



# The Philippine Higher Education: A Situational Reflection

## O Ensino Superior nas Filipinas: Uma Reflexão Situacional sobre Governança, Qualidade e Corrupção

Raul Aquino 

National Research Council of the Philippines.  
Email: [aquinoraul93@yahoo.com](mailto:aquinoraul93@yahoo.com)

**ABSTRACT | Purpose:** This article examines the current state of higher education in the Philippines, identifying patterns of institutional practices, governance structures, and factors that sustain low quality, weak international competitiveness, and persistent corruption within the system. **Methodology:** The study adopts a qualitative descriptive, phenomenological, and explanatory approach. It is based on documentary analysis and a systematic literature review, drawing on Commission on Higher Education policies, official statistics, court decisions, government reports, international rankings, and scholarly works on governance, leadership, and corruption in higher education. **Findings:** The findings indicate that the dominance of the private sector, combined with shared governance arrangements, weakens state regulatory capacity and enables maladministration, arbitrary decision-making, and questionable practices. Persistent issues include flawed accreditation processes, low faculty qualifications, limited research output, high tuition fees, and poor international competitiveness. Institutional autonomy, management prerogative, and presumed regularity are frequently invoked as legal cover for unsound policies and decisions. **Originality and Value:** The study contributes by demonstrating that the crisis of Philippine higher education is deeply rooted in structural governance failures and weak integrity systems. It underscores the need for regulatory reform, stronger accountability mechanisms, enhanced transparency, and genuine alignment with international quality standards.

**Keywords |** Philippine higher education; Educational governance; Corruption; Academic quality; University autonomy.



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**RESUMO | Objetivo:** O artigo analisa a situação atual do ensino superior nas Filipinas, identificando padrões de práticas institucionais, estruturas de governança e fatores que sustentam a baixa qualidade, a fraca competitividade internacional e a persistência de práticas corruptas no sistema educacional. **Metodologia:** Adota-se uma abordagem qualitativa de caráter descritivo, fenomenológico e explicativo. O estudo baseia-se em análise documental e revisão sistemática da literatura, incluindo memorandos da Commission on Higher Education, dados estatísticos oficiais, decisões judiciais, relatórios governamentais, rankings internacionais e estudos acadêmicos sobre governança, liderança e corrupção no ensino superior. **Resultados:** Os resultados indicam que a dominância do setor privado, aliada ao modelo de governança compartilhada, enfraquece o poder regulatório do Estado e favorece práticas de má administração, decisões arbitrárias e uso indevido da autonomia institucional. Verificam-se fragilidades na acreditação, baixa qualificação docente, fraca produção científica, altas taxas de mensalidades e limitada competitividade internacional. Autonomia, gestão por prerrogativa e presunção de regularidade são frequentemente utilizadas como justificativas legais para políticas inadequadas e práticas questionáveis. **Contribuições:** O estudo contribui ao evidenciar que a crise do ensino superior filipino está fortemente associada a falhas estruturais de governança e integridade institucional. Os achados reforçam a necessidade de reformas regulatórias, fortalecimento dos mecanismos de integridade, maior transparência e alinhamento efetivo aos padrões internacionais de qualidade educacional.

**Palavras-chave |** Ensino superior filipino; Governança educacional; Corrupção; Qualidade acadêmica; Autonomia universitária

## INTRODUCTION

The Philippine Higher Education has been generally described and assessed as weak, non-competitive, no integrity and quality. As strongly pointed out by UP Professor Editha Tan (2017), higher education in the Philippines is poor in all levels of standards.

Since 2013 to present, fewer than ten (10) HEIs, or only .02 %, were listed in the international ranking out of the total 2,419 higher educational institutions operating in the country when it comes to reputation, integrity, and quality. Although there are more than one hundred HEIs mentioned in the 2026 QS World University Rankings, it was just for supporting the UN sustainable goals (Malipot, 2025, Manila Bulletin). What is ironic in this yearly report is that most of the HEIs that claim quality and excellence, citing accreditation, are not seen on the list. This is a big slap to the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), school owners, academic leaders and managers, and accrediting bodies of this country.

The question is, what is wrong with Philippine higher education? Why is it so weak, lacks competitiveness, integrity, and quality?

It's all about corruption (Besana, 2025) (De Jesus, 2024). The Philippines has a corrupt political system for a thousand years, according to Garrido (2025), and the higher education system is one of its products.

The litany of corruption practices is an open secret in the academic world in the Philippines. Corruption, bad and incompetent leadership, poor human resource management, bad labor practices, misalignment of teaching, faculty gangsterism, thesis for sale, ghost writing in the undergraduate and graduate level by charlatan teachers using AIs, fake diplomas, academic dishonesty, and doubtful accreditations are very serious matters that require urgent and strict government actions.



Consequently, investigating corruption and questionable practices in higher education in the country is complicated. Even in the hearing of EDCOM Report 2 in the Philippine Congress, the issue of corruption has been evaded according to Edilberto De Jesus (2024), former Education Secretary with a PhD in Yale University.

The Filipino secretive culture, lack of transparency, closed-knitted and personal social relationships, patronage, misuse of debt of gratitude, cost-benefit effect, weak judicial system, fear, violence, and the lack of political serve as the major barriers. Getting information and doing research work on the issue of corruption is very hard and challenging (Aquino, 2021). Going against corruption is dangerous in the Philippines. Retaliation is the common answer for those who will expose corruption (El-Rayes, 2014, and Cailler, 2013).

Thus, the main purpose of this study is to present the realities and patterns of behaviors circulating in the higher educational system and to give concrete solutions and strategies for addressing these issues and challenges.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Realities in Higher Education**

Internationally, the role of the best higher education system has been greatly recognized as a partner in national development. Countries with the best educational systems provide good salaries to their citizens and better quality of life as compared to other countries with poor educational systems (Berger and Fisher, 2013). The best universities are usually found in well-developed countries and highly urbanized areas, providing the best education and training to students who want it (Jabar, 2013). However, corruption knows no boundaries. Illegal and unethical practices are now a growing concern worldwide and are the greatest barrier to human development (Monica, 2019). Political corruption, sub-standard policies, nepotism, diploma mills, academic dishonesty, incivility, and oppressive behaviors are very tense (Hallak & Poison, 2007)

Freedom of expression is suppressed by leaders, and bullying has become a norm, instilling fear in new and untenured teachers and employees (Tolentino, 2016). Incompetent and bad academic leaders and managers have been pinpointed as the main actors and instigators of corruption and unethical acts (Chapman, 2013, and Balci et al, 2011).

Despite the claims of quality and excellence of many higher educational institutions in the Philippines, the truth and realities cannot be denied. The country's higher educational system has no quality in all areas (Tan, 2017) and lacks competitiveness in international standards and innovation (Allison, 2020).

### **Theoretical Framework**

Power Dependency, Structural and Cultural Cruelty, and Cultural dimensions are theories highly practiced in weak and struggling societies, like the Philippines.



Fergusson, Molina, and Robinson (2020) confirmed that power dependency theory, known as the patron-clientelism relationship, is usually practiced in weak societies in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Philippines. It is about economic benefits and weakening state power in the interest of society. It is a dead trap and very hard to change or escape.

According to Barash and Webel (2018), structural and cultural violence are well-entrenched in the organizational structure that is very hard to resist. It is a form of oppression or social violence caused by power imbalances leading to dehumanizing inequality and injustice (Arthur Romano, 2022). Accessed from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/social-sciences/oppression>).

## Research Questions

Discussions and analysis of this paper revolve around these questions:

1. What is the present situation of Philippine Higher Education in terms of realities and patterns of practices?
2. Are these aligned and supportive of the government policy of quality education in response to international standards?
3. What can be done to address the realities and practices of Philippine Higher Education?

## Scope and delimitation

This is about the present situation of Philippine Higher Education in terms of realities and patterns of policies and practices. Discussions and analysis evolve on the present regulations, accreditation, classification, ownership & leadership and governance, faculty composition and capability, accessibility and quality of enrollees, and research.

The main materials used were the CHED-issued memorandum orders, statistics, labor cases involving HEIs as decided by the Supreme Court, selected studies on leadership & management, and selected laws. In support of the analysis, reports from Times World University Rankings, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), and Professional Regulations Commission (PRC), and the Department of Labor (DOLE) were also undertaken. Selected columns and news reports were also considered.

All the data and information collected were accessed from the official websites of the concerned institutions that is free for public use.

## Definition of Terms

For better understanding and clarity on the message of this paper, the following terms are defined and described based on their functions.

- **Accreditation.** In this study, accreditation is the recognized process by the Commission of Higher Education (CHED) as one of the bases of regulations, checking, and approval.



- **Autonomy.** It refers here to the highest classification of recognition given to a higher education by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). It is awarded to HEIs with consistent demonstration of high-quality of faculty and instructions, research, and scholarships. Autonomous universities will not be subjected to strict monitoring and given more rights and privileges in the operations of their institutions (Section 5 no 2, MORPHE).
- **Maladministration-** This is the prevailing leadership and management applied in almost all HEIs in the Philippines. It is all about evilness, incompetence, and mediocrity.
- **Management by Prerogative-** It's all about the decisions made by owners and their academic managers in governing their respective HEIs, and the presumed regularity of decisions is exercised. In reality, this is usually misused and abused by many HEIs.
- **Structure and situation** refer to the present landscape of the Philippine higher education in terms of regulations, accreditation, and classification, ownership & academic governance, faculty composition, accessibility and quality of students, research, and other prevailing practices that continue to dwell in different HEIs.

## METHOD

A documentary and systematic literature review and analysis were applied to best describe and understand the prevailing situation of the Philippine Higher Educational System.

A documentary analysis and systematic literature review are a good foundation for high-quality research to establish a strong theoretical basis and create new theories because of an in-depth analysis (Snyder, 2019; Maggio, Swell, and Artino Jr., 2016).

The main materials used were CHED memorandum orders and statistics, seventeen (17) local studies, selected labor cases involving higher educational institutions decided by the Supreme Court, eighteen (18) columns, and twelve (12) news articles. Additional statistical data were accessed from the Professional Regulation Commission and the Philippine Statistics Authority

In the selection of reviewed studies, the researcher strictly observed the following guidelines for the studies to qualify for review and analysis. First, to topic must be critical and the findings will contribute to the improvement of the society, 2nd, it must be systematic, no contradiction of conclusions to one another in connection to the official documents and factual reports, 3rd, findings must be to the nearest truth and realities that represents the actual situation of the higher education in the Philippines.



## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 1 What is the present situation/condition of the Philippine Higher Education System?

#### 1.1 The Commission on Higher Education and Corruption

Based on RA 7722, known as the Higher Education Act of 1994, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) is the only official arm of the Philippine Government to police, regulate, and supervise all government (national & local) and private higher educational institutions operating in the country. However, the creation of CHED was a product of a corrupt political system. Garrido (2025) posited that corruption in the Philippines has been present for more than a thousand years, and corruption has become a norm, using culture as a justification (Corpuz, page 5, Garrido, 2025).

Since 1994, formal and informal corruption and incompetence have been reported against the agency. Politization, abuse of authority, nepotism, patronage, dishonesty, misuse of government funds (Santos, Jr., 2023), collusions and poor monitoring system leading to diploma mills operations of HEIs (Sevillano, 2025), high tuition fees, and considered as a paralytic agency of the government and one of the centers of corruptions and incompetencies (Besana, 2025), (De Jesus, 2024), (Fr. Aquino, 2022).

**Table 1.** Some Corruption Cases involving CHED Officials and SUC Officials & Faculty – 2010-2025

Source	F	%
E-Library Supreme Court	3	9
Ombudsman Report 2017	17	53
News Report	12	38
Total	32	100%

Table 1 presents the 32 cases of corruption involving the Commission and SUCs. Some CHED Commissioners and officials, and SUC presidents, university heads, and faculty members were charged, removed, suspended, and dismissed from service.

In 2023, the Supreme Court cemented the full closure of the operation of a local college under the leadership of a college president with no legal personality. The said local college has no official permit from the Commission on Higher Education to operate as a higher educational institution.

In 2020, an executive director was finally dismissed with accessory penalties by the Supreme Court of the Philippines for gross neglect of duty in connection with the complaints of diploma mills operation by a state university.

In the case of misuse of the trust fund of a state university or college, the Supreme Court decision in 2019 ordered the members of the governing boards of state universities and colleges involved to return the disallowed benefits.



## 1.2 Shared Governance Captures State Policing Power

Using the principle of shared governance, the Commission was allowed legally to share its policing power with the private sector regarding regulations, accreditation, classification, and giving of awards to HEIs.

Shared governance in education is allowed legally in the United States of America, other countries, and in the Philippines based on the strong belief that school operations in the delivery of quality education is built on trust, shared authority, responsibility, accountability, transparency, and cooperation among the key stakeholders when it comes to the formulation and adaptation of policies, programs, and decision-making (Barao, 2025) (Section 5, RA 9155 2001), (Batas Pambansa 232, 1982), (Lo, 2024), (Bush, 2024).

On the contrary, the risk of shared governance in higher education is very high and tense, according to Lo (2024) and Bush (2024). This is because the school is composed of different and conflicting aims, overlapping policies, different personalities and behaviors, and is highly dependent on trust, communication, and relationships (Eisold, 2009). Transparency and accountability are very hard to check since those involved in decision-making are powerful groups of people.

As Liza David Barrett explained that in shared governance, strong interest groups that have a strong influence on political leaders and rule-makers participate in the beginning of the process on the formation of forming public policies. It is a systematic corruption that works slowly in the disguise of the legality process, where a shadow government is built for illegal and unethical means for the advantage and benefit of the powerful interest groups (Sore, 2018). This is an alarming worldwide problem affecting countries mostly with weak democratic institutions.

Accordingly, the present set-up of shared governance in regulations, accreditation, and classifications of HEIs is not effective and cannot be trusted (Conchada and Tionco, 2015), (Ching, 2013), and (Ordonez, 2010) based on the following practices: First, CHED CMO 1 series of 2005, accreditation is not mandatory but a mere encouragement. This allows HEIs who refuse accreditation to always justify the use of autonomy, management by prerogatives, the principle of regularity, and that it was done in good faith in the management and operations of their respective educational institutions. 2<sup>nd</sup>, allowing private entities to check SUCs is very ironic (Liquido, 2018). The government responsible for policing power is now being checked on who is supposed to be held accountable. This practice raised a lot of questions concerning authority and credibility (Liquido, 2018). 3<sup>rd</sup>, accreditation is composed of various private accrediting agencies with different interests, making the process complicated, conflicting, and doubtful. Accrediting bodies are usually manned by people who are officials or alter egos of the school owners, greedy and charlatan operators, and faculty members (Guiam, 2019). Accreditation is a product of self-evaluation and peer judgment (Liquido, 2018). It starts with a given self-survey instrument that will be answered by the institution that applied for accreditation. Knowing the Filipino culture of personalism, non-objective, a lack of discipline to comply, and self-interest, makes the self-survey instrument not reliable and a big joke. Peer evaluation and judgment cannot be trusted, knowing the Filipino culture of personalism and fraternalization as key determining factors (Cochada & Tionco, 2015).



As Nicollo Machiavelli said, things don't go well when too many are involved. Especially if the people trying to get involved have no expertise and knowledge on the issue of quality higher education.

**Table 2.** List of Private HEIs Granted  
Autonomy by CHED as of 2024

HEI	Counts	% of Total
RG	28	36.4%
PD	34	44.1%
BO	15	19.5%
Total	77	100 %

Source: CHED CMO 7 2024. Accessed from the Open to the Public CHED official website

Based on shared governance on accreditation, CHED issued CMO number 7, 2024, granting 77 HEIs with autonomous status and 22 HEIs with deregulated status. Twenty-eight (28) or 36% of HEIs are owned by the religious sectors, twenty-three (23) or 31% are a family business, fifteen (15) or 19% are under the big business corporations, and eleven (11) or 14 % are owned by the political families. In the latest development, an additional six HEIs were given autonomous status based on CHED CMO number 2, 2025.

After checking and scrutinizing the said HEIs, only four (4) private HEIs and two (2) state universities were mentioned in the Times World University Rankings from the year 2013 to 2025, and even in the Asian University Rankings, only the same four (4) private universities were included. HEIs addicted to accreditation and claiming quality and excellence cannot be seen from the list.

March 2025 PRC teachers board exam shows that ten (10) autonomous HEIs have zero percentage (0%) in the overall performance in the elementary category. EDCOM 2 report also confirmed that many HEIs offering teaching education courses had zero passing rates, and the majority of the results are below the national average of 50% in both elementary and secondary levels. Despite these poor performances, said institutions are still operating according to the official report.

In the strict sense of honest checking using the parameters of CHED on integrity excellence, sustainability, and viability of operations and research, most HEIs awarded are not qualified for an autonomous category.

The approval of these HEIs is continuing evidence of collusion, compromise, and consideration through shared governance, where the state is captured by the private interest groups.

"I scratch your back, you scratch my back," a well-known saying emerged from a relationship based on mutual benefits. A patron-client relationship culture is common in Africa, Asia, and the Philippines. This is a dead trap and very hard to escape, according to Fergusson et.al. (2020).

Marklein (2019) and Glendinning et al. (2019) confirmed that accreditors act as promoters of corruption by denying and doing nothing against non-compliance and questionable practices done by educational institutions. No sanctions were given to erring higher educational institutions. Fake credentials, plagiarized academic papers, and other unethical acts are so widespread in education due to corrupt accreditation.



### 1.3 Ownership of HEIs

**Table 3.** Total HEIs in the Philippines as of 2024

HEI	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
ALCU	145	6.0%	6.0%
OGS	13	0.6%	6.5%
Private	1709	70.6%	77.2%
SUC's	552	22.8%	100.0%
Total	2 419	100.0 %	

Source: Philippine Higher Education Statistics as of November 2024 from <https://ched.gov.ph/statistics>

In response to the rapid increase in student enrollment in higher education, the government has approved 2,419 HEIs as of 2024. Seventy-one percent (71%) or 1,709 are private institutions, owned and controlled by the three powerful groups: the political families, religious groups, and business oligarchs. Twenty-three (23%) of 565 are under the national government, and six percent (6%) or 145 are under the direct command and control of the Local Government Units, particularly the mayor.

Data implies that the service providers of higher education are dominated by the private higher educational institutions, inclined to profit rather than quality, since tuition fees are the lifeblood of their existence and operations. Moreover, the owners of these institutions are powerful groups in society who always insist on autonomy and management by prerogative in managing the affairs of their institutions.

### 1.4 Maladministration in Leadership and Governance

Maladministration with despotic inclination is the common leadership and governance of higher education institutions in the Philippines.

Lack of integrity checking demonstrated in non-functioning grievance machinery leading to bullying and culture of impunity (Danday, 2022) (Santiago, 2018), lack of transparency and withholding of information (Abun et al. 2021) (Santiago, 2018), political patronage is highly evident in bad hiring and promotion, poor employment status & salary (Collado, 2021), (Santiago, 2018), (Pernia, 2017), (Gaac, 2014), (Contreras, 2013). Collaboration and compromise, not resolution, in solving work-related problems (Mabunga & Mabunga, 2019), which is the typical style and approach of traditional and conservative leadership.

Despite term restrictions/limits for SUC President as stipulated in Sections 27 & 28 of RA 8292, it was found out that two (2) SUC Presidents in Region IV-A surpassed the maximum limit of terms of office. The one continuing as President in the said state university in Region IV-A, as indicated on the university's official website. Another is a former president of a local university in NCR served for 19 years as president. Same with private HEIs, academic officials such as VPAAAs, Deans, Directors, Department Chairs, and other school officials' term limit is almost non-existent as long as the trust and confidence remain.



As regards who will be allowed to teach, academic freedom is extended to all educational institutions. The management is given a wider latitude when it comes to appointments (CSC Representative, Understanding Good Governance Seminar, 2025, University of Makati).

This only shows that autonomy, management by prerogative management, and presumed regularity are always used in an abusive manner to justify illogical decisions and policies in the operations of their institutions (Elbo, 2020).

## 1.5 Increasing population and High Tuition Fees with low quality of education

**Table 4**

Academic Year	Enrollment	Total HEIs
2024-2025		2,419
2023-2024		2,410
2022-2023	4,792,160	2,410
2021-2022		
2019-2020	3,408,425	2,396
2018-2019	3,212,542	2,393
2017-2018	2,981,803	2,353
2016-2017	3,589,484	2,396
2015-2016	4,104,841	2,388
2014-2015	3,811,726	2,388
2013-2014	3,563,396	2,374
2012-2013	3,317,265	2,313
2011-2012	3,044,218	2,299
2010-2011	2,951,195	2,247
2009-2010	2,774,368	2,180

Source: CHED Statistics 2009 to 2022-2023

Table 4 shows the increasing enrollment population in higher education from the academic year 2009 to 2023. Coinciding with this is the increase in higher education institutions.

For the academic year 2022-2023, there are 4,792,160 enrollees. The biggest enrollees come from the undergraduate level with 4,449,978. It was followed by a master's level with 228,602. Third is the pre-baccalaureate with 63,206 enrollees, fourth is the doctoral /PhD level with 41,012, and the post-baccalaureate with 9,632 students.

The increasing number of enrollees is attributed to the following: Filipino cultural beliefs that having a college diploma can get a good job with better salary leading to better quality of life and the prestige and honor of college diploma it may bring to the family, education is a right to all according to the United Nations and Constitutions, abolition of the National College Entrance Examination in 1994, increasing demand for skills and competencies in the labor market brought by globalization, the Universal Access to Quality Higher Education Act of 2017 and the increasing young population of the Philippine as possible enrollees in higher education.



These driving factors open the door to a massive increase in enrollment. A situation that was not prepared by the government but enticing to many business opportunists, making it one of the lucrative businesses in the Philippines today (Ching, 2012; Gomez, 2011). Even the late former Senator and Secretary of Education Raul Roco observed the mushrooming of HEIs, describing these schools as burger chains.

However, despite the implementation of the Free Higher Education Act of 2017, accessibility is still a big problem due to limited government schools with strict acceptance requirements and limited quotas. Those who failed to be accepted in government schools went to private institutions, which are not free and, in most cases, with high tuition fees with questionable quality.

### *Low Quality of Students Enrolled in Higher Education*

Philippine Statistical Report of 2024 shows that 18.9 million Filipino graduates of senior and junior high school are functionally illiterate (<https://edcom2.gov.ph/around-18m-filipinos-finished-high-school-despite-being-functionally-illiterate/>).

In the Senate hearing on basic education, DepEd confirms that the present Senior High School curriculum is not enough to make these graduates ready for higher education (Charie Abarca, May 8, 2025).

A nine-year study conducted by Dream Project Philippines shows that 8 out of 10 Filipino students have no dreams/visions in life, and the so-called Youth vote in the Philippine election is a mere illusion (Paris, 2019).

In 2022, Laguna described the Filipino young voters are still conservative despite high engagement in digital technology. The 2024 study of Edwards et al. on the connection of political views and intelligence, traditional and conservative individuals have a lower level of intelligence quotient as compared to the left-leaning and progressive-minded individuals.

In the 2025 report of the World Population Review, the Philippines got a 96.7 in intelligence quotient, with a description of average. Before this, the country had below average score of 81.6 in the world intelligence quotient ranking based on the study of Lynn and Becker in 2019.

The University of the Philippines (UP) released the UPCAT 2025 results, with 17,996 applicants qualifying for admission. This represents 13% of the 135,236 examinees. Applicants can access their results on the UPCAT 2025 results portal using their application credentials.

### *Is pursuing higher education a right or a privilege?*

There were two contentions on this issue, and both sides have good arguments. Technically, yes, if the basis is on the accepted definition of human rights worldwide. However, according to Divina Law Office, studying in higher learning is more of a privilege on the part of the student rather than a right. This is because the law allows educational institutions to exercise academic freedom in their management and operations. Schools can implement reasonable and justifiable policies and standards to protect and preserve the integrity of their quality education for the good of the students and the school community.



In the academic case G.R. No. 134625, August 31, 1999, the Supreme Court clarified and pointed out the value and importance of academic integrity to an educational institution and honesty in social dealings. The high court favored the University of the Philippines when the university withdrew the academic degree from the private respondent, where the student obtained it through fraud.

### *High Tuition with Diminishing Quality and Poor Salary of Faculty Members*

According to Lopez, tuition fees in the Philippines are one of the highest in Asia and continue to increase, yet the quality is in question and diminishing.

CHED CMO 03 2012 7.2.2 states that 70 % of the tuition increase must be allotted to academic and non-academic personnel. However, this was not always the case. The salaries of faculty members are an issue. Monthly salaries in private HEIs range from 20k-27 k are much lower than in the government. Based on the experience of the researcher from various HEIs, the hiring rate is very low, even if you have a PhD degree. In private HEIs, the common hiring rate for a PhD is from 300-400 pesos per hour, a master's degree is 250 -300 pesos per hour, and a non-master's is 200-250. This rate is for autonomous universities. Other HEIs are worse than 200 pesos per hour and below. In an SUC in Regions IV-A, the researcher received a monthly salary of less than 30,000 pesos as a full-time faculty member. The starting hiring rate for contractual faculty members is below 200 pesos per hour for non-PhD.

Low compensation of teachers is still a big issue and a continuing injustice in the Philippines, forcing many teachers to work abroad (Santos, 2023) and poor teachers compromising the quality of teaching and learning.

This only means that one of the main beneficiaries of the increasing enrollment is the private higher education institutions, where those students not accepted in SUCs become their clientele paying more but receiving less.

## 1.5 Bad Human Resource Practices, Poor Faculty, and No Organizational Justice

CHED admitted and confirmed during the Congressional Hearing of EDCOM Report II that sixty percent (60) of faculty teaching in higher education have no master's degree, and the issue of vertical alignment on teaching is still a major problem compromising the quality of teaching and learning of the students.

Why does it happen? First, not all college graduates are willing to push for postgraduate education, since after graduation, looking for a job is the priority. 2<sup>nd</sup> postgraduate education is another financial burden. 3<sup>rd</sup> not all can take postgraduate education since it requires high intelligence, critical thinking, time, patience, discipline, determination, and hard work, which are not present in many Filipino graduates. Finally, it is all about economics. Profit for HEIs and employment for the unqualified faculty. HEIs will prefer to hire basic college graduates since they are cheaper to maintain and are expected not to argue when it comes to remuneration and school policies, as compared to faculty with an MA and PhD, and are considered a strong competitor in the working organizations. It has been noted by former CHED officials that despite repeated reminders, many HEIs, specifically private



institutions, are the recidivist violators of CHED policies and standards and have no intention of complying with them.

Hence, private HEIs maintaining unqualified faculty and non-compliance with CHED regulations, and faculty accepting work knowing that they are not qualified, are both at fault, or both are guilty of the crime of violation of the law. (SCRA, G.R. No. 211273, April 18, 2018).

## 1.6 Legal Cases

**Table 5.** Termination of Employment Cases as Decided by the Supreme Court (Period Covered: January 2010- 2025)

Decision	Frequency	%
Valid	17	47.00
Invalid	19	50.00
Non	1	3.00
Total	37	100.00

Table 5 presents the termination of employment cases in selected higher educational institutions reaching the Supreme Court for final decisions. Forty-seven percent (47%) was valid. The decisions made by HEIs are within the ambit of the law and not whimsical. Causes of valid termination were lack of master's degree, dishonesty and grave misconduct, malversation of school funds, absence without official leave, academic dishonesty and plagiarism, money-making activities such as selling of computerized final examination sheets, selling of sub-standard textbooks, and organized out-of-campus activities, all without permission from the school.

Data shows that the lack of a strong integrity system encourages faculty and employees to engage in deviant behaviors detrimental to school operations and the community.

Meanwhile, fifty percent (50%) of the terminations of employment were declared illegal by the Supreme Court. The lazy excuses used by the management of these HEIs were non-giving of teaching loads due to end contracts, low enrollment, reorganization due to declining enrollment, moral issues, and false accusations. Three percent (3%) or one case, as nothing happened or no dismissal happened.

This only means that autonomy, management by prerogative, and the presumed regularity extended by the government were misused and abused by the management/owners of the said institutions.

In terms of location, 8 cases happened in NCR, one (1) in Region III, One (1) in Region IV, two (2) in Region V, two (2) in Region VI, two (2) in Region IX, and one (1) in Region XI. In terms of ownership, twelve (12) are owned by the religious sectors and five (5) are owned by private family/business groups. Three (3) are declared autonomous status by CHED for 2024.

Data implies the following: that despite the proximity of these HEIs to the Central Office of CHED and DOLE, the management of these institutions are not afraid in making whimsical decisions since they know their power and position in society, that justice system in this country is weak, undergoes a long process and very hard to achieve, and can be circumvent, thus escaping accountability is highly possible (Narag, 2017). Another explanation is the failure of CHED and DOLE to closely monitor and



check these institutions, and for the lowly and oppressed employees is fear, expenses, and thinking of the long process of justice. It can also mean that many of the academic administrators and HR Officers are not knowledgeable and familiar with education and labor laws (Danday, 2022; Jimenez, 2018).

## 1.7 Poor and Low-Quality Research Output

Quality Research is one of the major criteria in the Times World and Asian University Rankings. It is also used in the granting of autonomous status and the level of accreditation of HEIs in the Philippines.

Based on the content and context analysis of related studies from 2010 to 2025, unfavorable research environment such as poor leadership, unclear & lack of transparency in policies, questionable practices in research undertaking, low return of investments, lack of school support in terms of monetary, lack of training, lack of capability of faculty members and too many non-essential works were the common mentioned barriers.

In the webinar conducted by The IRIS Leadership Legacy Forums: Peering into the Research Dimension of University Rankings: Snapshots of Philippine Universities via Zoom, July 14, 2021, wherein the author participated, only forty (40) HEIs out of 2,396 have the potential for competitiveness in research. The two expert speakers from De La Salle University and the University of the Philippines are also alarmed that the knowledge and innovation of higher education in the Philippines will continue to lag and become outdated if not given proper attention and solutions. And this will affect the global competitiveness of Filipino graduates who want to work in the international scene in the future.

Even a former Senator of the Philippines does not believe that research is necessary and helpful to the country's development.

## **2 Are the present realities and practices aligned and supportive of the government policy of quality education in response to international standards?**

No. Almost all HEIs failed in the government policy of quality education based on international standards.

### The Negative Long-Term Impact on the Philippines

The high cost of the negative impact of corruption in higher education makes the Philippines one of the weakest states in the world and a struggling democratic society. The extent of damage is very wide. It destroys national pride and, more importantly, the future of the young generation. Lagging in almost all areas of human development (a low middle income country with an HDI of .71, lower than Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, and Indonesia as of 2024, (United Nations & World Bank Report), and a lack of competitiveness in global higher education. Many college graduates are poor performers in terms of professional board examinations. Lack of the needed competencies and capabilities resulted in job mismatch, poor communication, and critical thinking skills. Thus, many are unemployed (26.9 % are college graduates, 2020 PSA Report) (Katzman, 2014), (Albert, 2013), (Ordonez, 2010), and (Angeles, 2009).



The latest 2025 Times World University Rankings show that out of 2,419 HEIs (CHED, 2024) in the country, fewer than ten (10) higher educational institutions were recognized for their reputation, integrity, and quality.

In the year 2024 announcement from the European Union, Filipino graduates of maritime education (seafarers) will no longer be accepted in the European shipping for failure or not comply with the education standards set. This will mean another loss of better job opportunities for the Filipinos, leading to poverty and other associated social deviance behaviors.

## Key findings

1. The structure of Philippine Higher education is dominated by the private sector, and one of the biggest industries with more than 100 billion pesos at stake in profits (PSA, 2022).
2. The theory of power dependency, structural and cultural cruelty, and oppressions are well-entrenched in the structure of the Philippine Higher Education. Despotism and customary leadership are the common leadership and management styles of most HEIs in the country. Many unfair labor practices are filed in Philippine courts due to the abuses and incompetence of academic leaders (Jimenez, 2021). This kind of leadership is very hard to deal with and common in weak and customary societies, just like the Philippines (Neundorf and Pop-Eleches, 2020, and Baldwin and Raffler, 2017). In summary, there is no doubt that many academic leaders and faculty members who are supposed to ensure academic integrity and quality education are the main actors and instigators of substandard and unethical practices in the learning institutions (Guiam, 2019), (Contreras, 2013), (Chapman, 2013), Balci, et al.2011) and destroyers of school reputation. Because of this, the quality of Philippine Higher Education is very poor and doubtful, making it uncompetitive internationally (Allison, 2020).
3. The present Commission on Higher Education is not effective as a regulatory body of higher education.
4. Many HEIs have weak or no integrity mechanisms to counter corrupt behaviors due to economic interest.
5. Compared to Western Education, the integrity and quality of higher educational institutions in the country are not based on International and CHED standards but rest on the organizational values, vision, attitudes, behaviors, and perspective in the life of academic leaders governing the institution. The integrity and quality of education vary depending on the decisions, policy, actions, and the school environment, which is the extension of the true personality and character of the owners/management of the HEIs.

## **3 What can be done: Solutions and Strategies to combat the lingering problems of Philippine Higher Education.**

1. Internal cleansing in the agency is very timely and needed to combat corruption, ineffectiveness, and inefficiency, as suggested by Fr. Ranrillo Aquino, 2022. As pointed out by a Scholar & Peace



Educator, Betty Reardon, the only way to destroy social violence is to eliminate the source supporting it.

2. CHED must have the strong political will to suspend the present accreditation practices and give awards and discipline erring HEIs. Instead, CHED must rely on the international ranking results of universities. This is one way to force politically and business-oriented oriented people to comply with the law on high-quality standards.
3. Exercising Motu Proprio for Legal Actions (Santiago, 2018). CHED must conduct a regular on-site visit to various HEIs to get truthful and factual data and be the first to file charges against erring HEIs.
4. For clarity and better understanding, CHED must conduct a nationwide orientation about nature, purpose, and meaning of higher education to all parents, teachers, and students.
5. CHED must regularly publish the standings and status of higher educational institutions in terms of integrity and performance. This is to allow parents and students to exercise their free will on where to study and get the best education they need.
6. Inclusion of anti-corruption subjects in the curriculum.

Aquino (2021) suggested that anti-corruption subject be included in curricula to develop non-tolerable behaviors among college students against corruption. These are better citizenship education in terms of ethics and morality, duties, responsibilities, and accountability, and intelligent and responsible voting.

In 2018, the CHED Chair, Prospero De Vera, Chair CHED, the Makati Business Groups, and concerned students united for the inclusion of anti-corruption subjects in the higher education curriculum. This is to increase college students' awareness of the bad effects of corruption as well as providing them with information and programs, and strategies on how to counter corruption and unethical acts in society.

7. Honest Self-Policing is better than Outside Checking. The researcher highly encourages the owners and academic leaders of HEIs to lead their institutions with honesty, transparency, and create an environment of a strong integrity system that will not tolerate wrongdoings.
8. Creation of a uniform national ranking system and a national grievance body, and special courts for education
9. Building more state universities just like the University of the Philippines
10. Enhance the Technical Education Program

**Note:**

1. The study does not involve any human subject participation. No survey, no interviews, and no focus group discussions.
2. There is no conflict of interest in this paper since this is an independent individual research work. No funding was secured in any form from any organizations.



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## List of Appendices

- CHED CMO 7, 2024: Grant of Autonomous and Deregulated Status by Evaluation to Private Higher Education Institution
- CHED CMO 06 2023: Policies and Guidelines for the Grant of Autonomous and Deregulated Status to Private Higher Education Institutions
- CHED Chair Statement, June 20, 2023
- CHED Institutional Sustainability Assessment Framework
- CHED CMO 15 2019: Policies, Standards, and Guidelines for Graduated Programs
- CHED CMO 46 2012: Policy-Standard to Enhance Quality Assurance (QA) in the Philippine Higher Education Through an Outcomes-Based and Typology-Based QA
- CHED CMO 30 2009: Applicability of the Manual of Regulations for Private Higher Education (MORPHE) of 2008 to State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) and Local Universities and Colleges (LUCs)
- CHED CMO 16,2009: Rules and Regulations Governing the Research for Presidents of State Universities and Colleges (SUCs)
- CHED CMO 40 2008: Manual of Regulations for Private Higher Education of 2008
- CHED CMO 44 2008: Policies and Guidelines for the Grant of Autonomous and Deregulated Status to Private Higher Education Institutions
- CHED CMO 52 2007: Addendum to CMO 30, Series of 2004 entitled “Revised Policies and Standards for Undergraduate Teachers’ Education Curriculum”
- CHED CMO 1 series of 2005: Revised Policies and Guidelines on Voluntary Accreditation in Aid of Quality and Excellence in Higher Education
- CHED CMO 9 2003: Grant of Autonomous and Deregulated Status to Selected Higher Education Institutions with Benefits Occurring Thereto (second batch)
- CHED CMO 21 2003: Grant of Autonomy and Deregulated Status to Selected Higher Education Institutions with Benefits Accruing Thereto (Second Batch)
- CHED CMO 3, S 2001, January 17, 2002, RA 8292
- CHED CMO 36 1998: Policies and Standards on Graduate Education
- CHED CMO 48, 1996: Updated Standards and Guidelines for the Grant and/or Retention of University Status Vis-Avis Higher Education Institutions



## List of Tables

**Table 1.** Philippine Universities in Times World University Rankings by Year

Year	Number of universities included in the first 1,000-1,500 list
2025	6
2024	5
2023	4
2022	2
2021	2
2020	2
2019	2
2018	1
2017	1
2016	-
2015	-
2014	-
2013	-
2012	-
2011	-

Source: Times World University Rankings: Accessed from <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings>

**Table 6.** Faculty Qualifications in Higher Education in the Philippines

Faculty Qualifications	SUCs	Private HEIs	Total	%
PhD	9,230	11,035	20,265	14.76
MA	21,105	32,050	53,155	38.71
BS/BA	24,930	38,968	63,898	46.53
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>55,265</b>	<b>82,053</b>	<b>137,318</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Data as compiled by OPRKM-Knowledge Management Division, based on the submission of State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) as of June 30, 2020

**Table 7.** Faculty Employment by Type and Institution as of 2023 Statistical Report

School	Full-time	Part-time	Unidentified	Total
<b>Private</b>	45,840	45,556	926	92,322
<b>SUC</b>	44,228	16,847		61,075
<b>LUC</b>	6,145	7,454	47	13,646
<b>OGS</b>	33	220		243
<b>Total</b>	96,246	70,077	973	167,286



**Table 8.** Power Dependency, Structural & Cultural Cruelty, and Oppression Theories As Demonstrated in Selected Studies from the Year 2010 to 2025 In various HEIs Nationwide

Author	Topic	Respondents	Location	Results
Danday (2022)	Grievance Machinery	Seven (7)	10 PSU	not working
Manalo et al. (2022)	Workplace Bullying	425	Manila	Bullying is common
Sedillo (2021)	Leadership	20 Faculty	Private HEI	Leadership as a predictor of resignations
Collado (2021)	Highly politicized HEI	7		Poor working conditions
Abun et. al (2021)	Organizational Climate	Faculty/Employees	2 Private HEI	Poor working climate
Abun et al. (2020)	Employee Treatment & Work	250 faculty/employees	Private HEI	Poorly treated
Balbuena et al (2020)	Leadership Theories	29 Graduate students	HEIs	Leadership styles & behaviors are predictors of organizational productivity.
Mabunga & Mabunga (2019)	Conflict Management	102 School Officials	SUCs in All Regions	Collaborator is the commonly used
Santiago (2018)	Corruption Prevention in HEIs	6 State Universities	NCR	Corrupt Practices
Cabahug et al. (2018)	Human Resource Management	48 faculty & staff	Private HEI Cebu	Poor HRM
De Guzman et al. (2017)	Level of Faculty Job Satisfaction	142	State University	Not satisfied with HRM
Jonson (2017)	Workplace Bullying	208	SUC Samar	Bullying is common
Pernia (2017)	LGU & Local Community College	Local Officials, students	Central Visayas	The politicization of HEIs led to legal conflicts
Reyes (2017)	Faculty Turnover and Causes	14 HRD and 23 HR staff	14 Private HEIs	Poor Human Resource Management
Gaac (2014)	Human Resource Management	298-Adm, Faculty, Employees	6 SUCs MIMAROPA	Poor practice
Contreras (2013)	University Politics		2 HEIs in Manila	Contestation of power
Loquias & Sana (2013)	Factors Affecting Leave	12 schools-107 Faculty	NCR	Leadership and salary

**Table 9.** Topnotchers when it comes to Corruption Cases

Agency	Total Cases	Rank
Cities/Municipalities	1,849	1
Barangay	1,065	1
Provincial Government	265	1
Unclassified LGUs	10	1
Philippine National Police	939	2
Department of Education	310	3
Department of Environment & Natural Resources	184	4
State Universities/Colleges	117	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,739 cases as of 2017</b>	

Source: LGUs top gov't agency with the greatest number of Ombudsman cases filed in 2017, Jun 22, 2018 | Press Release. Accessed from <https://www.ombudsman.gov.ph/lgus-top-govt-agency-with-most-number-of-ombudsman-cases-filed-in-2017/>



**Table 10.** Professional Teachers Board Exams Results from 2013 to 2025  
50% in the National Acceptable Passing Mark

Level	2013	2013	2014	2014	2015	2015	2016	2016	2017	2017	2018	2018
Elementary	27.78	31.18	28.98	35.74	27.42	31.36	28.38	30.18	10.39	26.33	23.62	20.29
Secondary	39.61	39.75	28.41	35.40	31.63	41.75	35.43	33.78	25.46	46.37	29.91	48.03
Average	33.69	35.46	28.69	35.57	29.52	36.55	31.90	31.98	17.92	36.35	26.76	34.16

  

Level	2019	2019	2021	2022	2022	2022	2022	2023	2023	2024	2025
Elementary	27.28	31.34		55.66	48.81	50.54	54.43	40.76	47.01	46.67	
Secondary	25.95	39.68	57.76	53.77	41.72	50.48	50.94	46.94	56.26	58.78	
Average	26.61	35.51		54.71	45.27	50.51	52.69	43.85	51.63	52.73	

### List of Invalid /Illegal Termination cases as decided by the Supreme Court of the Philippines

1. G.R. No. 235863, October 10, 2022 -NCR-Sectarian
2. G.R. No. 212333, March 28, 2022- Region VI- Sectarian
3. G.R. No. 202724, February 03, 2021- Region V- Private HEI
4. G.R. No. 224170, June 10, 2020- Region VI- Sectarian
5. G.R. No. 202851, September 09, 2019- NCR - Private
6. G.R. No. 227550, August 14, 2019-NCR-Private
7. G.R. No. 214744, March 14, 2018-NCR-Sectarian
8. G.R. No. 224319, November 20, 2017- NCR- Sectarian
9. G.R. No. 225044, October 3, 2016-NCR-Private
10. G.R. No. 198350, September 14, 2016- Region XI-Sectarian
11. G.R. N.O. 195155 April 13, 2016- Region I-Sectarian
12. G.R. N.O. 187417 February 24, 2016- Region IX-Sectarian
13. G.R. No. 187226, January 28, 2015-Region-IVA-Sectarian
14. G.R. No. 208890, December 08, 2014-NCR- Sectarian
15. G.R. 175293, July 23, 2014- Region V- Sectarian
16. G.R. No. 196280 & 196286, April 2, 2014- Region V- Sectarian
17. G.R. No. 199959, February 6, 2012.-NCR-Private
18. G.R. No. 164913, September 8, 2010- Region IX- Sectarian
19. G.R. No. 183572, April 13, 2010- NCR-Private HEI
20. G.R. No. 167563. March 22, 2010- Region III- Private HEI



## **List of Valid Illegal Dismissal of Employees declared by the Supreme Court of the Philippines**

1. G.R. 223665, September 27, 2021- CAR-Private HEI
2. G.R. No. 219916, February 10, 2021- Region VII- Private HEI
3. G.R. No. 202724, February 03, 2021- Region V-Private HEI
4. G.R. No. 227070, March 09, 2020-NCR- Private Sectarian HEI
5. G.R. No. 233314, November 21, 2018-Region V-Private HEI and G.R. No. 226727, April 25, 2018-NCR-Private HEI
6. G.R. No. 211273, April 18, 2018- NCR- Sectarian University
7. G.R. No. 198066, June 7, 2017- Region XIII- Sectarian School
8. G.R. No. 190015 and 190019, September 14, 2016- NCR- Sectarian
9. G.R. No. 194119, April 13, 2016-NCR-Private
10. G.R. No. 208321, July 30, 2014- Region III-Private Sectarian
11. G.R. No. 193324, July 23, 2014-NCR-Private HEI
12. G.R. No. 189456, April 02, 2014 – NCR- Private HEI
13. G.R. No. 188914, December 11, 2013-NCR-Sectarian
14. G.R. No. 193897, January 23, 2013-NCR-Private
15. G.R. No. 174158, June 27, 2011- Region I- Private
16. G.R. No. 181146, January 26, 2011- Region XI- Sectarian
17. G.R. No. 187104, August 3, 2010- CAR- Private Sectarian
18. G.R. No. 176717, March 17, 2010-CAR-Private

## **Monetary Claims cases**

1. G.R. No. 232522, August 28, 2019- Region VI- Faculty wins against Private HEI
2. G.R. No. 223621, June 10, 2020- Region XIII-Faculty wins against Private Sectarian HEI

## **List of Faculty/Employees Labor Union Related**

1. G.R. Nos. 197089 & 207971, August 31, 2022-NCR-Private HEI
2. G.R. No. 213730, June 23, 2021- Region III-Private HEI
3. G.R. No. 219025, September 09, 2020-NCR-Private HEI
4. G.R. No. 211526, June 29, 2016 -Region VII-Private HEI
5. G.R. No. 203957, July 30, 2014-NCR-Private Sectarian



## List of students filing a case against the school

1. G.R. No. 222740, September 28, 2016-NCR-Private HEI
2. G.R. No. 162299, March 26, 2014-Cordiller Autonomous Region- Sectarian
3. G.R. No. 217453, July 19, 2017- SUC Mindanao-Religious Freedom.

## Labor Related Cases in the Government Service

1. G.R. No. 252063, February 22, 2023
2. G.R. No. 225895, September 28, 2022- Region II
3. G.R. No. 237129, December 09, 2020 -NCR
4. G.R. No. 185112, January 18, 2010-NCR
5. G.R. No. 223429, January 29, 2020- Region X
6. G.R. No. 178630, November 27, 2012
7. G.R. No. 211999, August 20, 2019

## THE AUTHOR

Raul A. Aquino was a former local government employee for 20 years in the local government. He is one of the first board passers in the 1996 Licensure Examination for Professional Teachers. He is a graduate of BSE major in Social Studies with a master's and a doctorate in Public Administration. He is an associate member of the National Research Council of the Philippines-DOST and a member of the Eastern Regional Organization for Public Administration. He also serves as OIC Dean, Graduate School-JRU, former strategic & accreditation officer, former College Dean, Education, and Acting Principal. He is a certified expert in research and public policy by the National Research Council of the Philippines (NRCP-DOST). Presently, he is the area Chair, Public Administration Program, Graduate School, Jose Rizal University.

**Research Publications:** Four (4) research articles about Corruption in the Philippines published in international on-line journal, and two (2) research about local policing system in a college journal.

**Government Service:** *Local Government Employee for Twenty (20) years: Public Safety Department involved in the local community policing system and traffic management*

### **Academic Engagement**

1. Jose Rizal University- Area Chair, Public Administration Program- present  
Former OIC Chair, Graduate Education  
Former OIC Chair, Graduate Business Program



2. National Teachers College- Former Faculty, Graduate and Undergraduate Education
3. Philippine College of Criminology- Former Strategic Planning & Accreditation Officer
4. Universal College of Paranaque- Former Dean, College of Education & Acting Principal, Integrated School
5. Adamson University- Former Full-time Faculty, Political Science and History
6. Olivarez College- Former Part-time Faculty, Graduate School, Public Administration
7. Batangas State University- Former Full-time Faculty, History, Rizal, TCW
8. Laguna College-Former Part-time, College & Graduate School, Business and Public Administration
9. La Consolacion University of the Philippines- Former Part-time Graduate School, Education & Public Administration
10. Far Eastern University- Former Part-time, Political Science, History
11. Centro Escolar University- Former Full-time Faculty, Political Science & History
12. Lyceum of the Philippines University- Former Department Chair, Social Science & Legal Management and Full-time Faculty
13. FEU Cavite-Former Part-time Faculty, Political Science & History
14. Emilio Aguinaldo College- Former Part-time, Political Science & History
15. University of the East- Former Part-time Faculty, History
16. Asian Institute of Maritime Studies- Former Part-time Faculty, Political Science, History, Sociology