

# A Critical Examination of the Institutional Vision in Philippine Teacher Education Institutions

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**Abstract:** *The Asean Economic Community (AEC) is radically changing the landscape of Southeast Asian Higher Education. Currently, Southeast Asian universities are now being driven to regionalize Higher Education (HE). In this emerging development, it has become of paramount importance then among member state of the Association of Southeast Asian Nation (ASEAN) to re-align their institutional vision within the context of this regional phenomenon. Thus this investigation firstly, through a textual and contextual analysis critically examines the institutional vision of elite Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs). A total of ten (n=10) TEIs vision statements were accessed through the university websites and analyzed according to content and common themes. Secondly, the results shed light on the characterization of TEIs institutional vision. This paper argues that as the elite Teacher Education Institutions niche institutional identity in an increasingly borderless regional Higher Education faces roadblocks that demand a continual revision of their institutional vision.*

**Key Words:** *Institutional vision, Textual and contextual analysis, Regionalisation, Glocal, and Teacher Education Institutions.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

The Asean Economic Community (AEC) is radically changing the landscape of Higher Education in Southeast Asia. For instance, Southeast Asian universities are now being driven to regionalize their Higher Education. The modes of delivery in instruction, university governance, quality assurance mechanism and systems, and funding of operation are just a few of the aspects that the university leaders are devoting their attention just so to address the changing demands of the current time. It has become of paramount importance then among member state of the Association of Southeast Asian Nation to re-align their institutional vision within the context of this emerging regional phenomenon.

In an attempt to define what institutional vision is, researchers and organizational experts had extensively studied the term. Interestingly, there is a variety of descriptions and construct as to the definition and concept of the term called “institutional vision” It is likened to a road map” (Calder, 2014), “a clear photograph of an institution at some point in the future” (Tearle, 2011), “a mental picture of a successful organization” (Gearhart, 2003), “the future state of the organization” (Vanderlest, 2017), and “a philosophical template” (Abelman, 2008). For Nanus in Morse (1993) it is likened to “a signpost pointing the way for all who need to understand what the organization is and where it intends to go.” (<http://www.sedl.org/change/issues/issues23.html>)

In the context of Philippine Higher Education, vision statement, mission, philosophy, goals, and objectives (VMGOs) take shape in the formulation of the university strategic direction. It is therefore imperative that the university leaders including stakeholders have a functioning understanding of what they are supposed to live up and where they are heading to. But the role of the university regents, the highest governing body of the university has a critical role in the collective and synergistic effort in achieving their institutional vision. A critical evaluation of institutional vision is, therefore, an important pursuit of university leaders if it wants to create a bold impact on the community it serves. This is the reason why universities and institution of higher learning consider institutional vision as the most crucial aspect of the institution as it shapes not just the entire university but the nation and its economy. Hence, institutional vision should be crafted and continuously revisited for refinement on the basis of the local, national aspirations while also integrating global and regional trends in HE in order to be relevant. As Blessinger (2018) hinted that “In a world undergoing dramatic change, it is important that those who work in the higher education space be able to understand the major issues emerging in the field.”

## Unique historical background of Teacher Education Institutions

Some Teacher Education Institutions in the country were formerly normal schools and trade schools established during the first decade of the American Colonial rule in order to produce teachers for the public school system in the country. The first normal school was Philippine Normal School in Manila, established in 1901 and now Philippine Normal University. A year after, Cebu Normal School has also established in Central Visayas now Cebu Normal University. This was followed by the establishment of Iloilo Normal School which is currently a comprehensive University in Western Visayas. Today, these normal schools aside from institutional accreditation also are program

accredited by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) identified as Center of Excellence (COE) and Center of Development (COD) in teacher education programs. Indeed, these elite normal schools are still spurred of the responsibility of honing prospective teachers in the country.

### Major education reforms in the Philippine Higher Education

Reforms on Philippine Higher Education, particularly in Teacher Education Institutions, is anchored on governmental regulatory body mandated under the Article 1 Section 1 of the CHED, CHED Memo Order No. 30 Series of 2004 pertaining to the Revised Policies and Standards for Undergraduate Teacher Education Curriculum provides that to wit:

*“Quality pre-service teacher education is a key factor in quality Philippine education. In the Philippines, the pre-service preparation of teachers for the primary and secondary education sectors is a very important function and responsibility that has been assigned to higher education institutions. All efforts to improve the quality of education in the Philippines are dependent on the service of teachers who are properly prepared to undertake the various important roles and functions of teachers. As such, it is of utmost importance that the higher standards are set in defining the objectives, components, and processes of the pre-service teacher education curriculum.”*  
(<https://ched.gov.ph/2004-ched-memorandum-orders/>)

The reform agenda in the Philippines are made to address the decline of the country’s educational system. For example, one of the recent education reforms in the basic education sector is the restructuring of the basic education curriculum. The Department of Education (DEPED) in 2012 implemented the K-12 program that aims for the country's basic education aims to produce Filipino graduates who are competent and skilled capable of contributing to the country’s development. In the higher education sector, the CHED, a governmental regulating body of HEIs had in 2008 reformed Higher Education learning paradigm into Outcomes Based Education (OBE). The essence of egalitarian educational reform is now recognized as another bold reform in higher education has favored a free tuition fee for state-run tertiary education institutions including local colleges in an effort to provide access and equity along with quality. There are as well institutional efforts being undertaken by universities that are aligned with the governmental agencies vision. For instance, the elite Teacher Education Institutions in line with the ASEAN Economic Community, the country has improved its Philippine Qualification Framework (PQF) to make it congruent with the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework.

The current research critically analyzes the institutional vision statements of elite Teacher Education Institution in the Philippines through a textual and contextual analysis method. As the ASEAN Community continues to transform HE in the Southeast Asian region, the Philippine Higher Education Institutions still struggles to achieve internationalization and the need to explore the institutional vision of Philippine Teacher Education Institutions can offer valuable insights to university leaders in crafting their institutional vision that addresses current trends in Higher Education. It is in this premise that this investigation was primarily conducted.

## 2. RESEARCH AIMS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

Given that there is a scant of research on the institutional vision of Philippine Higher Education, this is among the first to investigate institutional vision of the elite Teacher Education Institutions that comprise the National Network of Normal Schools (3NS). The study is primarily focused on key research questions as follows:

*RQ 1:* What characterizes the institutional vision of the premier TEIs?

*RQ 2:* What are the commonalities of the institutional vision of TEIs?

## 3. RESEARCH METHOD:

The present investigation used textual and contextual analysis method. The adoption of this methodology is compatible with the research aims that is to explore what characterize the vision statement of elite Philippine TEIs.

### Sampling and sample

The study purposively included ten ( $n=10$ ) Teacher Education Institutions in the Philippines as sample schools of the study. These TEIs in compliance with the government’s call for transparency have provided in their university websites details of their institutional vision statements. These original normal schools were selected as the subject of the study for being considered as the leading institutions in the country offering teacher education programs. This is evidently reflected in their program accreditation status recognized as the Center of Excellence (COE) and Center of Development (COD) by the Commission on Higher Education, a governmental regulating body of state-run Higher Education Institutions. They also hold institutional accreditation with a majority having level IV status granted by the Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities (AACCUP), an accrediting body for state-funded Higher

Education Institutions in the country. Additionally, the majority of these Teacher Education Institutions hold International Certification Standard (ISO) in compliance with the Commission on Higher Education program for strengthening institutional development and achieving institutional competitiveness.

**Data collection and analysis**

The archival data on institutional vision statement was downloaded from university websites (between July-August 2018) of every sample school that comprise the subject of the current investigation. The visibility of institutional vision on the university website is in consonance with the governmental agency’s mandate for transparency. This practice is particularly beneficial to the prospective students as well as university stakeholders as it provides a clear picture of the institutions' directions and priorities. To critically examine the vision statements of the universities, textual and contextual analysis was employed. Data collected were coded, analyzed, and the thematic theme was established.

**4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS:**

**Overall vision statement thematic commonalities**

The current investigation was conducted in order to critically analyze the institutional vision of elite Teacher Education Institution. Specifically, the primary aim of the study is to unveil what characterizes their institutional vision. The subsequent section presents the findings of the investigation. Qualitative data collected were independently coded, analyzed, and collapsed into similarly emerging categories theme. The top five predominant words used in the vision statements of Teacher Education Institutions are reflected below in Table 1.

**Table 1.** The predominantly words used in institutional vision of TEIs

Rank	Top five predominant words used	f	%
1	Premier, primary, leading	7	25.93
2	Development, transformation	6	22.22
3	Asia Pacific Region, Southeast Asia, beyond the region, world & global	5	18.52
5	Sustainable, sustainability	3	11.11
	Excellence, excellent, quality	3	11.11
	Produce, producing, producer	3	11.11

The findings on predominant words used were further categorized into three (3) emerging themes. It can be noted from table 1, that the institutional vision of Teacher Education Institutions is characterized by four (4) distinct components which are: institutional prominence (33.33%), institutional function (26.67%), institutional outcome (20%), and institutional competitiveness (20%).

**Table 2.** Distribution of emerging themes

Rank	Emerging theme	f	%
1	Institutional prominence	10	33.33
2	Institutional function	8	26.67
3.5	Institutional outcome	6	20
	Institutional competitiveness	6	20

From predominantly words used, a thematic category theme was established. It is clear that the elite Teacher Education Institutions firstly, institutional prominence which ranked first only means that TEIs takes pride in its university identity and distinction as an institution of higher learning. Secondly, it is highly driven to perform the institutional function of contributing not only to the local development but also to the national progress through human capital formation and development. Thirdly, as a frontline in nation building, TEIs demonstrate a commitment to transforming the country’s human capital through endeavoring exemplary higher education services to stakeholders as evidenced by the institutional outcome ranked third. This finding signifies of their being outcome-driven HEIs that is believed could create an impact on national development. And if TEIs could produce future teachers who are outcome-driven and result-oriented a nurturing impact on the country’s educational system at all level will be achieved and would result in inclusive growth. Lastly, as shown institutional competitiveness ranked 3.5 implies that aside from trying to become locally and nationally relevant, the elite TEIs are bent on harmonizing with regional and global trends. For indeed, there is no better way to ensure Higher Education competitiveness and graduate marketability than harmonizing with the Asean counterparts.

As evidenced by the top rank words used relating to institutional prominence, a total of 6 terms came out for the institutional prominence which are “premier,” “primary,” “center and hub,” “world-class,” “choice,” and “leading” indicating that institutional identity ranks first which goes to mean that TEIs are inclined to foster a unique identity as a state-run Higher Education Institution. Historically, these TEIs particularly the original normal schools have a rich beginning, a majority of them were established during the American Colonization Period of the country. This, explains why TEIs are inclined to foster institutional identity. The proliferation of HEIs in the country demands that to attract students the institution must have developed identity that stands out with their local or national counterparts. And as the regionalization of HE in Southeast Asia is getting more pronounced, institutional identity is becoming a matter of institutional necessity. In terms of institutional function which ranked second, the word “development,” “transformation,” “sustainability,” “change agent,” “produce,” and “producer,” came out with a total of 6 words. This finding tends to show TEIs role as a driver of social transformation which is also in conformity with the culture of the Western and ASEAN universities envisioning their HE sectors as such. As to the institutional outcome, there is a total of 3 terms predominantly used for which signals that TEIs commit to deliver their institutional outcomes in an exemplary way as evidenced in the above table the word “excellence,” “excellent,” “quality,” “sustainable,” and “sustainability,” was used to describe their function as state-run HEIs. Finally, institutional competitiveness was another component of TEIs vision statement. The word “Asia Pacific region,” “Southeast Asia,” “beyond the region,” “world,” and “ASEAN” were the terms used which could be explained by TEIs embarking on global and regional border.

The striking commonalities of TEIs vision statement could be explained by their institutional charter. It is also in consonance with existing laws as elucidated in Republic Act 7722 otherwise known as the Higher Education Act of 1994 which provides that: “The State shall protect, foster and promote the right of all citizens to affordable quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to ensure that education shall be accessible to all. The State shall likewise ensure and protect academic freedom and shall promote its exercise and observance for the continuing intellectual growth, the advancement of learning and research, the development of responsible and effective leadership, the education of high-level and middle-level professionals, and the enrichment of our historical and cultural heritage.” In addition, CHED as the sole governmental regulating agency of Philippine Higher Education also mandates HEIs to: “Promote relevantly and quality higher education (i.e. higher education institutions and programs are at par with international standards and graduates and professionals are highly competent and recognized in the international arena.” This finding finds relevance to the principles of The Manila Declaration on Higher Education convened by the Higher Education Institutions presidents which state that: “The HEI presidents who drafted the declaration had to first set the principles to which they hoped all colleges and universities would adhere. Among these is the pursuit of truth, the pursuit of academic excellence, the production of innovative research, sustained communication and the sharing of information among HEIs, and a mission to harmonize the knowledge, skills, and attributes of graduates with the needs of the other sectors of society.” This is the reason why university leaders are so engrossed with constructing, de-constructing and re-constructing their institutional vision just so to respond to the needs of the changing time. It should ideally articulate institutional aspirations that address the need for the current time. And because of the AEC respective universities of ASEAN state members respond proactively to the regionalization of HE. The Philippines, in attempting to create a unique identity of its HE has opted to envision HE that reflects both local and global. Thus, the term “glocal outlook” has engulfed the Philippine Teacher Education Institutions.

In terms of their graduate exit outcomes, it is noteworthy that there is only (4 TEIs) that indicated their exit graduate outcomes such as “produce leaders, professionals who are socially responsive,” “responsive teachers,” “high-quality teachers and education managers,” “innovative and ethical leaders.” In contrast, (5 TEIs) instead of specifying their graduate outcomes opted to stress their institutional outcomes. For instance, “strong nation,” “attuned to local and global needs,” “hub for human resource development,” “agent for social transformation,” “higher education for sustainable development” As provided by the Philippine Constitution, all HEIs in the country shall operate within the principle of access and quality in protecting and promoting the rights of every Filipino to HE. From these results, it can be inferred that there is both similarities and differences as well as the degree of vitality and diversity among TEIs vision statement. In practice, the formulation of the vision statement of the university by the leaders adheres to several internal and external drivers. For instance, under internal drivers, both university charter and the country’s governmental agencies agendas, direction, vision, mission, and goals (VMGOs) are considered in shaping the institutional vision of HEIs. For external drivers, regional phenomenon, and globalization are the most significant external drivers since these drivers continually change the landscape of HE around the globe. Clearly, from the angle of these drivers of TEIs vision statement, the formulation of their vision is more of a collective nature rather than individualistic. Hence, Philippine Teacher Education Institutions remain a catalyst in nation building by addressing local and national vision while at the same time catching up with the global trends.

There are also descriptions in TEIs vision statement that elucidates their primary function such as “multidisciplinary research of education,” “Philippine university,” “university of education and diverse discipline,” “educational excellence in the Visayas,” “excellent and relevant HE,” “strong research orientation,” and “internationally recognized,” This trend may be explained by their university charter that distinguishes them from other types of HEIs. Specifically, the above

results on the description of TEIs vision statements imply their functions as tertiary learning institutions along with their three-fold functions that include: instructions, research, and extension services to the community geared towards the attainment of institutional vision and national development. Given the present direction of Philippine Teacher Education Institutions endeavoring to cultivate significance within the context of national development and in the regional arena, with the degree of vitality and diversity of institutional vision in Philippine TEIs, it seems quite unlikely that the elite Teacher Education Institutions will hopefully in the future become competitive Higher Education in the regional arena.

### **Linguistic and stylistic similarities and differences**

This investigation also tried to analyze the linguistic and stylistic component of institutional vision statements of the elite Teacher Education Institutions. There are a few characteristics that are reflected in their vision statements. For instance, there is a resemblance of their vision statements comprising a majority with a single statement (single statement, 9 TEIs). As opposed to the majority of the TEIs using a single statement, interestingly only one (multiple statements, 1 TEIs) comprising 3 statements. This finding could be due to institutional culture in Philippine Higher Education wherein in order for the university stakeholders to easily familiarize and remember what the university envisions to be at a given period of time, vision statement has to be written in a concise and brief statement. As to the average number of words per statement, the result indicated average words of 16.1. Another notable characteristic of TEIs vision statements is that the majority showed a more explanatory in nature; elucidating the unique identity and personality as a type of institution for higher learning. This is reflected in the beginning statements that include: “a leading,” “a premier,” “a world-class,” “as the center for,” “to become an ASEAN,” “choice for higher learning, and “shall become internationally recognized.” Indeed, this result paints a bleak picture of what TEIs are trying to foster as a university or institution of higher learning. With regards to the word preferred that are embedded in the vision statements to describe what the university envisions herself to become, words like adjectives were used. For instance, the adjective words used were “premier,” “primary,” “world-class” and “leading.” There are also nouns that were used to described TEIs functions such as “hub,” “center,” “choice,” and “producer,” “change agent” and “center.” These findings imply a pluralistic vision and domestic orientation of the Philippine Teacher Education Institutions while at the same time integrating regional thrusts, regional trends, and regional directions of HE.

Another notable similarity that is worthy of attention on the vision statement is the inclusion of the adverbial phrase to express the scope and limitation of their vision (5, TEIs). For example, an adverb of place “in the Asia-Pacific Region,” “in Southeast Asia,” in the world,” “in Asean” and “within and beyond the region.” Adverb of time such as “by 2020” and “by 2028” was omitted by (2 TEIs). The country’s Higher Education has a history two (2) periods of colonization beginning from the three centuries of Spanish Colonization followed by American that lasted for about 5 decades had impacted the many aspects of the country educational systems. Thus, TEIs tend not only to be nationally but also regionally relevant. To date among the Southeast Asian nations, the Philippine is considered the most vast in terms of the number of tertiary education institutions. Although confronted with both opportunities and hindrances, the above result shows that TEIs understand that broad impact requires a broad understanding of current regional and global trends in HE. It is vital to preparing graduates for a workplace in a highly globalized community.

### **5. CONCLUDING STATEMENT AND SUGGESTIONS:**

The primary focus of this investigation was to critically analyze the institutional vision of elite Philippine Teacher Education Institutions. It specifically tried to examine what characterizes the institutional vision of TEIs. The analysis indicated that there are similarities and differences in institutional vision among elite TEIs. Three emerging themes that characterize the institutional vision statements include *institutional prominence*, *institutional function*, *institutional outcome*, and *institutional competitiveness*.

In conclusion, the institutional vision of elite Teacher education Institutions is concise, cohesive, well - integrated, and highly congruent with its four-fold functions of instruction, research, and community extension services. It applauds the promotion of inclusive excellence in human capital development and social transformation. On the other hand, it nurtures competitiveness within the national and regional border. The collective commonality, enduring diversity, and sustaining the vibrancy of institutional vision of the elite Teacher Education Institutions has engulfed “glocalised education” in Philippine Teacher Education institutions. Definitely, the future of elite Teacher Education Institutions with the “glocal allure” in their institutional vision is something worth looking forward to. With the current vision statement of TEIs, would it finally answers the questions: “Will the Philippine TEIs spiced with “glocalised outlook” results to institutional and national development?” and “Will the Philippine Teacher Education Institutions remain isolated from the highly globalized and internationalized HE in Southeast Asean Region?” Not unless internationalization and globalization efforts of the institutions are accorded with sustained support and commitment by the national government. And because institutional policies and national laws perform in tandem with institutional vision, the government sector must therefore, be supportive of the TEIs initiatives, be it innovative reforms and strategic plans by reformulating laws and policies that sustain Teacher Education Institutions ambition for global visibility. For without a supportive milieu, institutional vision remains a “fad” and only worsens “educational crises.”

Based on the salient findings of the investigation, some suggestions are hereby offered. Firstly, for the elite TEIs to regularly re-visit their institutional vision to ensure relevance and responsiveness. As the Teacher Education Institutions are confronted with an array of barriers on addressing their changing role from the premier TEIs to regional player in HE, it should take a proactive role in regionalization initiative on Higher Education in the Southeast Asian Region. It is generally believed that HEIs incorporating global and regional trends could increase the marketability and competitiveness of their graduates. And by embracing this imperative, can provide a clearer structure and backbone for the TEIs in re-designing institutional programmes, innovating state of the art modes of HE service delivery, and restructuring management system and governance. Secondly, it should foster an aggressive pursuit of industry-university-partnerships since partner industry can shed light on the gaps of the theory and practice enabling curriculumist to address gaps, making the curriculum richer and relevant. Additionally, Teacher Education Institutions must outline a more comprehensive strategy for institutional development through developing strong links not just within their borders but linkages that go beyond the national border. Finally, aside from creating a highly intrinsic-value-driven university road map, it should embed Research and Development [R&D] and innovation in their institutional vision if Teacher Education Institutions want to join with the rest of the Southeast Asian universities in parading towards highly regionalized and globalised HE.

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#### Conflict of interest

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