisas e sua disseminação. No entanto, foram observados enigmas entre educadores em instituições de ensino superior que dificultam o florescimento de publicações de pesquisa em abundância. Utilizando o método de pesquisa qualitativa exploratório-descritiva, este estudo aprofundase nas razões emergentes pelas quais os membros do corpo docente não publicam artigos de pesquisa. Os participantes do estudo são os membros do corpo docente da Faculdade, identificados por meio da amostragem de máxima variação. O total de participantes do estudo foi $n = 63$. Os dados foram coletados por meio de entrevistas individuais em profundidade, discussões em grupo focal e entrevistas em painel, conforme a escolha dos participantes. Os dados relacionados à identificação dos participantes foram divulgados para fins de consideração ética deste estudo. Os dados foram analisados utilizando uma abordagem temática e validados por meio de auditoria pelos participantes e triangulação entre docentes da área tecnológica, acadêmicos e administradores. As descobertas sobre porque eles se abstêm de publicar pesquisas incluem: tempo e carga de trabalho, incentivos e reconhecimento, apoio e recursos, orientação e colaboração, especialização e aplicação, revisão curricular e conscientização sobre exigências regulatórias e estatutárias na realização de pesquisas e publicações. O estudo recomenda a criação de um framework para revigorar e redirecionar o apetite refratado do corpo docente na publicação de resultados de pesquisa.

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Introduction

In today's rapidly evolving education landscape, the role of educators extends far beyond the classroom. This encompasses the responsibility of producing scholarly outputs, knowledge creation and dissemination (Fayzullaevna, Negmatovna, & Qahramon qizi, 2020; Wa-Mbaleka, 2015). Some academic circles even have a "publish or perish" culture to urge educators to engage in scholarly debates by publishing research articles (Craig, 2020). However, amidst this appeal, a significant portion of educators chooses to stand in the shadows of the academic limelight, refracting from the path of research article publication (Magos, 2012). This mysterious divergence from conventional academic paths invites a thorough investigation of the complex motivations, barriers and complexity that underpin educators' decisions to refrain from participating in the production of research literature (Reisman, 2017; De Cote & Lengeling, 2014).

On international scale, higher education institutions are increasingly evaluated based on their research productivity, with scholarly publication serving as a critical metric of institutional prestige, global rankings, and academic competitiveness (Salameh et al., 2022; Singh et al., 2023). In many parts of the world, faculty research output is closely tied to funding allocations (Prozesky et al., 2021; Sattari et al., 2022), tenure and promotion systems (Pontika et al., 2022; Pontika et al., 2022), and international collaborations (Alamah et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2022).

Universities are expected to serve as engines of innovation, contributing to national development goals and the global knowledge economy through continuous production and dissemination of research (Coşkun et al., 2022; Tolstykh et al., 2021). Amid this global drive, countries have adopted diverse strategies to boost research engagement among faculty. In countries such as the United States, tenure-track systems and institutional incentives are designed to ensure that research remains a central faculty responsibility (Tripodi et al., 2024). Meanwhile, emerging economies such as China have invested heavily in research infrastructure and publication incentives to increase international academic visibility (Hyland, 2023; Li et al., 2024). These strategies often include publication-based bonuses, sabbatical programs, research grants, and international mobility programs (Ocampo et al., 2022; Uwizye et al., 2022). Since the 1970s, there has been an increase in research productivity in various research fields (Haghani et al., 2022). Despite the growing attention toward academic publishing, many faculty members in higher education continue to encounter significant obstacles that limit their engagement in scholarly output.

The Philippines, in particular, has historically lagged behind its Southeast Asian neighbors in research productivity (Vinluan, 2012). Although an optimistic growth trajectory in research was projected (Guido & Orleans, 2020), faculty across various disciplines, mostly in academic and research-focused institutions, continue to struggle with challenges such as

heavy workloads, lack of research training, inadequate institutional support, lacking or limited monetary incentives and limited resources (Dahal et al. et al., 2022; Durante et al., 2023; Çapraz & Kılıç, 2023; Launio, et al., 2024).

Emotional strain, fear of rejection, and stress caused by publication formatting requirements and long review periods also serve as major deterrents (Niez, 2024; Wa-Mbaleka, 2015). These issues, as categorized by Durante et al. (2023), span four major domains—individual, institutional, scientific, and professional—and reflect the complex, interrelated factors that hinder research engagement and publication.

Recognizing the presence of these issues in publishing research papers, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) issued Joint Circular No. 3, s. 2022, which outlines guidelines for faculty position reclassification in State Universities and Colleges (SUCs). Under this circular, research outputs published in refereed and internationally-indexed journals are evaluated as part of the reclassification process. This serves as another point of motivation for faculty members to pursue publication of research papers.

Even with the blurring distinction between traditional academic-focused institutions and TVET institutions (Berk, Ş., 2022), the landscape of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is still pivotal in equipping individuals with practical skills essential for navigating the demands of the modern workforce and the challenges posed by the fourth industrial revolution (Nordin & Omar, 2024). TVET institutions play a critical role in cultivating a skilled workforce capable of meeting the evolving needs of various industries (Yusoff et al., 2020). Within technical-vocational education institutions, faculty members navigate a complex landscape characterized by substantial teaching responsibilities coupled with expectations for scholarly research, a duality that often creates significant professional tensions (Ismail et al., 2018).

This tension arises from the inherently practical, skills-based focus of technical-vocational training, which demands considerable time and effort in curriculum development, hands-on instruction, and student mentorship, potentially impacting the time available for research and scholarly pursuits (Alinea, 2021). Furthermore, the prevailing academic culture often emphasizes research productivity as a primary metric for institutional prestige and faculty advancement, leading to increased pressure on faculty to engage in research activities, even within teaching-focused environments (McFarlane, 2015).

While different educational landscapes are becoming increasingly concerned with evidence-based teaching and innovative pedagogical approaches (Sato, M. & Loewen, S., 2019), a surprising paradox arises because many educators choose not to publish their new-found or developed strategies (Putri, 2020). This is not only true to academic and research focused institution but this could also be true to some TVET-focused institutions (Alinea, 2021; Ismail et al., 2018,). It is essential to explore the reasons for this diversion, as the educational

community recognizes the vital role of research in improving teaching methods and student outcomes (Craig, 2020). There is a need to shed light on a lesser explored aspect of the academia- profession conflict, bridging the gap between the mandate of academic engagement and the personal and contextual preferences that shape the decisions of educators (Cain, 2017).

This study aimed to explore the perspectives of faculty members in a TVET-focused institution by examining the complex interplay of institutional, personal, and contextual factors that influence their decisions to refrain from publishing research articles. The setting of the study—a TVET-dominated institution—presents a distinct academic culture and set of institutional priorities that may differ significantly from those of traditional academic and research universities (Kriesi & Sander, 2024). To fully understand these dynamics, a nuanced qualitative approach is necessary, one that captures the concerns, motivations, and perceptions of educators and reveals the deeper reasons behind their choices. The findings of this study will contribute to ongoing discussions on faculty development and offer insights into how educators navigate challenges related to academic accountability and teaching responsibilities.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed exploratory-descriptive qualitative research design to dig deeper on the reasons as to why educators from TVET college institution abstain from research article publications. Exploratory-descriptive qualitative (EDQ) research is a methodologically grounded approach that aims to explore and describe under-researched phenomena through the lived experiences and perspectives of participants (Hunter et al., 2019). Richards (2003) also argued that it will “study human actors in natural settings, in the context of their own world and seek to understand the meaning and significance of this actions from the perspective of those involved”. This design will shed light and uncover the reasons of research participants’ non-participation in growing corpus of knowledge through research publication.

Sampling

In identifying all possible reasons on the abstinence of the faculty members on research publication, maximum variation sampling was utilized (Berndt, 2020). A portion of faculty members across teaching departments of the College, considering the difference of tenure, academic rank and specialization will serve as the initial source of data. Recruitment of additional faculty as participants took place as new themes grounded from the data emerges. Criteria for selection for participants are the following: Must either be a regular or contractual

faculty member, or administrator of the college; Engaged in any research activities; and Does not publish for at least three consecutive years.

Table 1 shows the actual participants of the study which was totaled to n=63.

Table 1.

Distribution of participants

Participants	n
College Administrators	13
Faculty of Academics	13
Faculty of Engineering	5
Faculty of Entrepreneurship	2
Faculty of Technology	30
Total	63

Data Collection

To gather qualitative data, the researchers employed a semi-structured interview approach, allowing participants to freely express their personal perspectives and experiences about their inability to publish research (Buys et al., 2022). The study was conducted within a state-run polytechnic college located in Marikina City, Philippines offering academic and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) courses. Participants included regular faculty members and administrators who had not consistently engaged in research publication activities for over three years. Most of the participants are involved in research but some of these faculty members also held administrative roles, offering a dual perspective that enriched the data. Even though they provided different perspectives, they were counted as a single person.

The participants were drawn from various departments, ensuring a diverse representation of disciplines and roles within the college. Initially, the actual number of participants is not determined as inclusion of additional participants necessitates to saturate the data. Data collection commenced once approval to conduct the study was given by the College authorities. Selected participants were asked consent prior to data gathering procedure. Unstructured interviews by one-on-one in-depth, panel, or focus group discussion were employed depending on the choice of the faculty member or the respective department which will allow them to share their thoughts, opinions and experiences as to why they are not participating in research publications. Open-ended questions were asked to participants that prompts to discuss their reasons for refracting from publications, the factors which influenced their decisions, and their perceptions.

Data analysis

The research team were divided into three for data collection – One team for faculty of academics and entrepreneur, one in faculty of technology, and one for college administrators. After each collection of data, thematic analysis was employed enabling the identification of themes and insights within the gathered narratives. Each interview was transcribed verbatim,

and the transcripts were systematically coded to identify recurring themes and patterns (Jnanathapaswi, 2021). An inductive approach of thematic analysis was taken which allow the themes to emerge from the collected data. Themes and sub-themes that were generated in the analysis were organized to form narratives which then became the basis of offered insights how to help educators on publishing researches considering the profound dimensions of non-publication. Recruitment of additional faculty members as source of data were employed as long as the data does not achieve its saturation (Mwita, 2022). Saturation of data was only achieved once the data of the last three recruited participants of each group of data collectors does provide new insights on the notion of non-publication, as compared to the current pool of data. The whole team was then had a meeting to compare and contrast the findings of each to finalize the themes as discussed in this study.

Ethical Consideration

One of the paramounds of the research process is its ethical consideration. Prior to the conduct of the study, approval from the higher authorities of the College was sought. After their approval and prior to the data collection by means of interview on the recruited participants, informed consent form was obtained ensuring that they have understood the purpose of the study, their role, and confidentiality of their responses. Pseudonyms were used in case there is a demand to include fraction of their responses in the results and discussion section to provided anonymity. Data security measures such as secure storage of transcripts and audio recordings will be implemented. All raw data and transcriptions were destroyed right after the completion of this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study set out to shed light on the complex variables affecting teachers' productivity in research and publication. It revealed a web of interrelated obstacles and enablers through a thorough thematic analysis.

Theme 1. Time and Workload

The key barriers that prevent faculty members from conducting meaningful research are closely related to time constraints and excessive workloads. One common insight expressed by participants is that they feel overwhelmed by the amount of work they have to perform, including the teaching, administration, and other volunteer work. This total burden not only affects their everyday life, but also greatly impairs their ability to conduct research. Some faculty members face an even more difficult task of integrating their academic responsibilities with administrative responsibilities, which is likely to impair their ability to conduct research. This theme agrees with the study of Dahal et al. (2022), Durante et al. (2023), Çapraz & Kılıç

(2023) and Wa-Mbaleka (2015) about heavy workload and limited time as one of the most prevalent issues that makes the research publication more difficult for faculty members.

In conjunction with time constraints, this theme poses a significant challenge in academic institutions: the need to conduct a profound study and redesign faculty workload. In order to guarantee that a reasonable proportion of faculty time is reserved for high-priority research assignments, the intended redistribution aims at a more rational allocation, which is preferably based on academic rank. This encouraging approach indicates the need to respond adequately to varying academic requirements taking into consideration the different positions of faculty members.

Focusing on balancing time and work while taking into account all faculty responsibilities can be extremely useful for institutions. Accumulating teaching load and cutting down administrative work are the basic steps towards developing a positive research culture. These practices not only ease the burden on faculty in the short-term but also help to build a robust research culture in academic institutions in the long-run. Structural changes of this type have the potential to enhance overall productivity and, in turn, increase scholarly activity among faculty.

Theme 2. Incentives and Recognition

One of the most significant barriers to research productivity in the faculty is a lack of incentives and recognition for their efforts. There is a distinct belief amongst most, if not all faculty members, with systems that should promote and reward research work in both financial and non-financial forms.

One of the main issues raised was a lack of financial incentive research grants or honorariums; apart from remuneration from service, monetary incentives can be a means in compensating the expense incurred in conducting research. The importance of participants covering travel, equipment, and publication fees above all to make research work more feasible and sustainable was stressed. It was also discussed that most of the participants in the study considered non-financial recognition like promotions and opportunities for further professional development as a significant element in validating and celebrating faculty research efforts. Such recognition was appreciated as contributing towards pride and motivation to researchers apart from financial benefits.

A major issue that was raised was that of the transparency in information dissemination regarding the awards and incentives. This theme supports the findings of Launio, et al. (2024) and Niez (2024) that having incentives and recognition are some of the motivating factors for the faculty members in pursuing scholarly works. Without these incentives and recognitions, faculty members may not have enough motivation to pursue research publication.

Theme 3. Support and Resources

Increased research productivity was very much ascribed to strong research support and resources. As the participants indicated, there is a need for a solid integrated framework composed of access to important infrastructures, personnel support, and training opportunities. This theme in agreement with the study of Wa-Mbaleka (2015) and Niez (2024) that having lack of support and insufficient resources breeds issues for faculty members in publishing scholarly articles. This is also related to the findings of Çapraz & Kılıç (2023) which shows that challenges arise when there is no adequate support for research from the institution.

In very few terms without qualifying, they insisted on the importance of the provision of well-equipped libraries along with comprehensive collections for the review of an extensive literature and for the access of the research materials. Also deemed crucial were well-maintained equipment and dependable internet connectivity to use the various online databases and data-analysis tools effectively. Such resources are essential for contemporary research, and without them, the participants face significant obstacles in doing their work. The proposed interventions focus on providing the adequate support and improving infrastructure to fill the identified gaps so that researchers will be enabled to use the essentials for becoming successful researchers.

The significance of personnel support in streamlining research efforts was emphasized by the participants. Technical experts and research assistants are considered essential for handling duties such as data gathering, analysis, and paper writing, which relieves individual researchers of some of their workload while enhancing the caliber and effectiveness of the research process. Along with personnel, there was a great demand for more structured training programs targeted specifically at developing research skills. Comprehensive instruction in subjects including statistical analysis, publication methods, and research technique was indicated by faculty members. These programs would enable them to carry out in-depth study and more adeptly handle the difficulties associated with scholarly publication.

Theme 4. Mentoring and Collaboration

The emphasis of the participants is directed towards the aspect of mentoring support as a means of improving the entire research process. Faculty members stressed the crucial role that research assistants and technical specialists play in support in various areas such as data collection, analysis, and manuscript preparation. This blows up the workload on researchers while improving their productive efficiency as well as research quality. A major challenge though is the lack of sufficient training making them. Participants stressed needing structured programs focusing on research methodology, statistical analysis, and publication strategies. The suggested path is comprehensive training opportunities to facilitate faculty preparation for high-quality research and highly effective scholarly publishing. This theme was also

identified in the study of Durante et al. (2023) as some of the reasons why faculty members do not publish research papers. It was also highlighted from the study of Niez (2024) that in order to address the challenges in scholarly publications of faculty members, mentoring and faculty support is needed.

Interdisciplinary cooperation, therefore, appears a very crucial tactic for dismantling traditional barriers within and towards disciplines since it encourages sharing of different points of views, approaches, and ideas. This cooperative effort can trigger research innovations and help solve more challenging problems. Crossover collaborations would indeed enhance research capability of faculty members and pull in wider vistas of knowledge. According to Phillips and Dennison (2015), mentoring and collaboration can significantly enhance faculty research and publication by improving their skills in research, writing, and publication skills.

Discussions also brought about cooperation and mentorship as probably among the most vital aspects in making possible individual development as well as a highly dynamic, cutting-edge research culture in academic settings. Rather, from their point of view, research production should be assessed as holistic and thus as joint performances. This gives the foundation of a far more exciting and intellectually interesting academic atmosphere.

Theme 5. Expertise and Application

This theme is all about the critical importance of having diverse skills together with actually putting research into practice. The participants pointed out that the above great source of expertise diversity in faculty becomes a real issue when it does not link to real-world applications in an academic setting. The establishment of specialized research publications that address certain faculty domains of expertise is one major recommendation. These forums would propel the vigorous intellectual debate and promotion into deeper examination of hundreds of research areas besides visibility enhancement. The overall goal is to highlight and celebrate faculty competence to have a more involved and influential research community.

The participants highlighted the importance of recognizing and paying contractual faculty members for their work in research. Such faculty members constitute a source for research because they provide a great deal of outside knowledge and experience. This supports the findings of Durante et al. (2023) in which 47.7% of faculty members reported that one of the barriers in research is lack of dedicated research team. Conduct their work well with recognition and putting them into working arrangements with the institution, and research output will improve. They further suggested that research results be caught up in a radical change in perception and dissemination. The participants suggested moving away from normal academic linkages and towards practical outcomes using faculty skills to create real benefits. Such dynamic merging into individual academic projects serves the mission of the institute as a whole.

The participants expressed a strong eagerness to step beyond the confines of the academic setting, recognizing that most research is directed toward addressing real-world

issues. The specific interests and areas of expertise of the faculty members, each adding a different flavor to this viewpoint. The suggested transformation is to take these diverse fields of expertise and actively convert them to workable solutions satisfying social needs. Quite importantly, this endeavor has bigger implications than mere individual objectives as it is congruent with the institutional aim of the academic body as a whole. It's all about helping make that college the center of transformational research and applied knowledge by closing the theory-practice divide. Institutions and faculty can create a strong reputation among and within the community, while empowering a dynamic research culture that is directed toward solving real-world problems, by accentuating the relevance of their work. This collaborative approach harmonizing individual faculty passions with the overarching vision of the college serves as a powerful catalyst for producing impactful results with tangible benefits for society.

Theme 6. Graduate School Preparation

The importance of research in graduate school preparation is given special emphasis for improvement by the participants. They note while benefits accrued from the current coursework, which they see taking greater emphasis on research training for practical knowledge and teaching capabilities. Their goal will be to prepare graduate students who can do research independently and contribute significantly to their respective fields.

This theme supports the findings of Durante et al. (2023), which indicate that three out of the four identified domains contributing to research hesitancy are linked to inadequate training and limited knowledge in conducting research. Thorough changes are needed in terms of research education. The institution must adopt comprehensive and specialized training per discipline, particularly in topics such as statistical methods, data collection, analysis, and design. The understanding of more techniques across sectors must be well emphasized. It also must stress the introduction of students in the writing of manuscripts, peer review, and ethical issues with regard to research publication.

A very major issue in graduate programming is whether these programs would initiate a more research-oriented culture. Faculty involvement with students has additional opportunities and appears to contend that practical, specific-disciplined research projects should be integrated into the course. They also include funding for student-led projects as a department-level support towards enhancing research activities. The goal is to develop a graduate program to create a strong, new generation of scholars equipped with the specific tools they will need for meaningful research in addition to teaching skills.

Theme 7. Awareness on Regulatory and Statutory Requirements

There were insistences from participants for having clear, actionable guidelines on research and publication, since discrepancies could obstruct faculty performance in research. They sought comprehensive guidelines on acceptable research practices, predatory journals, and compliance to the standards set by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). In the

findings of Launio, et al. (2024), around one third of the faculty members are not aware of publication policies, while 40% of these faculty members think that the policies are not fully implemented. Training about responsible conduct, informed consent, data protection, and conflict of interest was pushed by these respondents. Research ethics was one of the primary contents discussed. They also emphasized the need for strong ethical review processes. This theme is in lined with the study of Regmi (2011) which highlights the importance of continued education on research rules and regulations. Even though the study focuses more on the ethical rules, it is still important to note that knowledge on statutory and regulatory requirements is crucial for research writing and publication.

It was suggested a list of selected acceptable journals for referencing should be available and that trainings on how to identify and avoid predatory publications must be done. It was also stressed that it is also very important that research activities be aligned with CHED's guidelines to ensure contributions to institutional and national research objectives.

CONCLUSIONS

From the discussions, quite a few key issues relating to academia and potential solutions arose. With so much teaching and administrative work to complete, most faculty members are overworked while research activities represent the very extra burden that is constantly neglected. Research activities would also not count for anything. Provisionally, the proposed solutions include workload allocation according to academic ranking, non-monetary considerations such as grants, promotion, and professional growth opportunities in addressing these problems. But for increased research productivity, training programs, infrastructure, including access to research assistants, libraries, and reliable internet, ought to be improved. Facilitating multidisciplinary interaction and giving mentoring to junior faculty members became most critical in accelerating the advancement of research.

A need was expressed for enhanced training in research methodologies within graduate school programs to further prepare them for independent and large-scale research. They insisted also on including research ethics and strategies for avoiding predatory journals. A notable challenge listed was the non-existence of uniform and conclusive guidelines on research and publication, which greatly impacts good research practice. To counter this, the participants suggested that user-friendly guidelines be put together, spelling out ethical considerations, avoidance of predatory journals, and alignment with Commission on Higher Education (CHED) requirements. This approach shall help arbitrary faculty members conduct ethical and quality research that aligns with institutional and national priorities.

Recommendations

A number of recommendations are given for improving a research culture in education institutions. First, graduate teaching should include technical training in research methods and ethics and publications along with teaching competencies in discipline-associated

research. Second, institutions must have rules easy to access, uniform, and unambiguous on research topics such as ethics, a guide on identifying predatory publications, and coordination with CHED or another regulatory agency. Ethical research procedures, however, call for much rigorous training in data protection, informed consent, responsible conduct, and conflict management. The remedy proposed is to impose upon researchers' tight ethical review procedures that would scrutinize their research ideas very closely.

Besides providing a well-defined list of trusted journals to consult, establishments can also hold workshops for their staff members on how to recognize predatory journals. Mentoring and collaboration are critical; it is advisable to establish mentorship programs that match new faculty to experienced researchers and to establish specialized research journals that showcase faculty specialties. Institutions also need to set guidelines to ensure that faculty research is aligned with institutional goals and CHED objectives to create a research culture benefiting both institutional and national research agendas.

Improving the communication of information is also crucial when it comes to ensuring that it disseminates more regarding the incentive and recognition of research activities. Revealing it explicitly to the members would encourage them to promote their beliefs to the engagement session. These suggestions are designed to create a nurturing, transparent, and research-friendly environment in higher learning institutions within which faculty members can comfortably secure contribution opportunities toward the development of knowledge.

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