

Commitment to Serve the Broader Community: The Status of Linkages of a Private University in the Philippines

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the status of the established university-industry-government linkages of the private university in the Philippines relative to its commitment of serving the broader community. The study examined the characteristics of the university's linkages in terms of sectoral groupings of the institutions under linkage tie-ups, nature of collaboration, level of collaboration, and documentation process employed. The study also described the other linkages the university has actively participated to further achieve its commitment of serving the broader community. Using the university's Registry Form on Linkages, it was found out that majority of its partners are coming from the industry sector, provincial-based, with OJT/ apprenticeship as the most common nature of collaboration, and where the linkages are either forged with or without MOAs/ MOUs. This private university has also tie-ups with provincial-based organizations with missions of either protecting the environment and/or improving the lives of its community residents by addressing their needs, conditions, and aspirations. While the university's existing linkages are good enough to meet its objectives, however its current practices may still need improvement so as to fully maximize the intended benefits of its collaboration.

Keywords: *Collaboration, Linkages, Community, University-industry-government linkages, MOA/ MOU, Private university, Philippines.*

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Highlights of this paper

- The purpose of this research is to investigate the status of linkages of the private university in the Philippines relative to its commitment of serving the broader community.
- The study indicated that the subject-private university has partners coming from the industry sector, provincial-based, with OJT/ apprenticeship as the most common nature of collaboration, and where the linkages are either forged with or without MOAs/ MOUs. It was found out also that the university has existing tie-ups with organizations with missions of protecting the environment and/or improving the lives of its community residents.
- It is recommended that a monitoring framework should be installed by the university in order to keep track the progress of the implementation of the linkages activities.

1. INTRODUCTION

The subject-university, being one of the top private educational institutions in the Philippines, believes in the pursuit of knowledge, values and skills necessary for the preservation and improvement of a broader community. As an academic institution, it envisions to be a center of excellence committed to serve the broader community through quality education. With such vision, it aims to develop cultural, economic and socio-civic conscience through an educational content relevant to national development needs, conditions and aspirations. It also aims to strengthen involvement in community services through varied economic and environmental projects at the same time attain institutional self-reliance through responsive programs for staff, facilities and systems development.

Considering the role of universities, it engages into collaborations with private and public organizations in order to achieve the university's commitment of serving the broader community. As pointed out by [Turk-Bicakci and Brint \(2005\)](#) the role of universities apart from instruction and research is participating actively in society by establishing relationships with firms and local communities. In this era of fast technological progress, increased competition, and more demanding stakeholders, building university-industry-government relationships can be highly beneficial as this enriches and improves the educational objectives of the university. Such linkages initiated by universities with relevant industry and government sectors are considered fundamental for knowledge transfer, organizational growth, innovation, and economic and social development ([Schofield, 2013](#); [Cunningham and Link, 2015](#); [Weckowska, 2015](#)). Further, such linkages may refer to the trusting, committed and interactive relationships between the sectors mentioned in order to enable the diffusion of creativity, ideas, skills and people with the aim of creating mutual value over time ([Plewa and Quester, 2008](#)).

Relative to the above perspective, it is the aim of this research to assess the status of the established university-industry-government linkages of a private university in the Philippines relative to its commitment of serving the broader community. More specifically, this study has the following objectives:

1. Determine the status of university-industry-government linkages in terms of:
 - Sectoral groupings of the institutions under linkage tie-ups;
 - Nature of collaboration;
 - Level of collaboration; and
 - Documentation process employed.
2. Describe the other linkages the university has actively participated to further achieve its commitment of serving a broader community relative to the following:
 - Membership with professional organizations, networks and associations;
 - Active involvement with organizations protecting the environment; and
 - Other socio-civic participation addressing the needs, conditions, and aspirations of the broader community.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study used a mixed quantitative-qualitative approach in assessing the linkages of the private university from year 2012 to the present year, 2018. For objective no. 1, content analysis was employed by the researcher using the university's Registry Form on Linkages as data gathering instrument. The template was used to gather the linkages/ partnerships which have been forged with any groups/ sectors/ organizations from year 2012 to present by any academic and non-academic department of the university. Documents like memorandum of agreement/ understanding, contract of services, and other references to support the completed registry of linkages of a particular department were also retrieved. The data obtained from the different colleges/ departments of the university were categorized as academic departments. On the other hand, those coming from the support offices of the university are grouped as non-academic departments. Assessment of the status of the university-industry-government linkages of the private university has data coming from 11 academic departments and 5 non-academic departments. Simple frequency counts and percentage were used to present the status of linkages of the university in terms of the sectoral groupings of the institutions under linkage tie-ups, nature of collaboration, level of collaboration, and documentation process employed.

On the other hand, additional linkages (objective number 2) of the university which may not be reflected in the registry template submitted were also collated to further describe the extent of linkages of the university through interviews with selected administrators (chiefs of offices) of the university. Additional data and information were also gathered from the Human Resource Department of the university. The data and information were presented according to the involvement of the private university with relevant professional organizations, organizations protecting the environment, and other organizations with missions addressing the needs, conditions, and aspirations of the broader community.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part of the paper presents, analyzes, and interprets the data gathered by the researcher. For clarity of presentation and consistency in the discussion, the data are presented according to the objectives of the study.

3.1. Status of the University-Industry-Government Linkages

The linkage tie-ups of the different academic departments and non-academic departments were assessed in terms of the sectoral groupings, nature of collaboration, level of collaboration, and documentation process employed. Academic departments included in the study are the 11 colleges/ departments such as College of Education (CoE), College of Tourism and Hospitality Management (CTHM), College of Information and Communications Technology (CICT), College of Allied Medical Sciences (CAMS), College of Nursing and Midwifery (CNM), College of Law (CL), College of Criminal Justice Education (CCJE), College of Business and Accountancy (CBA), Technical Education Department (TechEd), Junior High School Department (JHS), and Expanded Tertiary Education Equivalency and Accreditation Program (ETEEAP). On the other hand, the non-academic departments with established linkages include the offices of the Publications, Research, Linkages, and Liaison (PRELL), Student Affairs and External Program (SAEP), International Affairs and Special Programs (IASPO), Admission, and On-the-Job Training. Other support offices of the university with no established linkages were excluded from the study.

Sectoral Groupings of the Institutions under Linkage Tie-Ups. It can be gleaned from [Table 1](#) that majority of the organizations whom the university has partnered with are coming from the private sector or the industry sector. Of the 430 organizations, the subject-university has collaborated with 316 private organizations

equivalent to 73.49 percent. This implies that university-industry partnership is more prevalent compared with any other sectors. Industry and universities collaborate because of several mutual motives which can be brought by the partnership. According to [Ankrah et al. \(2013\)](#) university-industry collaborations were set up despite the differences in their specific motives for collaboration. The partners' respective motivations even if different, according to [Perkmann and Walsh \(2009\)](#) is enough for the collaboration to materialize.

Table-1. Sectoral groupings of the institutions under linkage tie-up with the university.

Sectoral Grouping of the Institutions under Linkage Tie-Up	Academic Departments		Non-Academic Departments		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Government Sector	35	24.65	63	21.88	98	22.79
Private Sector	96	67.61	220	76.39	316	73.49
Public HEI	3	2.11	1	0.35	4	0.93
Private HEI	8	5.63	4	2.78	12	2.79
Total	142	100.00	288	100.00	430	100.00

Source: Data summarized from the completed registry form on linkages submitted by the different academic and non-academic units of the university.

Nature of Collaboration. There are several motives why University-industry-government linkages are established. Each party's motivations are considered in the collaboration engagements. Among those motivations, on-the-job training (OJT)/ apprenticeship of students is the most popular among the modes of collaboration with their external partners [Table 2](#). Two-hundred ninety five out the 430 organizations equivalent to 68.60 percent are partner-institutions where students from the different degree programs of the university are sent for OJT or apprenticeships. It should be noted that before a student graduates from his/her course, there is a prescribed industrial training duration that must be accomplished by any graduating student. For that purpose, the university has close link with various industries and other organizations (be public or private) for the purpose of sending students for the said off-campus training. This is similar to the findings of previous researchers in their assessments of university-industry partnership in Malaysia ([Othman, 2011](#)) and Pakistan ([Ashraf et al., 2018](#)).

Table-2. Nature of collaboration of the linkages.

Nature of Collaboration	Academic Departments		Non-Academic Departments		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Faculty exchange	6	4.23	4	1.39	10	2.33
Student exchange	1	0.70	7	2.43	8	1.86
Research	16	11.27	13	4.51	29	6.74
Lecture/ seminars	36	25.35	7	2.43	43	10.00
Instructional program	34	23.94	5	1.74	39	9.07
Cultural program	2	1.41	5	1.74	7	1.63
Event sponsorship	1	0.70	0	0.00	1	0.23
Scholarship	2	1.41	11	3.82	13	3.02
OJT/ apprenticeship	60	42.25	235	81.60	295	68.60
Immersion	4	2.82	18	6.25	22	5.12
Information exchange	2	1.41	6	2.08	8	1.86
Educational tour	3	2.11	0	0.00	3	0.70
Community service	1	0.70	2	0.69	3	0.70
Others	4	2.82	2	0.69	6	1.40

Note: Multiple responses.

Level of Collaboration. It can be gleaned from [Table 3](#) that majority of the partner-organizations of the subject-university (250 out of 430 organizations equivalent to 58.14 percent) are located within the province where the institution is located. Since majority of the organizations whom the university has tie-ups with are for the OJT/ apprenticeship of students, proximity to the school is one of the considerations.

Table-3. Level of collaboration of the linkages established.

Level of Collaboration	Academic Departments		Non-Academic Departments		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Provincial	47	33.10	203	70.49	250	58.14
Regional	43	30.28	18	6.25	61	14.19
National	46	32.39	56	19.44	102	23.72
International	6	4.23	11	3.82	17	3.95
Total	142	100.00	288	100.00	430	100.00

Source: Data summarized from the completed Registry Form on Linkages submitted by the different academic and non-academic units of the university.

Documentation Process Employed. In order to formally forge a collaboration, certain documentation procedures have to be established. As indicated in Table 4, in the 202 organizations equivalent to 46.98 percent, the subject-university and partner organizations have formalized the collaborations through a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). A MOA or MOU is a written document describing a cooperative relationship between two parties wishing to work together on a project or to meet an agreed upon objective. Though this serves as a legal document and describes the terms and details of the partnership agreement, Khosla *et al.* (2013) found out in their study that although many agencies acknowledged the importance of collaboration, the document lacks practical utility. They suggested development of alternative means of fostering collaboration that would be perceived relevant by both parties. In reference to the findings of the present study, that even if majority of the collaborations have formalized the linkages through MOA or MOU, there might be instances that provisions in the agreement may not be properly monitored. Thus, evaluation of established partnerships, with or without MOA, must be periodically done.

Table-4. Documentation process employed in forging linkages with partners.

Documentation Process	Academic Departments		Non-Academic Departments		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
With MOA/ MOU	97	68.31	105	36.46	202	46.98
No MOA	45	31.69	183	63.54	228	53.02
Total	142	100.00	288	100.00	430	100.00

Source: Data summarized from the completed registry form on linkages submitted by the different academic and non-academic units of the university.

3.2. Other Linkages of the Private University to Further Achieve its Commitment of Serving the Broader Community

Membership with Professional Organizations, Networks and Associations. Faculty members and employees of the private university in their attempt to be of service to the broader community have engaged themselves to be members and officers of the professional organizations, networks and/or associations. It can be gleaned from Table 5 the increasing trend of its personnel who are affiliated with professional organizations serving as either active members or officers. It can be noted that in 2017, 98 personnel who are mostly faculty members are affiliated with professional organizations with one-third of them (33) are acting as officers of such organizations. This only shows the continuous commitment of the university's personnel to be of service to the broader community through their active involvement in organizations or associations along their professions and/or disciplines.

Table-5. Membership and officership of university's faculty, employees, and administrators.

Academic Year	Member	Officer
2012-2013	47	13
2013-2014	52	15
2014-2015	58	20
2015-2016	72	23
2016-2017	98	33

Source: Data summarized from the records of the human resource department of the university.

Active Involvement with Organizations Protecting the Environment. The subject-university, in its commitment to the protection of environment, is an institutional member of Batangas Coastal Resources Management Foundation, Inc. (BCRMF). BCMRF is committed to be a prime innovator in the protection and conservation of the coastal environment of Batangas Province. This non-stock, non-profit, environmental non-government organization was established in 1991 where UB is a regular member since then and the only member coming from the academe. The foundation has 28 members where majority of the institutional members are from the industry like Chevron Philippines, LMG Land Development Corporation, Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corporation, First Gas Power Corporation, and other big companies in the Batangas coastal areas. BCMRF envisions itself to be the leading group composed of private companies, government and non-government organizations, academe, concerned organizations and stakeholders working for the sustainable development of Batangas coastal areas and its tributaries. Some of the activities of the foundation where the subject-university is an active participant are the following: conduct of coastal clean-ups, promotion of waste recycling and waste exchange, deployment of artificial reefs in Batangas Bay, mangrove rehabilitation, and conservation of Verde Island passage marine biodiversity corridor, among others.

Another organization where the subject-university is an institutional member is the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' Protected Area Management Board – Taal Volcano Protected Landscape (PAMB-TVPL) where it sits as the academe member of the Board (<https://bit.ly/2QFfn0s>). Other members of the Executive Committee are the 16 municipal mayors, 8 ABC chairmen, and representative each from the Provincial Development Office, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Pusod, Inc. (non-governmental organization representative), KapisananngMalilitnaMangingisdangTaal (fisherfolks organization), Taal Lake Aquaculture Alliance, Inc. (non-governmental organization representative), and Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Philvocs).

PAMB is a multi-sectoral board created under the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) Law of 1992 in order to protect the TVPL (<https://bit.ly/2PG5VZo>). In the Province of Batangas, PAMB serves as the policy making body of TVPL. The role of PAMB-TVPL is important in protecting and conserving the watershed area surrounding the TVPL as well as its cultural, historical, scenic, and diverse fresh water ecosystem and resources.

Other Socio-Civic Participation Addressing the Needs, Conditions, and Aspirations of the Broader Community. The university, in its capacity to be instrumental in the development of the broader community particularly in improving the quality of life of Batanguenos, has made active collaboration with various organizations in order to address the needs, conditions and aspirations of the stakeholders. One of these organizations is the Batangas Provincial Blood Council (BPBC). The subject-univeristy is the only academe-member of BPBC since it was established in 2011. As bonafide member of BPBC, the univeristy is actively supporting the mission of the Council in the effective implementation of the local voluntary blood donation program in the Province of Batangas, Philippines.

Another worthy socio-civic philosophy of the subject-univeristy is its commitment to partner with a distressed barangay within a period of five years. At present, Barangay Cuta, Batangas City is the present beneficiary after the University's previous adoption of Barangay Sala, Balete, Batangas from the years 2011 - 2015. Well-designed socio-civic activities are being undertaken by the different departments and offices of the univeristy in order to improve the living condition of the beneficiaries in the adopted barangay. The extension activities undertaken by the students, faculty, and employees of the univeristy during the five-year period of partnership with adopted barangay have contributedsignificantly in improving the quality of life of the residents.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The partner-institutions of the subject-university are generally belonging to the industry sector, provincial-based, and with OJT/ apprenticeship as the most common nature of collaboration. Moreover, the university-industry-government linkages underwent formalized procedures with almost half of them being covered with MOA or MOU. The study also concluded the increasing involvement of the university's personnel with their respective professional organizations either as active members or officers. In the same manner, being a premier university in the province, the university is being acknowledged as academe-partner of provincial-based organizations with missions of either protecting the environment and/or improving the lives of its residents by addressing their needs, conditions, and aspirations. While the university's existing linkages are good enough to meet its objectives, however its current practices may still need improvement so as to fully maximize the intended benefits of its collaboration.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions drawn, the subject-university still needs to strengthen its linkages not only with the private sector but with the government sector as well. Collaborative activities which are not only related to OJT/ apprenticeship would need to be identified and implemented in order for a much effective and efficient delivery of services to its clientele and to the broader community where the university is committed to serve. Likewise, more linkages outside the province of its business operations would have to be initiated and actively implemented, particularly in partnering with international organizations in order to keep abreast with the clientele's demands and expectations in this era of fast changing educational landscape.

In order to improve the linkages reporting of each department of the University, it is also recommended that after a particular linkage is forged, a monitoring reporting framework should be installed in order to keep track the progress of the implementation of linkages activities. In this way, the extent of effectiveness of the established linkages can easily be monitored.

It is the limitation of the study where effectiveness of implementation of the existing linkages or its outcomes is not covered as the study primarily dealt on the practices only. In this regard, a future research which will find out how effective the established linkages of the university in terms meeting its intended purpose may disclose interesting results which maybe important to improve the current practices in a university setting.

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