

Doctoral academics' roles in Philippine higher education institutions: Insights from a qualitative study

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In educational research, the literature reveals disparities in how academics view their academic roles. Through semi-structured interviews, this study explores how a group of 53 Philippine higher education academics view themselves as doctoral academics and their roles in academic publishing. Overall, doctoral academics (which, in the present study, refers to academics who hold doctoral degrees) play important roles both in classroom teaching and in academic publishing. Our thematic analysis of interview responses indicated that doctoral academics in Philippine higher education institutions (HEIs) ascribed to two general roles: as teachers and researchers. In terms of academic publishing, it was found that doctoral academics fulfil four key roles: producers of new knowledge, research mentors and collaborators, expert reviewers of scholarly articles, and prime-movers of social change. The study includes implications for policy-making and curriculum development with respect to research pedagogy and academic publishing in Philippine HEIs.

Introduction

Higher education institutions (HEIs) are competing to become top universities in the world (Binswanger, 2014; Fauzi, Tan, Daud & Awalludin, 2020; Goglio, 2016). Although it may vary across contexts, a top-ranking university means quality education (Hazelkorn, 2018), which has a positive impact especially on attracting the most intelligent students, academics, and researchers and on getting more academic support and research funding. As a result, a number of HEIs worldwide are keeping up with this challenge to stay relevant in the academe. Furthermore, the ranking of the world's top universities is often measured by the quality of teaching and its impact in society, and the number of high-impact research publications in peer-reviewed journals (Palali, van Elk, Bolhaar & Rud, 2018) produced by highly-qualified and competent HEI academics. This is often confirmed by different institutions such as the *Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU)*, *Quacquarelli Symonds (QS)*, *Times Higher Education (THE)*, *Leiden University* ranking, and *Webometrics* ranking (Fauzi et al., 2020). Consequently, such a world-ranking university status has led a number of universities to reform and revisit their strategies on teaching and research to increase marketisation and world ranking. One of the most apparent approaches practised among universities is to ensure that a majority of their academics possess a doctorate (Dann et al., 2018) and that these academics regularly participate in other professional development programs and also continually publish research articles in

top journals (Binswanger, 2014). In fact, there has been an increase in the number of students pursuing doctoral degrees (Elliot & Kobayashi, 2018) and the number of scientific and academic publications as well (Kyvik & Aksnes, 2015).

However, while there has been a plethora of studies that have explored the significant contributions of academics toward HEIs' internationalisation, world-ranking, and academic publishing productivity (Hazelkorn, 2018; Kwiek, 2018; Olenick, Flowers, Maltseva & Diez-Sampedro, 2019; Reddy, Xie & Tang, 2016; Tayeb, 2016), there is a dearth of studies that examine academics' perceptions of their orientation in, and their reflections on, the conditions of the academe, especially with regard to teaching and academic publishing in the Asian context and in the Philippines in particular. Among Philippine HEIs, this issue is crucial since like any other universities, Philippine HEIs also participate in the university world-ranking. This study is conducted to explore Philippine HEI doctoral academics' (those with doctoral degrees) views toward teaching and academic publishing as their primary roles. It theorises that since Philippine HEIs aspire to become amongst the world's top-ranked universities, they are putting the pressures and expectations on the shoulders of their academics, who may have different perceptions toward their roles in the academe and toward academic publishing.

Furthermore, this study extends the research conducted by Brew et al. (2018) by exploring three areas affecting the sense of agency among academics: their orientation to the academe, their underlying goals and purposes, and their reflections on the conditions of the academe. Interviews with doctoral academics from different Philippine universities are used to identify the varied perspectives these academics have with regard to teaching and academic publishing. This paper begins with the introduction, followed by a literature review where gaps are identified and research objectives are developed. It is then followed by the presentations of the research design and findings. Lastly, this paper ends with the discussion of the findings, implications, and conclusions.

Literature review

Doctoral academics and academic publishing in HEIs

Academic publishing is one key element toward HEIs' internationalisation and academics' career progression (Olenick et al., 2019). The more scholarly publications that are produced by university academics, the more their universities become recognised in the academe and attract international students, academics, and researchers (Tayeb, 2016). For academics, scholarly publications may demonstrate their competence, knowledge, and proficiency in their chosen fields, and may also confirm their qualifications toward job security, tenure, and promotion. Indubitably, the phrase 'publish or perish' has become a common reminder for all academics either to publish regularly or face the consequences, e.g., losing their jobs.

Academics play an important role in generating and disseminating new knowledge. They do not only shape the future of the younger generation, but they also contribute to the advancement and development of society through teaching, research, and community

service. These are the three most important responsibilities expected of them, especially in the context of HEIs. In other words, not only do academics transmit knowledge, but they also generate and disseminate it through conducting research and presenting it in academic conferences. Wa-Mbaleka (2015) has emphasised that “it is a failure on the faculty members’ part if they only teach, and do not produce and share their own knowledge through scholarly avenues” (p. 122). However, in the case of Philippine HEIs, academics seem to have problems with fulfilling research and publication responsibilities. In fact, in the 2019 Scimago country-ranking report from 1996 to 2019, the Philippines had only a total of 38,024 published research documents compared with Bangladesh (56,088) and Vietnam (63,969). This indicates that Philippine HEIs have not produced enough research publications in the last two decades. These numbers may “have resulted in hand-wringing and finger-pointing looking for solutions to ‘fix’ what has apparently gone so very wrong” (Nygaard, 2017, p. 519) in Philippine HEIs’ attitudes toward academic publishing. In fact, the Philippine Commission on Higher Education (CHED), a major education regulatory body that oversees the country’s colleges and universities, both public and private, has always maintained that faculty members should research and publish.

Although CHED emphasises academic publishing among faculty members in Philippine HEIs, there seems to be a lack of its full implementation as academics may have focused only on one role, teaching. In most Philippine HEIs, academics may not necessarily be a doctoral or masters degree holders to be employed to teach. In fact, most academics may only have bachelor degrees, and there may only be a few who have postgraduate degrees. Having only a small number of academics who have a doctoral degree may be seen as one of the key factors why the Philippines has fewer research publications compared with other countries in the Asiatic region. In a report by CHED (2019) on highest degrees attained by HEI faculty in the academic year 2018-19, there were 21,488 (42%) faculty members in state universities and colleges (SUCs) who held bachelor degrees; 18,139 (35%) masters degrees; and only 11,801 (23%) were doctoral academics. These numbers may imply that Philippine HEI academics may be recruited only to teach and that there may be little attention given to research and publication. Although bachelor and masters degree academics may also be encouraged or obliged to research and publish, doctoral academics may be expected to generate new knowledge and disseminate it through producing more research and publications, since they may be more skilled and qualified to do so. However, given the low proportion of doctoral academics in Philippine HEIs, productivity in research publication, and creating and sharing of new knowledge may also be limited.

Although academic research publishing may be a daunting task for academics, it is one of the main activities required of them as part of their workload (Cadez et al., 2017; Ulla & Tarrayo, 2021). It is crucial toward securing a tenure post and has become a critical area through which academics are evaluated for promotion. Consequently, the pressure to publish is growing, and there has been a high demand for research publication productivity (Kwiek, 2018), especially among doctoral academics.

Philippine HEI academics as researchers

In the Philippines, although ‘publish or perish’ may be strongly mandated by CHED, some HEIs may downplay this mandate as there is empirical evidence pointing to the country’s low research productivity. In fact, in the country ranking released by Scimago in 2019, the Philippines ranked 14th out of 33 countries in the Asiatic region with only 38,024 published research documents. It lagged behind Bangladesh, Vietnam, Thailand, Singapore, and Pakistan. Furthermore, although several teachers from the Philippines recognised the importance of research and publication for their professional development and for their teaching practices, only a few of them were engaged in doing it (Ulla et al., 2017; Ulla, 2018). This finding, although there are some factors to consider, may imply that there is “a problem in the quality of doctoral education for preparing students to participate in research cultures” (Lee & Kamler, 2008, p. 511) in the country. This could also mean that while a number of Philippine HEIs may have emphasised research and publication as one of the main workloads for their faculty members, the strategies these HEIs employed may not complement the ability of doctoral academics to conduct and publish research. Recent studies have reported that Philippine HEI academics lack necessary skills to research and publish (Ulla et al., 2017; Ulla, 2018; Vecaldo et al., 2019; Wa-Mbaleka, 2015), which can be attributed to the lack of research or thesis-by-publication degrees in the country. Completing a doctoral degree by research, although common in most universities in the world (Mason et al., 2020), is rarely offered in Philippine HEIs. In addition, although offering Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) by research may not necessarily mean that an academic becomes skilled in research, it may cultivate a culture of research among academics, which may have an impact on their capacity to research and publish (Horta & Santos, 2016; Ulla & Tarrayo, 2021).

Academic publishing in the Philippines, particularly among state universities and colleges, has been the subject of several studies in the past years. In fact, previous studies have found that the insufficient research output among Philippine higher education academics may have been caused by specific issues. For example, Wa-Mbaleka’s (2015) study among 173 Philippine academics revealed that lack of time, research training, interest, funds, and institutional support were some factors that hindered faculty members’ conduct and publishing of research. Although the study was conducted in three different contexts (two private colleges and one public university), the researcher used conventional content analysis to explore the factors why these teachers produced insufficient research. Vecaldo et al. (2019) conducted a similar study among 12 academics in the teacher education program in a state university in northern Philippines. Using in-depth semi-structured interviews, the researchers found that although the participants admitted that research can have a positive impact on their career and professional development, they also reported that lack of time, heavy workload and multiple designations, lack of mentoring, and inadequate financial support for international presentation and publication as among the issues related to their low research productivity.

In a different context, Ulla (2018) conducted a similar study on the benefits and challenges faced by teachers in the Philippines with regard to research and publication. However, while the studies by Wa-Mbaleka (2015) and Vecaldo et al. (2019) focused on Philippine

HEI academics, Ulla's (2018) participants were 11 public high-school English language teachers in Mindanao, the Philippines. Although in a different context, the study yielded similar results as high school teachers' research motivations were more personal rather than professional. The teachers acknowledged the importance of conducting research for themselves, the school, and the students. However, despite the perceived benefits of conducting research, the teachers also reported some issues that discouraged them from doing it: heavy teaching load, and lack of financial support, research skills and knowledge, and research materials and resources.

Apparently, while these reviewed studies have focused on identifying the factors and issues on the lack of scholarly publications among academics in the Philippines, none of these studies concentrated on exploring Philippine HEI academics' views of their orientation in the academe and their perceived roles in academic publishing. Given that several Philippine HEIs have a limited number of doctoral academics and that academic publishing in international peer-reviewed journals among these HEIs is scarce, it is important to identify academics' perceptions of their orientation in the academe, their underlying goals and purposes, and their reflections on the conditions of the academe, especially with regard to academic publishing. This study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How do the teacher-participants view themselves as doctoral academics in Philippine HEIs?
2. How do these doctoral academics perceive their roles in Philippine HEIs with regard to academic publishing?

Method

Research design

This study, which explores how doctoral academics view their orientation in the academe and their roles in academic publishing, was conducted in the Philippines. It employed purposive-convenience sampling (Patton, 2014), since only those doctoral academics who had taught full-time for at least two years in a Philippine HEIs within the researchers' network were contacted to participate. In addition, since the study was conducted between May and July 2020 amidst the Covid-19 pandemic, only those who were available and had online access were given the questionnaire. Subsequently, the email questionnaire, which consisted of open-ended questions written in English, was emailed to identified participants. The questionnaire focused on identifying teacher-participants' perceptions of their orientation in the academe and their roles in academic publishing within the context of Philippine HEIs. Further, a follow-up in-depth individual interview through either *Facebook Messenger* or *Google Meet* was conducted with those participants who volunteered.

Participants

A total of 53 doctoral academics (29 women, 23 men, one preferred not to say) from the humanities, social sciences, and education areas responded to the email questionnaire. A

majority of them were 30-50 years old with 11-25 years of teaching experience. Thirty-five of the participants were teaching in state universities, 17 in private universities, and only one was teaching in a private college. Furthermore, 29 participants earned their doctorate degrees from Philippine state colleges and universities (SUCs), 23 from private colleges and universities, and only one from an institution outside the Philippines. Of the 53 participants, 49 were able to do and publish research in the last five years, and 41 were willing to participate in the follow-up individual interview. The participants were informed about the study and its purpose. Likewise, it was made clear to them that their participation was voluntary and that all information they would share would be treated as confidential.

Data collection and analysis

Because the study was conducted amidst the Covid-19 pandemic, data collection was done online. The email questionnaire consisted of ten questions that asked doctoral academics' perceptions of their roles in Philippine HEIs, including their views toward teaching and academic publishing. The participants were given ten days to answer and return the questionnaire to the researchers. Participants who asked for an extension were also given considerations. Furthermore, an individual follow-up interview (Salmons, 2011), which was done on participants' time convenience, was conducted through either *Facebook Messenger* or *Google Meet*. The online interviews lasted between 30-45 minutes.

Data were then transcribed and repeatedly read and examined to identify recurring codes that could be formed to common themes. Employing a thematic-analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006), the codes were categorised so that themes could be formulated. To ensure validity, the transcribed data were sent to the interview participants for correction, addition, and approval (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Findings

Interview excerpts are given in the quotations below, with teacher-participants assigned codes (T1, T2, T3, ...) to maintain anonymity.

Teacher-participants' views of themselves as doctoral academics

All the teacher-participants identified two key roles as doctoral academics in Philippine HEIs: as classroom teachers and as teacher-researchers. They admitted that these two roles have shaped and defined their identities as doctoral academics.

As classroom teachers

As one with a doctorate degree, one teacher-participant mentioned that he was expected to be more adept at his craft as a teacher. He emphasised that "teaching is a basic function of a doctoral academic. It should not be neglected and must be practised with competence and expertise" (T1). Competence and expertise in teaching is a must for doctoral academics because they serve as mentors to students. T2 mentioned:

I perceived myself to be a mentor to my students particularly in their academic work and as someone who knows what to teach and how to teach my students.

When doctoral academics demonstrate expertise in teaching, they could contribute not only in producing competent graduates but also to elevating the status of their academic institutions. This view is evident in the following statement:

Being a doctoral academic in a state university for teachers, my function is to equip my students with disciplinal knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge. This means that I have to model these competencies and be an expert in my discipline. (T3)

However, “being doctoral academics in Philippine HEIs is taxing” (T4) because much is expected of them and that they have to live with it:

I believe that the expectation among doctoral academics [is] higher when it comes to competence and expertise in teaching because of the knowledge and skills that have been gained in the graduate school. (T5)

All of the teacher-participants' competence and expertise in teaching may be attributed to their being doctoral academics. They thought that they were already confident to share the knowledge they had with their students as they already possessed a doctorate degree. One teacher mentioned:

As a doctoral academic, I should have higher level of teaching expertise and breadth of knowledge in my field of specialisation. (T6)

T6's view was supported by another teacher who revealed:

PhD is such a pleasurable pressure. I have to be on my toes all the time and people expect me to be on my best—day in and day out. As a doctor, competence is given and you have to locate your line of expertise to be able to fulfill a noble task—to contribute to the reservoir of knowledge. (T7)

However, other teachers expressed that they were more inclined to teaching because they thought they lacked necessary skills to conduct research. One teacher noted:

I finished my degree many years back and at that time I was not yet fully oriented about publication. Even perhaps in research. I just felt I really didn't have adequate skills and knowledge about research then. (T8)

Similarly, T9 admitted that his lack of research skills could be attributed to his inadequate training and exposure to research and publication when he was pursuing his doctorate degree. He revealed:

My orientation in research during my doctorate degree was moderate, publication was 1 in a scale of 5 (5 being excellent). At that time, only few faculty members were engaged in publishing their research output and there was no mentoring (that was my observation) done by the more experienced with the budding faculty.

For T10, doing both teaching and research requires more time. She perceived herself as a classroom teacher.

Teaching and doing research are difficult to do especially simultaneously. But since teaching is my bread and butter, I have to do well with it.

As teacher-researchers

The teacher-participants also viewed themselves as teacher-researchers. They believed that as doctoral academics, they should contribute toward educational transformation by conducting and publishing research. Two teacher-participants indicated that:

I see myself as an example of a professional who must continuously work on research and extension endeavours not only to develop expertise in a specific area but also to be of contribution to our main clientele in the community. (T11)

I believe that as a doctoral academic, I should be research-oriented because I have to share with my colleagues and students the current issues, trends, and information in my discipline. (T12)

T13 also supported the views of T11 and T12 when she said:

The whole point of obtaining PhD is for one to be research-oriented. Common sense tells us that all PhD programs are supposed to be designed in such a way that graduates will be trained and prepared to be research-oriented even before they get their degrees. I believe myself to be research-oriented. I subconsciously developed the love for research while doing course work in the PhD program.

Furthermore, T14 also gave a clear justification why she viewed herself as a teacher-researcher. She declared:

And I think the very essence of having a PhD degree is to become a prolific researcher and be an expert in that chosen field. Of course, one could be considered expert in a specific field if they have conducted many research studies and have contributed much in the expansion or development of a certain field or discipline. Research studies would also contribute in the development of teaching or pedagogical practices.

T15 and T16 emphasised that they have become research-oriented because conducting research is one of their responsibilities as doctoral academics. They commented:

There is much to learn along technicalities of research and concepts involved in answering queries along learning and teaching improvement. And I believe it is a responsibility of a doctoral academic to be able to contribute knowledge through research for enlightenment of colleagues and institutions.

... most especially that I am teaching in a university. Universities are supposed to be involved in research to maintain its status. Research undertaken can contribute to the status of the university and at the same time it can help improve the institution or even the community.

T17 opined that as a doctoral academic, he can contribute not only to the improvement of his institution's ranking but also to the development of his community. He said:

A doctoral academic should be research-oriented in order to contribute to the global and national sustainable development goals.

Lastly, T18 averred his view of himself as a doctoral academic:

Teaching and conducting research are requirements of being a doctoral academic. As a teacher and researcher, I can incorporate theoretical knowledge and its application through research. (T18)

Doctoral academics' perceived roles in academic publishing

Based on the interview findings, doctoral academics fulfill four roles in academic publishing as perceived by the teacher-participants: producers of new knowledge, research mentors and collaborators, expert reviewers of scholarly articles, and prime-movers of social change.

As producers of new knowledge

The teacher-participants believed that as doctoral academics, they should be able to produce or generate new knowledge through research:

First and foremost, the role of a PhD holder in academe is to contribute something new in the field of knowledge of his specialisation. Instead of just teaching the students what is already written, it is his responsibility to create new theories and approaches. Remember that when you publish something of your own, you will be remembered years after doing so as students and scholars would read your work as a reference. (T19)

As research mentors and collaborators

For the teacher-participants, doctoral academics have the responsibility to contribute to the economic and social development of the country. They likewise emphasised that the country's development may only be achieved if they would help and mentor others to produce research or studies on their own. These two views are captured in the following interview extracts:

I have to take this role to accelerate production. The country is lagging behind in terms of research production compared to our ASEAN counterparts. We need more researchers, scholars and thinkers engaged in research endeavours to at least improve our production rate. Ultimately, this will translate into nation's development. (T20)

As expert reviewers of scholarly articles

"Being an expert reviewer of scholarly journals is also one of doctoral academics' roles in publishing" (T21) as perceived by the teacher-participants. One of the teachers maintained:

Aside from researching and publishing vital findings to better life in general, a doctoral academic ought to take part as council of experts who shall critique studies for

publication by refining and polishing such to maintain the quality of studies in a given field and making the exchanges of knowledge scholarly—publish and help others to publish. (T22)

As prime-movers of social change

Lastly, being a doctoral academic also means being able to view and analyse social problems through a critical lens and address them in a manner that involves everyone in the community:

I believe a doctoral academic has a social responsibility in terms of knowing urgent problems encountered in real world and responding to that problem. It may be through awareness or through offering possible options for solution. Also, I think that more than putting your paper out there it is equally important to be in the active role of making these known to people who can make use of these information. I should be an advocate at the same time of what I want to achieve in what I publish. I don't want to think of publishing as a passive endeavour that only seeks promotion of self-interests but more of a catalyst of small important changes. (T23)

Discussion

In this section, the research questions are answered under the light of the findings presented above. Through the first research question, the study found that the teacher-participants ascribed to two general roles as doctoral academics in Philippine HEIs: as classroom teachers and as teacher-researchers. These roles manifested as doctoral academics constantly engage in both teaching and research in their respective schools.

Although teaching, research, and community involvement are considered as the three main responsibilities of HEI academics (Tayeb, 2016; Ulla & Tarrayo, 2021; Wa-Mbaleka, 2015), doctoral academics in Philippine HEIs viewed teaching as their primary role in the academe. Likewise, they maintained that as doctoral academics, they must demonstrate competence and expertise in teaching, for much is expected of them since they may have advanced knowledge and skills to contribute to their respective institutions. They believed that through teaching, they could potentially contribute in developing their students' skills and knowledge and in elevating their respective institution's ranking status. They claimed that teaching should not be neglected and must be practised with competence and expertise.

However, while teaching is a primary responsibility among academics, research, especially with its impact on improving institutional ranking status, has become imperative. Although several studies have argued that world university ranking is problematic, especially with regard to its indicators and methodology (see Fauzi et al., 2020; Goglio, 2016; Hazelkorn, 2018), it is clear that research publication is one crucial indicator for such ranking. In fact, Olenick et al. (2019) and Tayeb (2016) emphasised that for a university to be ranked and recognised as world-class, academic publishing must also be given attention along with other factors (e.g., teaching excellence, international collaborations, academic rankings, etc.). Furthermore, academic publishing elevates a ranking status and manifests that doctoral academics are well-informed about issues and

trends concerning teaching and education. Palali et al.'s (2018) investigation on the relationship between research quality and teaching quality maintained that research and publication can have a positive effect on teaching practices. In other words, teachers' research engagement grounds effective teaching. Focusing only on classroom teaching may only discount their engagement in doing research, especially when doctoral academics are regarded as experts, producers of new knowledge, and mentors in their own academic fields. Doctoral academics, in optimising their potentials, should devote their expertise to teaching and to academic publishing.

Apparently, in the context of Philippine HEI academics, their perceived role as classroom teachers, although valid, only stemmed from the two factors that can be attributed to their academic orientations: their training when they were pursuing their doctorate degrees, and their present teaching conditions. First, relatively few doctoral academics mentioned that they only demonstrate competence and expertise in teaching to compensate for their lack of research skills and knowledge in academic publishing. They admitted that such inadequacy can be attributed to their lack of extensive orientation on academic publishing when they were pursuing their doctorate degrees. Although 49 of the teacher-participants reported that they were able to conduct and publish research in the last five years, research databases suggest little evidence of their publications. This means that their publications were either locally published or were not recorded in the world's popular research databases (e.g., Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed, ERIC, etc.). The inclusion of a research publication in a reputable indexing database is crucial toward wider knowledge dissemination and mobilisation; otherwise, a research article may attain only limited access to interested scholars and academics and may not have an impact in terms of its contribution to the field or discipline. When a research study is indexed, it may be cited, and its citation count can indicate its quality and scholarly impact (Aksnes et al., 2019; Thelwall, 2015). This relatively minimal number of research publications among doctoral academics in the Philippines reflects the data revealed in the 2019 report on journal and country rankings by Scimago where the Philippines ranked 14th with only 38,024 published research documents among countries in the Asiatic region. This lack of publications among HEI academics and scholars suggests that academic publishing in Philippine HEIs may not be strongly emphasised and that doctoral academics, despite having doctorate degrees, may need to improve their skills in research and publication.

Given that there are only a few research publications among Philippine doctoral academics, HEIs may reconsider their intention to be included in the university world ranking. They may need to recalibrate their doctoral academics and revisit their policies governing research to prepare them for academic publication. In addition, HEIs may focus on the alignment of research toward the needs and interests of the community to bring a positive impact on the lives of people. This suggests that aiming for a high ranking from local and regional communities may deserve more importance than a high ranking obtained from some worldwide process.

Doctoral academics may not be ready to take on the challenge of doing research and publication, considering their educational orientation, and changing this perspective may take time. Thus, HEIs, with the government's help, can turn their attention to improving

the quality of their curriculum so that future doctoral academics may contribute to the development of the community and to the internationalisation of their respective universities.

Second, other doctoral academics also acknowledged that because of lack of time to conduct research, they perceived themselves primarily as classroom teachers whose lifeblood is teaching. The issues of teachers' lack of time, resources, and professional expertise to conduct research in Philippine HEIs are well known from previous studies (Ulla et al., 2017; Ulla, 2018; Vecaldo et al., 2019; Wa-Mbaleka, 2015). However, enabling doctoral academics to become more effective teachers and researchers should be given importance. This challenge may warrant a review of national and institutional policies on teaching and research in HEIs. For instance, encouraging doctoral academics to do collaborative research can help them fulfill their research and publication responsibility. HEIs may play an essential role in attaining this goal by conducting collaborative research activities where academics are introduced to senior ones who are experts in their field or discipline. Doing collaborative research reduces the burden among academics as this can be done in teams or groups, and provides an opportunity for them to co-create knowledge together. Doctoral academics who engage in collaborative research, can gain an additional layer of their professional development that may undoubtedly impact their profession.

Through the second research question, the researchers set out to explore the doctoral academics' perceived roles in academic publishing. The findings revealed that doctoral academics fulfill four roles as regards academic publishing: producers of new knowledge, research mentors and collaborators, expert reviewers of scholarly articles, and prime-movers of social change.

First, as doctoral academics who are involved in academic publishing in their respective universities, the teacher-participants perceived themselves as producers of new knowledge because they believed that contributing new theoretical and empirical knowledge in their academic disciplines would make a positive impact both to their students and the community. They thought that through research, they could also generate new knowledge than can be used by other scholars to inform social policies and practices. Such a perception is relevant since as experts, they initiate important scholarly deliberations and give updates and new knowledge that can impact society. Moreover, doctoral academics also serve as front-liners in an endeavour to test and retest certain concepts and constructs in terms of their relevance to reinforce better outcomes for humanity. Model-building is likewise expected of them since they have a better grasp of the social science arena. They also give recommendations to alleviate an existing problem in their respective fields. All of these ought to be shared to the widest possible audience to guarantee research utilisation. Hence, doctoral academics may need to research and publish more often to contribute significantly to the reservoir of knowledge.

Second, doctoral academics also perceived themselves as research mentors to their students and as collaborators with other researchers and scholars. They maintained that such mentorship and collaboration would help increase the country's research production, which, in turn, could contribute to national development goals. This perceived role was

likewise identified in Walkington et al.'s (2020) study, which indicated that mentoring is an essential component toward students' research success. Doctoral academics being research mentors and collaborators would serve as catalysts to enhance the country's research productivity. It must be noted that the Philippines is lagging behind other Asian countries in terms of research publications (Scimago, 2019). Thus, research mentoring can be one effective way to address the issue of research and publication. Senior academics may serve as mentors for new doctoral academics. HEIs may identify these senior academics and form teams to mentor the new generation of academics. Doing so transfers the skills and knowledge in doing research, and allows for collaboration, networking, and professional development among academics. Likewise, mentors should hone their students' technical and research skills and encourage them to publish their works. This can be done by increasing "student ownership and voice through tailoring an individual research experience using mentee interests and choices" (Walkington et al., 2020, p. 10).

Third, doctoral academics also viewed themselves as expert reviewers of scholarly articles. They emphasised that by reviewing research articles, they would be able to ensure the quality of research to be published. Being expert reviewers, doctoral academics' participation in academic discourses, especially through reviewing scholarly papers, can help polish the ideas of other scholars in the same discipline. This can contribute to the scholarly production of new knowledge that can create a positive impact upon a particular academic discipline and society in general.

Lastly, through teaching and academic publishing, the doctoral academics viewed themselves as prime-movers of social change (Bourn, 2016). They disclosed that through teaching and research, they were able to view, analyse, and address social problems in a manner that fosters community involvement and contributes to sustainable collective efforts. Therefore, doctoral academics' effort in both teaching and academic publishing should be geared toward creating connections among those in the field where they belong (Bourn, 2016).

Academic publishing is vital to career progression, growth, and knowledge contribution of doctoral academics. The role crosses the boundary between research and academic instruction. It is a powerful method to demonstrate a balance between theory and practical discoveries as a result of research. Likewise, academic publishing shows the breadth and depth of knowledge and research skills of doctoral academics. It serves as a measure of their competency and progress as academics.

Conclusion

Doctoral academics play important roles both in classroom teaching and in academic publishing. They should be active contributors of relevant and scholarly ideas, innovators of techniques and strategies, and creative thinkers who have a clear vision of societal progress. They need to actively engage in research because they have been trained to do so. Additionally, being doctoral academics means being expert and competent in teaching and research. One could be considered an expert if they have conducted and published a

substantial amount of research and have contributed significantly to the expansion or development of a certain field or discipline. Research also contributes to the improvement of teaching or pedagogical practices. Therefore, whatever teaching practices a doctoral academic employs in the classroom should always be anchored in certain principles, theories, and frameworks. This can only be achieved through gathering or considering empirical evidence and conducting relevant studies or research.

Although this study was conducted in Philippine HEIs, the findings have implications to other doctoral academics and education policy-makers and scholars in other higher education contexts. First, doctoral academics are expected to demonstrate expertise in both teaching and doing research as they are regarded as experts in their academic disciplines. Therefore, doctoral academics should maintain a balance in performing the two roles in academe, so they may profess knowledge to their students and contribute to their academic disciplines. Second, academic publishing requires a lot of skills. Doctoral students must be exposed to and trained in academic publishing, so they may be prepared to do such should they become doctoral academics. This implies that teaching and research pedagogy should be revisited to address the needs of doctoral academics with respect to academic publishing. Lastly, future studies should explore the issue on teaching and research pedagogy among HEIs to investigate specific institutional practices they uphold for their doctoral students and/or doctoral academics. Exploring such an issue would shed a new light on doctoral academics' roles and their orientation in the academe. Further, since the study found that the doctoral academics viewed themselves as prime-movers of social transformation, it becomes worth considering for future research to investigate the broader impact of doctoral academics' research-based abilities beyond their work or career.

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Appendix: Email questionnaire

Dear Participants:

We are currently working on a research titled “Doctoral academics’ roles in Philippine higher education institutions: Insights from a qualitative study”, and this survey will help us gather the necessary data. May we invite you to answer the following survey questions? It should take approximately 20 minutes to complete the survey.

Your participation in this research project is completely voluntary. Your responses will remain confidential and anonymous. No one other than the researchers will know your

individual answers to this questionnaire. The results of this survey will be used for research presentation and publication.

Thank you for your assistance in this important endeavour.

Sincerely,

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Part 1: Profile of the respondents

1. Gender:
2. Age:
3. Number of years in teaching:
4. Type of higher education institution where you are teaching right now:

State university:	State college:
Private university:	Private college:
5. Where did you obtain your doctorate degree?

A state university/college in the Philippines:
A private university/college in the Philippines:
A university/college outside of the Philippines:
6. Have you done research in the last five years? Yes: No:
7. Have you published research in the last five years? Yes: No:
8. Do you teach research or any research-related courses in your school?

Yes:	No:
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- 9: Do you engage in research advising or supervision among your students?

Yes:	No:
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Part 2: Interview questions

1. How do you view yourself as a doctoral academic in your university?
2. As a doctoral academic, do you feel that you have to demonstrate more competence and expertise in teaching? Why or why not?
3. Do you think, as a doctoral academic, you should be research-oriented? Why or why not?
4. As a doctoral academic, how do you situate yourself within the demands of teaching and research in the academe?
5. How would you describe your orientation in research and publication when you were taking your doctorate degree?
6. Do you feel comfortable in teaching while doing research? Why or why not?

7. How would you describe your research engagement and productivity in academic publishing from the time you were doing your doctorate degree to the present?
8. How do you equip yourself to be productive in research in terms of academic publishing?
9. What research policies or programs in your university enable or hinder you from publishing your research?
10. What factors can aid to promote productive academic publishing among doctoral academics in your university?

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