



## Revisiting Extension Service Implementation, Modalities, and Challenges in a Private Higher Education Institution in Region 02: Policy Directions for Program Enhancement

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### ABSTRACT

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Community extension services enable Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to translate academic expertise into community-responsive development initiatives. This study investigated the implementation of extension services in a selected Private Higher Education Institution (PHEI) in Region 02, with the end view to determine the programs, extension modalities, and operational challenges. The study utilized a mixed-methods explanatory sequential design using survey data from sixty (60) faculty and staff extensionists and qualitative data from ten (10) Extension Coordinators through key informant interviews. The data analysis used descriptive statistics and methodological triangulation. Results indicated that the extension programs were implemented at an extensive level (OWM=2.76), with dole-out (WM=3.80), literacy campaigns (WM=3.56), and livelihood skills training (WM=3.53) being very extensive. Extension modalities were moderately extensive (OWM=2.28), reflecting a very extensive reliance on traditional approaches such as Adopt-a-barangay (WM=3.56) and Adopt-a-School (WM=3.56). Respondents further agreed that operational challenges in the delivery of extension services (OWM=3.44) were too much academic work (WM=3.98), coverage of too many target groups (WM=3.83), lack of essential teaching and communication equipment (WM=3.78), and lack of training in extension and communication methods (WM=3.76). Based on the results, it is concluded that strengthening policy frameworks, resource allocation, communication and technological integration, and capacity-building initiatives are vital to achieving sustainable, community-driven extension delivery.

### KEYWORDS:

Community extension services; community engagement; extension program implementation; mixed-methods research; sustainable community development.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Extension programs are vital to encourage inclusive growth and sustainable development in less urbanized and geographically isolated communities. They serve as channels for the dissemination of knowledge, skills, and institutional resources to communities that are deprived of educational and developmental opportunities. Core functions of State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) and private Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the Philippines are instruction, research, extension, and production. Thus, higher education institutions extend academic expertise to

provide practical help to people, organizations, and communities.

However, the success of extension initiatives depends on effective communication. Extension work essentially consists of the exchange of information, ideas, and experiences between higher education institutions and partner communities. Communication helps institutions to understand the needs of the community, to encourage participation, to transform academic knowledge into practical applications, and to ensure that the innovations are well understood and adopted by the beneficiaries.

Higher Education Institutions in the Philippines also contribute to the country's development through their programs designed in accordance with the Philippine Development Agenda (PDA) 2020, which advocates intervention policies on socio-economic issues and community development (Corpuz et al., 2022). Aside from instruction and research, HEIs are also expected to

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implement extension programs consistent with their institutional vision and mission to ensure that academic outputs respond to real societal needs.

Extension services are defined as activities that impart knowledge and influence practices and assist target beneficiaries in increasing productivity, institutional capability, and quality of life, as defined by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) (Memorandum Order No. 8, s. 2008). This definition was further improved to emphasize the systematic transfer of technology, innovation, and information that is generated by HEIs and their partners to solve specific problems of development (CHED Memorandum Order No. 52, s. 2016). These policies emphasize extension as an organized and cooperative interaction between academic institutions and communities.

The main aim of extension services is to uplift the marginalized and underserved segments of society (Bidad and Campiseño, 2010). Therefore, the community extension programs should be anchored on the needs, resources, and opportunities identified in the local communities to make them relevant and sustainable.

Recent studies also point to the expansion of extension work beyond traditional outreach activities. Declaro-Ruedas and Dela Cruz (2022) stated that modern extension practice has incorporated various communication styles and learning strategies for community participation. Technology transfer, capacity building, and human resource development are gaining prominence in extension organizations, which are experimenting with diverse organizational models and implementation modalities. Thus, appropriate extension methods and communication are required to maximize program outcomes, satisfy stakeholder expectations, and allow for coordinated implementation.

Torres et al. (2015) of the College of Development Communication (CDC) introduced Community Communication (ComCom) as one of the domains of DevCom that serves as a crucial foundation for CDC's extension programs. According to them, ComCom offers the foundational philosophy, ethics, and methodologies for conducting extension work with partner communities and other stakeholders in development initiatives.

Thus, the study of Rodriguez (2023) on the communication processes of a university extension project in the Cagayan Valley Region highlighted the lived experiences of beneficiaries and the significance of participatory communication in extension work. The results emphasized extension communication as a specialized practice that facilitates empowerment, contextual sensitivity, and sustainable community engagement and questioned traditional top-down extension approaches.

Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) in Region 2 continuously enhances its instruction, research, extension, and production functions to make a significant contribution to the development of society. They encourage active

participation by faculty, staff, and students in sharing expertise, developing partnerships with agencies and industries, and addressing community needs through organized extension programs.

While extension services are becoming more and more relevant, there is little academic research concerning the design, communication, and implementation of extension programs by private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs). This study aimed to fill this gap by examining the modalities of extension and operational challenges experienced by selected PHEIs in the region. The study identified best practices and gaps in implementation through an analysis of stakeholder engagement, resource mobilization, communication processes, and program delivery. Ultimately, the findings are anticipated to foster institutional enhancement and to reinforce PHEI's role in advancing social change and community development.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of the study is to determine how the selected PHEI's extension services are implemented, with respect to extension modalities, and challenges encountered in the delivery of extension services. The results are intended to provide an empirical basis for strengthening institutional practices and addressing emerging concerns related to community extension implementation.

## **II. METHODOLOGY**

This study utilized a mixed-methods research design employing an explanatory sequential approach to examine the implementation practices of extension services among selected Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) in Region 02. The quantitative phase involved survey administration, followed by qualitative Key Informant Interviews (KII) to further explain and validate the results.

Participants consisted of extension coordinators and faculty and staff extensionists engaged in institutional extension activities. Purposive sampling was applied in selecting sixty (60) faculty and staff extensionists, while total enumeration included ten (10) extension coordinators who served as key informants.

Data were gathered using a modified survey questionnaire and interview guide adapted from related studies. The instrument covered socio-demographic profile, extension engagement, programs and activities, extension modalities, and operational challenges. Reliability testing yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.87, indicating high internal consistency.

Quantitative data were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, and weighted mean based on 4-point and 5-point Likert scales, while qualitative responses support methodological triangulation.

Ethical standards were strictly observed, including informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and

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approval from the Institutional Review Ethics Board (IREB Approval Code: 2025-08-119). Findings were reported in aggregated and anonymous form.

### III. RESULTS

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of data gathered in the study concerning the implementation of extension services of a selected Private Higher Education Institution in Region 02, which is organized according to the specific objectives of the study.

**Table 1. Extent of Implementation of Extension Programs, Projects, and Activities**

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. Dole out	3.80	Very Extensive
2. Skills Training	2.24	Moderately Extensive
1.1 Agricultural Production Strategies	1.11	Not Extensive
1.2 Literacy and Educational Campaigns	3.56	Very Extensive
1.3 Livelihood	3.53	Very Extensive
1.4 Disaster Risk Management	1.58	Moderately Extensive
1.5 Food and Nutrition	1.51	Moderately Extensive
1.6 Parenting	2.46	Moderately Extensive
1.7 Healthcare	1.70	Moderately Extensive
3. Community-based Interventions	2.45	Moderately Extensive
3.1 Community Organizing	2.23	Extensive
3.2 Community Research	1.83	Moderately Extensive
3.3 Capacity Building on Community Empowerment	1.71	Moderately Extensive
<b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>	<b>2.76</b>	<b>Extensive</b>

Table 1 presents the extent of implementation of extension programs, projects, and activities with an Overall Weighted Mean of 2.76, which is described as Extensive, indicating that the institution generally carries out a range of extension undertakings. It shows that dole out (WM=3.80), literacy and educational campaigns skills training (WM=3.56), and Livelihood Skills Training (WM=3.53) are Very Extensive. On the other hand, community organizing (WM=2.23) was described as extensive, while Skills training (WM=2.24), specifically parenting (WM=2.46), healthcare (WM=1.70), disaster risk management (WM=1.58), food and nutrition (WM=1.51), and community-based interventions (WM=2.45) like community research (WM=1.83) and

capacity building on community empowerment (WM=1.71) were Moderately Extensive. However, skills training on agricultural production strategies garnered the lowest mean of 1.11 and was described as Not Extensive.

To support the quantitative data, one of the extension coordinators during an interview stated that the majority of the extension programs and activities conducted by their department are more focused on dole-out specifically on

*“The key activities included in our institution’s extension services revolve around community education and empowerment. We regularly conduct literacy enhancement programs, livelihood skills training, and health education seminars in our partner barangays. These projects are usually doled out, especially if our community partner requested it”.* – Extension Coordinator 1

literacy programs, livelihood, and health care.

This is also supported by an extension coordinator who stated that Handog Kapamilya has been a tradition of the institution.

*“It’s already been a tradition that every December, we conduct the Handog Kapamilya. Our task is to give Noche Buena packages to our determined beneficiaries.”* – Extension Coordinator 5

On the literacy and educational campaigns, one of the

*“Our extension activities are centered on education support programs, tutorial services. Since we are from the College of Education, we have a Project titled as BATA-BATUTA, a reading intervention program.”* – Extension Coordinator 6

extension coordinators stated:

These findings also suggest that extension communication is often operationalized through top-down, information-and-aid delivery approaches, which align with earlier modernization-oriented paradigms of development communication that emphasize assistance and diffusion of innovations from institutions to communities (Servaes, 2020). While such interventions address immediate needs, they tend to prioritize relief-oriented outcomes rather than sustained participatory engagement.

**Table 2. Extent of Use of Extension Modalities Employed in the Delivery of Extension Services**

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. Direct Service Delivery (Individual or Home Visits)	3.10	Extensive

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2. Capacity Building and Training	2.83	Extensive
3. Knowledge Dissemination and Technology Transfer	2.15	Moderately Extensive
4. Collaborative Projects	2.26	Moderately Extensive
5. Use of information and communication technologies	2.46	Moderately Extensive
6. Integration of modern and Indigenous knowledge	2.18	Moderately Extensive
7. Adopt-a-barangay	3.56	Very Extensive
8. Adopt-a-school	3.56	Very Extensive
9. Print materials	1.65	Moderately Extensive
<b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>	<b>2.28</b>	<b>Moderately Extensive</b>

Table 2 shows the extent of use of different extension modalities with an overall weighted mean of 2.28, rated as Moderately Extensive. This means that the modalities of extension delivery of the institution are limited in scope and scale. The highest scoring modalities were Adopt-a-Barangay (WM=3.56) and Adopt-a-School (WM=3.56), both rated as Very Extensive, underscoring the great reliance on traditional community-based delivery models. Extensive ratings were given to Direct service delivery (WM=3.10) and Capacity building and training (WM=2.83). However, the use of ICT modalities (WM=2.46), integration of modern and indigenous knowledge (WM=2.18), knowledge dissemination and technology transfer (WM=2.15), collaborative projects (WM=2.26), and print materials (WM=1.65) were rated Moderately Extensive. This suggests that the use of ICT for delivery, knowledge dissemination, and technology transfer remains underutilized.

*“Our department mainly uses the Adopt-a-Barangay as a modality because it is easier and more convenient for us. Instead of conducting one-time outreach activities, we continuously return to the same barangay to implement different extension programs. This makes monitoring easier and strengthens our relationship with the barangay constituents.”*- Extension Coordinator 2

To support the quantitative data in terms of their extension modalities, one Extension Coordinator explained that Adopt-a-Barangay is the most convenient for them.

A similar idea regarding the Adopt-a-School model was shared by an extension coordinator in terms of their extension delivery.

*“Very effective for us is Adopt-a-School because of the nature of our work in our department. Lately, we provide reading interventions, sometimes teacher trainings if requested, and other student support programs. With this, the impact becomes more visible since beneficiaries are consistent.”*- Extension

One of the extension coordinators said that knowledge dissemination and technology transfer are limited.

*“Technology transfer is not easy because not all of us are tech savvy. More on awareness through seminars, rather than bringing in new technologies to partner barangay. Implementation of technology transfer projects is seldom done for reasons of need of sophisticated equipment, technological expertise and continuous follow-up. No access to those resources means no real technology adoptions.”* - Extension Coordinator 4

Likewise, another Extension Coordinator mentioned during the interview that the use of information and communication technologies and print materials is very limited.

*“Sometimes we use ICTs and print materials in our extension initiatives; however, they are not really maximized since our knowledge and skills in using those, especially in extension programs, are very limited.”* - Extension Coordinator 6

From a development communication (DevCom) perspective, this indicates that the institution’s extension delivery system remains largely traditional in approach, with limited diversification of communication channels and participatory modalities necessary for more dynamic and inclusive development engagement (Servaes, 2020).

The Adopt-a-Barangay and School modalities reflect localized, relational, and context-based communication approaches, where sustained presence in communities allows for closer interaction, trust-building, and direct engagement with stakeholders. Such models align with the principles of participatory development communication, which emphasize long-term engagement and relationship-building as foundations for effective extension work (Quebral, 2012).

While direct delivery and capacity-building modalities remain important, DevCom literature emphasizes that effective extension should evolve beyond one-way knowledge dissemination toward interactive and dialogic communication processes, where beneficiaries actively participate in learning and decision-making (Melkote & Steeves, 2015).

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In the context of extension innovation systems, Klerkx, Aarts, and Leeuwis (2012) show that the use of ICT platforms in extension delivery dramatically increases reach, especially in geographically scattered and underserved communities. Klerkx et al. (2012) mention that the continued underuse of ICT and modalities for technology transfer in a time of rapid digital transformation represents a missed opportunity for scalable impact.

**Table 3. Problems Encountered by Extension Professionals in Conducting Extension Services**

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. Lack of complementarity among research and development key players	3.58	Agree
2. Lack of extension workers' competencies	3.58	Agree
3. Lack of an established partnership with MOA/MOU	1.46	Strongly Disagree
4. Insufficient allocation of fund	3.51	Agree
5. Top-down management	3.60	Agree
6. Lack of technology suitable for farmers/ fishers/ women, etc	3.30	Undecided
7. Change in political leadership	3.38	Undecided
8. Lack of training in extension and communication methods	3.76	Agree
9. Lack of adequate transportation to reach clientele	3.46	Agree
10. Lack of essential teaching and communication equipment	3.78	Agree
11. Too many changes in the policy objectives	3.40	Undecided
12. Too much academic work in addition to field work	3.98	Agree
13. Coverage of too many target groups by one agent	3.83	Agree
14. Lack of subject-matter specialists to serve specific problems	3.58	Agree
<b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>	<b>3.44</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Table 3 identifies the rated problems encountered by extension professionals with an overall weighted mean of 3.44, which is in the "Agree" level, indicating that respondents agreed that these problems exist. The problems most urgently agreed upon by the respondents were: too much academic work in addition to fieldwork (WM=3.98), one agent covering too many target groups (WM=3.83), lack of necessary teaching and communication equipment (WM=3.78), and lack of training in extension and communication methods (WM=3.76). There were too many undecided items: changes in policy objectives (WM=3.40),

changes in political leadership (WM=3.38), and a lack of technology suitable for farmers (WM=3.30). The only Strongly Disagree item was the lack of a formal partnership with MOA/MOU (1.46), indicating that formal partnership agreements are not a concern.

To support the data, one of the Extension Coordinators considers the difficulty of balancing academic responsibilities with extension work to be a challenge.

*"Most of the time, our biggest challenge is handling our extension activities while managing our teaching loads and other administrative tasks. When it comes to extension work, it needs preparation, travel, and follow-up activities."*- Extension Coordinator 7

As shared by another coordinator, the academic loads and insufficient funding of extension activities were also a problem.

Regarding training in extension and communication methods, one of the extension coordinators during the interview highlighted that there is a need for professional development.

When asked about frequent policy objective changes, which received an undecided rating, one extension coordinator shared that it depends on institutional priorities and external requirements.

*"Although a state university in the Region conducted capacity training, it is limited, and many of us did not receive formal training in terms of extension methodologies or community facilitation. You know that classroom teaching is different from extension."*- Extension Coordinator 9

*partners, it becomes an additional responsibility for us.*

*"Policy directions sometimes change depending on institutional priorities or external requirements, but we try to adjust. It is not always a major problem, although it can affect continuity of projects."*- Extension Coordinator 10

On the issue of partnerships, an Extension Coordinator clarified:

Effective extension depends heavily on adequate communicative capacity, manageable workloads, and appropriate communication tools that enable meaningful engagement with communities (Melkote & Steeves, 2015). The overlap of academic and field responsibilities suggests a form of role overload, which may limit the ability of extension workers to engage in sustained, dialogic, and

*"Formal partnerships through Memorandum of Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding are not really a problem in our institution. In fact, we have forged strong partnerships with local government units, agencies, and community organizations. These partnerships help facilitate program implementation and add legitimacy to our extension activities."*- Extension Coordinator 5

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participatory communication processes essential for development work.

The result of the problems encountered is in agreement with the findings of Abubakar et al. (2016), who found that extension workers who are saddled with multiple responsibilities have reduced field engagement and lower program effectiveness. Researchers consistently recommend the professionalization of extension as a distinct academic function, not as an adjunct to teaching and research (Rivera & Alex, 2004).

Likewise, Higher Education Institutions and extension practitioners face multiple challenges in implementing extension programs. McCann, Cramer, and Taylor (2015) found that although many researchers value outreach activities, they encounter barriers such as limited institutional support, competing professional demands, and difficulty communicating scientific concepts to non-specialist audiences.

### IV. DISCUSSION

The majority of respondents were aged 28–32 years, predominantly female, and single. Most held a master's degree, followed by baccalaureate degree holders, with a few doctorate degree holders. In terms of specialization, respondents were mainly from Education, Nursing, and Criminology programs, with representation from other academic disciplines such as Hospitality Management, Information Technology, Business Administration, and allied fields.

In terms of engagement in extension services, faculty and administrative staff extensionists were equally represented with thirty (30) each, while coordinators comprised ten (10). Participants performed multiple extension roles, primarily in documentation/reporting, extension leadership, and community liaison functions. Most respondents had 5–7 years of involvement in extension services. Extension programs were largely supported by internal institutional funding, with typical budget allocations ranging from ₱6,000 to ₱10,000. This is consistent with the findings of Mojares (2015) that extension work in HEIs involving faculty and staff in different employment categories is a shared responsibility, highlighting collaboration in the delivery of community service. Constantino and Santos (2024) also stressed that faculty extensionists play multiple roles such as project leaders, coordinators, and implementers, which points to the multi-role nature of extension engagement in Philippine SUCs. Institutional expectations and professional commitment have often sustained faculty participation in extension services over many years (Santiago et al., 2023). In line with Pilar and Utleg (2023), funding and resource findings showed that limited access to external funding is still a major challenge

in extension implementation, resulting in HEIs depending heavily on institutional budgets.

Results revealed that the general extent of implementation of extension programs, projects, and activities was rated Extensive (OWM = 2.76), showing that the institution generally undertakes a variety of extension initiatives. Institutional engagement in community assistance and skills development is evident as programs such as dole-out activities (WM=3.80), literacy and educational campaigns (WM=3.56), and livelihood skills training (WM=3.53) were implemented at a Very Extensive level. According to Lero (2010), many people within higher education institutions perceive extension as relief work and outreach programs provided during an emergency. These assumptions indicate that extension has not yet been integrated into many higher education institutions.

In terms of delivery modalities for the extension, the overall utilization was Moderately Extensive (OWM = 2.28). The institution relied heavily on traditional approaches such as the Adopt-a-Barangay (WM=3.56) and Adopt-a-School (WM=3.56) programs, direct service delivery (WM=3.10), and capacity-building activities (WM=2.83). Declaro-Ruedas and Dela Cruz (2022) point out that contemporary extension practices use multiple communication strategies and learning methodologies to transfer technology and develop human resources.

The study also revealed several operational challenges faced by extension professionals (OWM = 3.44, Agree). The main concerns were: too heavy an academic workload in addition to extension duties (WM=3.98); one agent covering too many target groups (WM=3.83); lack of necessary teaching and communication equipment (WM=3.78); changes in policy objectives (WM=3.40), changes in political leadership (WM=3.38), and lack of technology suitable for farmers (WM=3.30). Operational challenges also affect the implementation of extension programs. According to Rubio et al. (2016), limitations in funding and logistical challenges, such as distance, were identified as significant barriers to program implementation.

### V. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it is concluded that the extension services of the selected Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) are an important mechanism of university–community engagement and knowledge sharing. The participation of faculty and administrative personnel is a sign of the institutional commitment, but the implementation is largely activity-based and not fully development-oriented. There are institutional support structures, but they are hampered by inadequate funding, manpower limitations, inconsistent infrastructure and training support, and partial policy implementation in their effectiveness.

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Findings also indicate weak integration of community needs in program planning and continued reliance on traditional extension modalities with minimum use of technology-enhanced approaches. These gaps show that extension initiatives are not yet fully participatory and sustainable, which limits their long-term developmental impact.

To address these concerns, it is suggested that institutions improve policy implementation, institutionalize workload and reward, and improve resource mobilization through external partnerships. It should also give importance to capacity-building programs and adoption of ICT-based and participatory extension approaches for efficiency, inclusiveness, and sustainability. Future research could further evaluate the long-term impact of extension programs from the community beneficiaries' perspective and discuss best practices in extension governance and innovation.

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The author declares that there are no financial, personal, or professional conflicts of interest that could have influenced the conduct, results, or interpretation of this study.

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