# Awareness and Stances of Higher Education Institution Faculty on Transnational Education

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#### **Abstract**

The number of students who seek offshore education has continued to grow faster, and reports on transnational education (TNE) emphasized the reality of a new segment of students who are ready to pay for global education while staying in their home country. This study ascertained the teachers' awareness and stances on TNE programs and the various educational institutions' steps to support TNE. It employed a descriptive, sequential exploratory design using both data mining technique and survey questionnaires with 27 faculty members from six higher education institutions as respondents. Results showed that although there were initiatives undertaken to disseminate the types of TNE arrangements as stipulated in the policies and guidelines, teachers have limited knowledge of the existing TNE programs. They regarded TNE as promising but are quite uncertain whether to avail of it or not. While it is promising with its perceived benefits, there are still drawbacks to consider should one wants to avail of transnational education.

Keywords: distance education; higher education institution; transnational education; teachers' awareness; stances

### 1. Introduction

The extent and nature of the demand and supply of international education have been widely affected by globalization as more and more students worldwide are choosing to study in institutions that offer international higher education programs. The phenomenon has brought a wide range of options to the students who seek an international education but want to stay in their home country. Consequently, this gave birth to the rise of 'glocal' students and transnational education (TNE). The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Memorandum Order no. 2 promulgated the policies, standards, and guidelines on transnational education. Article 1 of the CMO stipulates that "the commission recognizes the globalization, changing foreign policies, and liberation of trade in goods and services worldwide have created a climate for borderless teaching and learning as well as expanded the opportunities for TNE."

UNESCO (2011) defines TNE as all types of higher education study programs, or sets of study, or educational services. The students are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based. Hence, higher educations' TNE activity involves delivering their educational services in another country instead of students traveling to a foreign university to study. It includes, but is not limited to branch campuses, distance learning, online provision, joint and dual degree programs, flying in faculty for short courses, or mixed models (known as blended learning). Similarly, Hill (2012) maintained that transnational education (TNE) or cross-border education is characterized by the mobility of higher education students, programs, providers, and resources across national jurisdictions or borders. This represents an area of tremendous potential for higher education institutions and, therefore, one that warrants scrutiny.

Reports on transnational education across countries emphasized that the growing consumer class will expand new segments of students who are willing to pay for global education while staying in their home country or region. These have been known as "glocal" segments- global aspirations with local experiences. Glocals are characterized by aspirations that usually outstrip their ability to afford a full fee-paying foreign education and their academic merit to gain admission to an overseas institution with financial aid.

The Philippines, in its quest to be at par with the other countries, supports TNE as evidenced by the signing of the Operational Alliance Agreement between the Commission on Higher Education, represented by the Chairperson Dr. Patricia Licuanan, and the British Council in the Philippines represented by Country Director, Nick Thomas. The agreement aims to collaborate on reviewing and finalizing CHED's policies, standards, and guidelines on Transnational Higher Education (TNE).

The British Council has expressed its commitment to support CHED in creating regulatory conditions conducive to successful TNE operations in the Philippines. Among others, the British Council-CHED collaboration on TNE set out guidelines on quality assurance, registration of TNE services, mechanics for recognition of foreign higher education institutions and courses of study, and Philippine universities engaged in TNE. A Guidebook on TNE will form part of the outputs of the collaboration. CHED has also allocated a budget for TNE scholarships such as full tuition grants and living allowance both for students in the local universities and foreign counterparts, as in the dual award program.

Looking at the present situation where the country is increasingly becoming a study destination among our neighboring countries for learning English and other professional degrees, there is a sense of urgency to establish regulatory mechanisms. This, however, necessitates the government's effort towards upgrading the Philippine educational system to be able to withstand the demands and requirements of a successful TNE program, such as the ICT readiness of the host institution, teacher training, and cost of each TNE program.

Accordingly, students in the TNE program have differing reasons for enrolling in the program. Some of the reasons include career advancement, quality of education, immigration, or living abroad experience. In addition to limitations regarding financial means and academic merit, glocals may also decide to stay within their home country or region due to regional mobility initiatives. For instance, the ASEAN Economic Community aims to transform the South-east Asian region into a common market; that is, there is a free flow of goods, services, investments, and workers, which will benefit students.

With the promising opportunities offered by universities offering transnational education programs, it is important that uncover the teachers' awareness and understanding of TNE and their regard towards the institutions' support initiatives. In this context, this study was conceptualized. It determined the teachers' awareness and attitude in selected higher education institutions, their understanding of the various TNE modes, and the institutions' support for the program in cultivating the culture of excellence.

#### 2. Objectives of the Research

This study ascertained the teachers' awareness and stances on TNE programs and the various steps undertaken by higher education institutions on such programs.

Specifically, it sought to determine the following:

- 2.1. the existing modes and categories of transnational education;
- 2.2. teachers' awareness and understanding of TNE and its modes;
- 2.3 the means employed by the institutions to address the teachers' understanding of TNE;

and

2.4.1. teachers' stances on the implementation of TNE.

#### 3. Literature Review

Transnational education is a reality that will continue to gain popularity in the future. With the myriad of opportunities of learning offshore, obtaining a degree away from one's home country is not a new phenomenon. To date, TNE has globally expanded and is recognized in Finland, France, and the United Kingdom, to name a few. Resembling distance education, TNE would notably develop and expand more in the future, which requires a certain level of expertise. Hussain (2007) succinctly emphasized:

The new information and communication technologies have facilitated students' in their studies, providing a globally competitive environment. It may provide the students and academicians the opportunity of achieving the international standards of education. There will be concerted and deliberate efforts to ensure quality standards and worldwide qualification recognition through transnational education in the future.

Such TNE conditions require collaborations between and among universities to advance education for sustainability and research. Bennell (2019) and Fancois (2016) accentuated the collaborations' fundamental features, which include objectives pursued and subjects addressed, locations, and implementation schemes coupled with non-financial factors. Upon these conditions, universities offering TNE have rationalized their offshore educational provision. This notion of collaboration has also been supported by Guido et al. (2017) highlighting success factors such as local and global considerations, technological readiness, and available resources.

At the forefront of developing human capital, the higher education institutions' teachers are constantly encouraged to undergo continuing professional development through attendance to

various seminars and training and enrollment in advanced studies. Stewart (2019) underscored that with the ubiquity of the internet, anyone could gain global access to borderless distance education anytime at any place. He added that the nexus of distance students could take advantage of the diminishing educational borders brought about by the internet without losing sight of the literature that provides a frame of reference to domestic and international students' experiences.

For over ten years, there has been a continued increase in the number of Filipino students studying abroad at higher education levels. In the executive report made UNESCO on TNE figures, the number of TNE students is still small compared to the country's population. The Institute of Statistics estimated an outbound mobility ratio of 0.4 percent in 2013, with the highest numbers enrolled in Australia (4,177) and the US (2,959). The UK was the 3rd most popular destination but with significantly fewer numbers enrolled (698).

Beginning in 2018, Filipinos had more opportunities to access UK degrees in the country and gain global qualifications through postgraduate programs offered by Philippine institutions in partnership with UK universities. Once students complete their course, they will receive a diploma bearing names of both Philippine and UK universities. This international qualification is recognized and respected by academics and employers worldwide.

In a report published by the British Council (TNE Engagement in the Philippines), a strong support was noted between and among agencies since 2008. Various government entities expressed their readiness to expand Philippine education by offering transnational education, disseminating policies, standards, and guidelines, and encouraging qualified students and teachers to avail TNE programs aligned with their specializations. The Commission on Higher Education (CHED), in a memorandum order, mandated the promotion of a relevant and quality higher education, which is at par with the international standards. In so doing, highly competent graduates will be recognized in the international arena. Seen as an opportunity to support internationalization and respond to globalization's demand, the Commission instituted various initiatives to make the Philippines a TNE hub. These include desk researches, a survey of identified probable TNE providers, an assessment of TNE partner engagement, and an analysis of strategies and funding mechanisms.

In 2019, Republic Act (RA) 11448, the Transnational Education Act, was signed into law to expand 'access to educational services through the establishment and administration of transnational higher education.' A comprehensive national strategy, TNE arrangements, articulation, franchising, niche areas, and validation are looked into vis-à-vis the TNE models in crafting the Implementing Rules and Regulations. (Chao 2019) cited the significant focus on TNE program development in niche areas identified by CHED as evidenced by the support activities, projects, and initiatives. Such undertaking finds support in Malete's (2016) study emphasizing higher educations' acceptance of education as one of the commodities in global trade.

Sicat (2019), on transnational education law, stressed what the law defines. It covers all modes and types of higher education study program's delivery, courses, services, and entities involved. Foreign higher educational institutions can establish a 'commercial presence provide educational services through an approved mode of arrangement. This one's possibility of having academic franchising, opening branch campuses of a foreign university setup and offering joint (local and foreign university) degree programs.

Whist there are accompanying challenges in the implementation, Salvador and Berse (2020) viewed these limits as opportunities. The 'transnationalization' of Philippine higher education indicates the government's openness to a shift. To them:

The Transnational Higher Education Act (RA 11448) legislation in August 2019 showed the government's openness to a shift from a focus on student and academic mobility to program mobility, supporting educational internationalization.

With the comprehensive framework, higher education institutions are challenged to expand the limits of educational capacity. Viewed with a permanent reality, TNE provides a positive set of educational opportunities for aspiring students who can choose from the different categories of TNE models to increase competitiveness and lifelong learning.

## 4. Research Methodology

This study made use of descriptive and sequential exploratory design using both data mining techniques and survey questionnaires. Memoranda and the principles, standards, and guidelines on TNE were accessed through the official government website. Survey questionnaires on TNE awareness were distributed to obtain data on the TNE awareness, its emerging models, operations, and its benefits. The respondents' views on TNE implementation were obtained through a semi-structured interview, building into the second phase of the study- the qualitative phase.

With purposive sampling, twenty-seven (27) teachers from select higher education institutions were chosen, based on inclusion criteria, as the respondents of the study. They have taught in a higher education institution for the past five years, are currently enrolled in any graduate programs, or participated in at least three seminars or trainings for the past academic year.

A TNE Survey questionnaire was sent to their email. For ease and accessibility, the questionnaire was placed in the Google Form. A reasonable time was given for each participant to fill out the form after obtaining their consent to participate in the study. Answered questionnaires were sent back to the researcher through electronic mail. Of the 30 sent questionnaires, twenty-seven (27) were filled out, hence, obtaining a 90% return rate after 25 days waiting period. With a semi-structured interview guide, the respondents' stances on TNE implementation were determined. Research protocols as to confidentiality and treatment of the data gathered were observed.

#### 5. Results and Discussion

#### 5.1. Categories and Modes of Transnational Education

The Commission on Higher Education, cognizant of the emerging needs in education to address the issues of globalization and changing foreign policies, has created a climate for borderless teaching and learning. Alam et al. (2013) purported that the growing number of students who seek overseas education has continued to grow at a faster pace and managing teaching across multiple campuses employing various platforms like distance learning programs, offshore campuses. Recently, the massive open online courses has its challenges such as the institutions' priorities and resources. The institution needs to be prepared to adapt to a major shift in student profiles and corresponding engagement strategies. To address such need, CHED Memorandum No.2, s. 2008 was signed adopting the policies and standards on TNE. It provides details on the

general principles and guidelines, objectives, specific implementing procedures, and TNE categories. Table 1 presents the TNE categories.

Table 1.

Categories of Transnational Education

Delivery System/Mode	Category/ Type	Description		
	A	Partner schools enter into an equal relationship and deliver programs via distance education, with both institutions awarding the credit or degree.		
I. Distance Education	В	The programs are offered directly by an awarding institution with no local agent/partner. The institution may be an FHEP with students in the Philippines (IB1),or a Philippine HEI with students abroad (IB2).		
	C	A Philippine HEI uses programs/courses owned or created by an FHEP under a license agreement. Credit is granted by the local HEI.		
II. Face-to-face or Conventional Mode	A	Partners enter into an equal relationship and deliver programs face-to-face, with both institutions awarding the credit or degree.		
	В	Conventional programs are offered transnationally by a FHEP with a local branch in the Philippines (IIB1), or a Philippine HEI with a foreign branch (IIB2).		
	C	Conventional programs are offered by an FHEP thru a franchiser or a local partner. Credit is granted by an FHEP.		
	A	Partners enter into an equal relationship and deliver programs using blended learning techniques, with both institutions awarding the credit or degree.		
III. Blended Learning	В	Conventional programs are offered transnationally by an FHEP with a local branch in the Philippines (IIB1), or a Philippine HEI with a foreign branch (IIB2), using a mix of face-to-face and distance education.		
	С	Conventional programs are offered by an FHEP thru a franchiser or a local partner using a mix of face-to-face and distance education. Credit is granted by the FHEP.		

Source: https://ched.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/CMO-No.02-s2008.pdf

To various modes of delivery system offers the takers options based on the current conditions and realities. The types illustrate each mode and delivery system's distinction, highlighting the role of the education providers, the place, and access. Implications as to credit and student mobility are emphasized in mode 2, face-to-face or conventional mode. Vignoli (2004) in Amimo (2015) stressed that transnational education implies crossing the borders of national higher education systems. With this notion, it usually falls within the category of non-official higher education, which in its turn is defined as "all forms of higher education activities operating in parallel to and outside the official higher education system of the host country." This means that non-official education operates only outside the official context in the host country and that TNE may operate both in and outside such a context. Table 2 presents the outline of the types of transnational education arrangements.

Table 2.

Modes of Transnational Education Arrangements

Types		Delivery System or Mode		Level of Collaboration between/among HE Service Providers				Institution Awarding Credit or Degree			
		DE	FF	BL	EP	F	В	No CP	FHEP	LHEI	Both
I	A	✓			✓				✓		
	B1	$\checkmark$						$\checkmark$			
	B2	$\checkmark$						$\checkmark$			
	C	$\checkmark$				$\checkmark$					
II	A		$\checkmark$		$\checkmark$						
	B1		$\checkmark$				$\checkmark$		$\checkmark$		
	B2		$\checkmark$				$\checkmark$				
	C		$\checkmark$			$\checkmark$			$\checkmark$		
III	A			$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$						
	B1			$\checkmark$			$\checkmark$		$\checkmark$		
	B2			$\checkmark$			$\checkmark$				
	С			✓		✓			✓		

Legend:

DE-Distance Education

FF- Face-to-Face
BL- Blended Learning

EP-Equal Partnership

B- Branch

No CP- No Commercial Presence FHEI-Foreign Higher Educ Institution

LHEI-Local Higher Educ Institution

The types and the delivery systems, the level of collaboration between and among the institutions, whether sending and awarding, have several challenges. In a paper compiled by Vignoli (2004), the TNE arrangements were highlighted, that is, both the sending and the receiving countries must be compliant with the national legislation on higher education; academic quality and standards of TNE programs should be at least comparable to those of the home institution as well as to those of the host country; TNE institutions should publish their policy and mission statements; their information should be transparent, consistent and reliable; staff members of TNE institutions should be proficient in terms of qualifications, teaching, research and other professional experience; conditions for the admission of students in TNE programs should be equivalent to those of the same or comparable programs delivered by the awarding institution; and the academic workload of TNE programs should be that of comparable programs in the awarding institution, any difference in this respect requiring a clear statement on its rationale and its consequences for the recognition of qualifications.

### 5.2. Teachers' Awareness of TNE

The current trends in education necessitate a conscious effort to move towards internationalization in higher education. Hence, the teachers' awareness of the TNE has been of paramount importance. Table 3 presents the teachers' awareness of transnational education.

Table 3.

Teachers' Awareness on TNE

editiers Awareness on TNL		
Statements on Transnational Education	f n=27	%
1.TNE refers to an educational qualification being		
delivered in a different country to the one where the	24	89
awarding institution is based.		
2. I am familiar with the collaborative arrangements,		
such as franchising and twinning programs.	3	11
3.TNE with its offshore campuses through the		
transnational mode meet the government's aid agenda.	4	15
<del>_</del>		
4. Anyone can avail the opportunities of quality	20	74
education through transnational mode.		
5.TNE is offered only to students who availed the	15	56
transnational mode.		
6.I am familiar of educational institutions which are	6	22
TNE providers.	1.5	5.0
7. TNE is like distance education.	15	56
8. In TNE, students and teachers travel abroad to	9	33
study or to teach.		
9. Linkages are established between the two	21	78
universities prior to offering TNE programs.		
10. The curriculum is promoted offshore, thus	20	74
enhancing the image of an institution.		
11. Education infrastructure of an institution is	23	85
developed when it is a TNE provider.		
12. Students on transnational programs do not receive		
the benefit of interacting with students from the	14	52
university's main campus; therefore the experience is		
quite different.		
13. Students studying locally do not expect the same		_
level of service as their counterparts who have gone	17	63
abroad to study.		
14. It is not possible for a foreign institution to offer		
the same level of service away from the main home	20	74
campus.		
15. It is very costly to avail a transnational education.	21	78
16. There might be problems on accreditation with	14	52
courses earned.	<b>.</b> I	

Of the 16 statements, seven are identified by the majority of the teacher-respondents: place (Statement 1), need for infrastructure (Statement 11), linkages and cost (Statements 9 and 15), opportunities of quality education, curriculum, and level of service (Statements 4, 10 and 14). Very few of them expressed awareness on collaborative arrangements, meeting governments' aid agenda, and the different TNE providers (Statements 2, 3, and 6). Teachers will benefit from initiatives and all forms of information-dissemination to enhance awareness of TNE and the opportunities attached to being a TNE provider. The findings further imply that several teachers held different knowledge

of TNE. The concept must not have been properly introduced to them. This could probably be the reason why few have availed of such educational mode.

On the perceived benefits of TNE, respondents considered linkages between and among universities as the most patent gain, while 20 or 74% believed that the school's curriculum is promoted. As such, the image of an institution will be enhanced. None of the respondents considered the development of an institution's infrastructure as a benefit in offering a TNE program. This supports Amimo and Bosire (2012) findings that transnational education is anchored in economic, political, cultural, and educational rationales; hence, the need to establish close partnership is of paramount consideration.

Along with the benefits comes the hitch of TNE. Due to the seemingly complex arrangements that are not properly understood, respondents considered the extent of interaction with the students from the university's main campus influence the benefits a student may gain. The experience is quite different when you are studying in an offshore institution that awards the qualification. Similarly, 6 or 22% believed that students studying locally (away from the degree-granting institutions) do not expect to receive the same level of service as their counterparts who have gone abroad to study. However, this has been addressed when the awarding institutions become compliant with the UNESCO/OECD Guidelines on Cross Border Education (Woodhouse, 2006).

## 5.3. The Means Employed by the Institutions to Address the Teachers' Understanding of TNE

On the question, "Is your institution supporting transnational education?" the majority (22 or 81%) of the respondents believed that they had been encouraged by the school to avail of such without sacrificing students' learning. As such, they will have to choose the right mode or type of arrangements. Three of them (11%) disclosed that their school conducted information dissemination to orient the faculty members on TNE. In contrast, two, or 7%, had no idea at all on the school's means to introduce TNE to the faculty members. This implies that there was no deliberate information dissemination on TNE, and the measures to support TNE programs were not known to the respondents. While there be ongoing reports, some institutions believed that the Commission on Higher Education efforts is in place in terms of cascading the information to public and private educational institutions. Figure 1 presents the institutions' support for TNE.

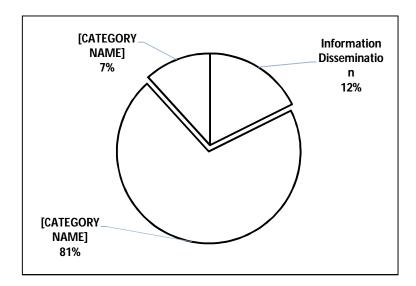
In fact, in last 2016, thirteen (13) HEIs had forged partnerships with several universities in the United Kingdom. The RP-UK mutually supports TNE by offering programs and by inviting takers of the program. This has been realized through series of orientations and briefings on creating niche programs in identified centers of excellence schools (COEs).

Figure 1.

Institutions' Support to TNE

Figure 1.

Institutions' Support to TNE



Various means have been undertaken to ensure that the faculty members are acquainted with the nature of TNE. Figure 1 presents the teachers' knowledge on the extent of their institutions' means of supporting the TNE program as perceived by the teacher-respondents. This is in consonance with the findings of Helm (2013) that acknowledge the fact that transnational providers, by all means, are subject to a variety of provincial and local regulations.

At the institutional level, the Public Information Officer (PIO) may include TNE updates as part of the bulletin's regular entries. The appointed college liaison officer may designate portions of the information board on scholarship undertakings, announcements, and circulars. An interested teacher who wants to avail of any TNE program shall also submit pertinent documents to the Faculty and Staff Development Committee (FSDC) for deliberation like any privileges afforded to the faculty members under the career and staff development program. This is to make sure that classes will not be jeopardized in the process of availing of the said program.

To heighten the teachers' awareness of transnational education, educational institutions need to adopt, if not enhance, the system of information dissemination to include all aspects of relevant circulars and memoranda. Regularity and accessibility are important features to strengthen one's consciousness of any program.

#### 5.4. Teachers' Views on the Implementation of TNE

**Promising TNE**. Getting the teachers' responses provides an idea of what must be done to address the dearth of information on transnational education programs. In so doing, the study's output will be contributing to the aim of CHED, to upgrade the quality of Philippine higher education by introducing TNE programs. When asked about their views on the promulgation and implementation of TNE, most teachers believed that the policies, standards, and guidelines, help them better understand the rationale and purpose of its implementation. Some of the accounts of the respondents are presented below.

"Through the CMO no.2, I am enlightened on the various modes of delivery of TNE should I wish to avail it."

" The CMO guide me on the process in availing the TNE Program."

"TNE, when clearly understood, widens and expands learning opportunities by providing wider choices for the teachers and for everyone who intends to enroll in the program."

" I am conscious about pursuing another post graduate degree. TNE is promising, but I have also to consider many things if I want to avail of it.

" I did not know that CHED is offering a scholarship for those who want to earn a post-graduate certificate in UK."

**Quite Uncertain**. While the majority of the respondents view TNE as promising but there are also factors that they need to consider should they decide to avail one type of delivery mode.

"It must be hard to be away from home. Although I wanted to develop professionally, I need to consider my family and work."

"I will just wait the time when the institution I am working now will be a TNE provider. Maybe then I can enroll. I must be ready by that time."

"I am interested but I am not sure if I can afford the tuition and other expenses. Also, I need to consider what other things do I need to prepare like computer, internet connection, etc. I am not sure if it is within my means."

"With so many areas to attend to, I think it is not yet possible for our institution to provide a TNE program or to send a faculty member to be a scholar who will take up courses offered abroad."

Faculty development programs support an institutions' strategic directions. Encouraging the teachers to avail existing TNE programs and working towards becoming a TNE providers are great leaps towards internationalization and higher level of accreditation. The promising opportunities brought by TNE and all forms of borderless education placed anyone at an advantage especially in this era where technology is regarded as human's special's tool towards advancement and scholarship. Notably, teachers can benefit from completing advanced education courses within and outside the country.

#### 6. Conclusion

Transnational education is concrete, although not fully perceived reality. Teachers' awareness of TNE is shaped by several reasons, such as the institutions' extent of engagement reflected in the steps undertaken to bring more opportunities to increase their global profile. The perceived benefits and challenges are well understood in terms of threats and program management. It is imperative that teachers be made fully aware of this special kind of consortium arrangement between universities involved in the TNE program.

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