

Addressing Enrollment Challenges: A Study on Registrar's Office Operations in Private Higher Education Institutions in Eastern Pangasinan

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Abstract

This study investigates how Registrar's Offices in private higher education institutions (PHEIs) in Eastern Pangasinan manage enrollment processes and address operational challenges, with the goal of improving administrative efficiency and supporting Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 16 (Effective, Accountable, and Transparent Institutions). Guided by systems theory, the research employed a quantitative descriptive design using a validated survey administered to 15 registrars across the 4th, 5th, and 6th Congressional Districts. The study assessed institutional profiles, levels of practice in student records management, student evaluation, and encoding of student data, as well as challenges related to personnel, tools and systems, and administrative procedures. Results reveal a clear mismatch between institutional size and administrative capacity: most PHEIs are long-established and serve large student populations, yet operate with small registrar teams and rely heavily on hybrid manual-computerized systems. Despite these limitations, all three core enrollment domains scored "Always Practiced," with a grand mean of 3.79, indicating strong procedural compliance and alignment with CHED standards. Challenges were rated only as "Minor" (grand mean = 1.87), but recurring issues such as staff turnover, inadequate personnel, limited training, outdated systems, and incomplete automation affect workflow efficiency and data integrity. The study rejected the hypothesis that encoding is not practiced and contradicted the assumption that administrative procedures pose the greatest challenge; instead, personnel capacity and technological gaps emerged as the primary concerns. The findings demonstrate that while PHEIs in Eastern Pangasinan effectively manage core enrollment functions, they require strategic interventions to modernize systems, strengthen human resources, and fully transition toward integrated digital processes. The study proposes targeted recommendations including staffing reinforcement, continuous professional development, systematic policy alignment, and phased digital transformation to enhance registrar operations, ensure data accuracy, and improve service delivery. These improvements directly contribute to SDG 4 by strengthening institutional support for quality education and to SDG 16 by promoting efficient, transparent, and technology-enabled academic administration.

Keywords: Eastern Pangasinan; Enrollment Process; Private Higher Education Institutions; Registrar's Office; SDG 4 (Quality Education); SDG 16; Student Records Management; Systems Theory

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Education plays a vital role in individual and societal development by equipping learners with essential knowledge and skills for personal and professional advancement (Joaquin et al., 2020). Higher education institutions support this development by serving as gateways through which students access programs aligned with their academic and career aspirations (Tatlah, 2011). Within these institutions, the Registrar's Office is central to ensuring efficient and accurate enrollment processes, particularly in private higher education institutions (PHEIs) where operational challenges are increasingly complex (Hamzah, 2020). Enrollment procedures ranging from application processing, credential evaluation, advising, and fee assessment to data encoding and issuance of registration credentials have grown more intricate with the shift toward online systems and integrated student information platforms. Despite technological advances, many institutions struggle with outdated infrastructure, limited staff training, weak inter-department coordination, and heightened demands related to data privacy and regulatory compliance. In the Philippines, numerous PHEIs continue to rely on hybrid manual-automated systems, resulting in issues related to data accuracy, accessibility, and staff productivity. In this regard, strengthening registrar operations directly supports the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education) by promoting equitable, efficient access to higher education and SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) through the advancement of digital and institutional systems in the education sector.

1.2 Global and National Enrollment Challenges

On a global scale, universities face challenges in managing large volumes of data, integrating systems, and adopting data-driven strategies to improve student recruitment and retention (Wiley, 2022; EDUCAUSE Review, 2022; PwC, 2023). High turnover in admissions offices impacts continuity and efficiency (Wiley, 2022), while the use of advanced technologies such as CRM systems and analytics tools is often hindered by the need for substantial resources and training (EDUCAUSE Review, 2022; PwC, 2023). In the Philippine setting, disparities in institutional resources, equity issues, bureaucratic inconsistencies, and uneven technological adoption affect enrollment efficiency (PwC, 2023). These challenges are especially visible in regions such as Eastern Pangasinan, where PHEIs experience long processing times, inefficient workflows, personnel shortages, and inadequate technological infrastructure (Jobe & Lenio, 2014; Hamzah, 2020).

1.3 Purpose of the Study and Theoretical Framework

Given this context, the present study assessed the enrollment challenges faced by PHEIs in Eastern Pangasinan by examining their institutional profiles, existing enrollment practices, and operational constraints. It further explored strategies to improve registrar operations, enhance efficiency, ensure regulatory compliance, and guide future research. The study is grounded in systems theory, which views organizations as open systems that rely on continuous interaction with their environment to survive and remain effective (Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 2006; Santos & Santos 2025). Through this lens, the study examined the inputs, processes, outputs, and feedback loops that define the enrollment system of PHEIs. Insights gained from this approach contribute to a deeper understanding of how registrar operations can be optimized, particularly in resource-limited academic environments such as Eastern Pangasinan, while also aligning institutional reforms with global development priorities under SDG 4 and SDG 9.

1.4 Role of the Registrar's Office in Higher Education

Globally, the Registrar's Office serves as a critical administrative hub responsible for student records management, registration, graduation processing, and policy compliance, all while ensuring data integrity and navigating increasingly digital and regulated environments (AACRAO, 2021). Its key functions record management, scheduling, graduation services, and academic policy oversight depend on effective technology integration, interdepartmental collaboration, data analytics, and ethical information handling. The modern registrar's role has evolved into a strategic function supporting competency-based digital credentials that provide employers with detailed insights into student learning outcomes (Inside Higher Ed, 2019). Institutions worldwide continue to face challenges such as integrating disparate technologies, ensuring privacy protections, and shifting toward a more student-centered service model.

1.5 Philippine Regulatory and Operational Context

In the Philippines, registrar operations are governed by CHED regulations, MORPHE standards, and the Data Privacy Act of 2012, requiring HEIs to systematically manage student records from creation and classification through maintenance, retention, and disposal (CHED, 2013; CHED, 2021; National Privacy Commission, 2016). Although web-enabled services improve access to information, many provincial HEIs still depend on hybrid paper-digital systems that slow down data retrieval and introduce duplication risks (Joy, 2018). Student evaluation follows structured procedures that ensure fairness and transparency, including grading policies, validation checks, publication of grades, and appeals (CHED, 2013; Joaquin, Biana, & Dacela, 2020; Ortega 2025). During the COVID-19 pandemic, institutions rapidly adopted LMS platforms and digital workflows, revealing both improvements in accessibility and challenges in verification and data integrity (Joaquin et al., 2020). Encoding of student data into SIS platforms continues to vary widely across institutions. While some HEIs use automated systems, others particularly in rural areas still rely on spreadsheets and small databases, increasing the likelihood of errors and delays (CHED, 2021; National Privacy Commission, 2016; Joy, 2018; Joaquin et al., 2020). Urban HEIs in Metro Manila and Central Luzon have achieved fully automated systems, but many PHEIs in Eastern Pangasinan still use hybrid systems, highlighting gaps in digital infrastructure and resource allocation (CHED, 2021; TCU Registrar's Office, 2024). Despite these challenges, the resilience of regional institutions demonstrates adaptability in managing enrollment operations with limited resources.

1.6 Empirical Evidence and Research Gap

Foreign research supports the benefits of automation, demonstrating how automated record-keeping systems enhance efficiency, accuracy, retrieval speed, and organizational productivity (Abuzawayda et al., 2012). The Kenyan model proposed by Metto, Kinuthia, and Miriam emphasizes the importance of accuracy, privacy, retrieval efficiency, and technological integration in student records management. Iwhiwhu (2005) highlights the adverse impact of inadequate records management in Nigerian universities, offering a cautionary perspective for institutions with weak systems. The Malaysian study by Abuzawayda, Yusof, and Aziz further demonstrates the advantages of automated records retention schedules for improving compliance, operational continuity, and institutional efficiency. Local studies reinforce these themes. Garcia (2024) found that strong digital infrastructure, staff learning, policy clarity, and resource allocation significantly improve registrar services in course registration and graduation certification. Joy (2018) emphasized the role of institutional websites in facilitating enrollment, while Joaquin, Biana, and Dacela (2020) showed how HEIs adapted

using digital tools during the pandemic. More broadly, local scholarship calls for increased technological adoption, staff capacity-building, and policy modernization in regional HEIs. The literature underscores the importance of systematic records management, transparent evaluation practices, accurate data encoding, and digital integration. However, a research gap exists: no prior study has specifically examined enrollment and registrar-office challenges in private higher education institutions in Eastern Pangasinan. Furthermore, the literature does not address how automated retention schedules, CHED-aligned systems, and customized technology models can improve operations in resource-limited regional institutions. This study addresses that gap by applying systems theory to analyze local enrollment processes and develop targeted, technology-driven, privacy-conscious strategies to strengthen registrar operations in PHEIs across Eastern Pangasinan.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research method to obtain comprehensive data on enrollment challenges and the operational procedures of Registrar's Offices in private higher education institutions (PHEIs) in Eastern Pangasinan. Quantitative data were gathered through structured surveys administered to key stakeholders including registrars, faculty members, administrators, and students. The survey instruments were designed to measure essential components of enrollment operations, such as student records management, evaluation processes, and the encoding of student data. Statistical analysis was applied to determine the level of practice in these areas and to identify trends, patterns, or significant correlations.

2.2 Sources of Data

Primary data were collected directly from respondents who completed the survey questionnaires, while secondary data were sourced from books, academic articles, CHED Memorandum Orders, and online resources. A total of 15 registrars from private colleges and universities across the 4th, 5th, and 6th Congressional Districts of Pangasinan participated in the study, with eight coming from District IV, two from District V, and five from District VI. These respondents provided the foundational perspectives needed to understand institutional operations and enrollment practices.

2.3 Instrument Development and Validation

To ensure the accuracy and suitability of the research instrument, the study followed a systematic development and validation process. The questionnaire consisted of two sections: demographic information and items focusing on registrar operations and enrollment processes. Closed-ended items using a Likert scale allowed the researcher to quantify perceptions and operational practices. Expert validation was conducted by a registrar from a public college in Urdaneta City with more than fifteen years of professional experience. Using an expert assessment checklist rating items from "Not Valid" to "Very Highly Valid," the validator determined that the instrument was "Very Highly Valid," offering only minor suggestions that the researcher subsequently incorporated.

2.4 Reliability Testing

After content validation, reliability testing was conducted to ensure internal consistency. The revised questionnaire was pilot-tested with ten registrars from PHEIs outside the study area. Using Cronbach's alpha, the instrument achieved a reliability coefficient of 0.86, which is considered "Good" and acceptable for full deployment. Semi-structured interview guides were likewise prepared to supplement quantitative data with deeper narrative insights. These guides underwent expert review and refinement to ensure they were aligned with the study's objectives and capable of eliciting meaningful responses regarding the experiences of registrar personnel.

2.5 Data Collection Procedures

The administration of the research instruments adhered to ethical and systematic procedures. Participants were invited through direct communication, electronic correspondence, and institutional announcements. Before participating, respondents were informed about the study's objectives, procedures, potential risks, confidentiality measures, and their rights as voluntary participants. Informed consent was secured from all registrars and stakeholders involved. Surveys were distributed both physically and digitally. Interviews were conducted in person or remotely, depending on participants' availability. The researcher also obtained permission to distribute surveys and conduct interviews during the Association of HEI Registrars in Region 1 Mid-Year Conference held on May 30–31, 2024, at Selah Vie Resort Hotel, San Ildefonso, Ilocos Sur. Throughout the process, the researcher remained available to clarify questions, ensured accurate transcription of responses, and stored all collected data securely to maintain confidentiality.

2.6 Quality Assurance

Quality assurance procedures were implemented throughout the data collection phase. These included periodic checks on the completeness and accuracy of responses, efforts to minimize researcher and respondent bias, and strict adherence to ethical standards governing research involving human participants. These measures collectively ensured that the data gathered were reliable, valid, and trustworthy, reinforcing the integrity of the study's findings.

2.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis involved the use of frequency and percentage distributions to answer questions related to institutional profiles and the challenges experienced by Registrar's Offices. To determine the level of practice for enrollment processes, weighted mean scores were computed using a standard interpretation scale. Scores from 3.25 to 4.00 were interpreted as "Always Practiced," 2.50 to 3.24 as "Sometimes Practiced," 1.75 to 2.49 as "Seldom Practiced," and 1.00 to 1.74 as "Not Practiced." These analytic procedures provided a clear understanding of the operational efficiency of Registrar's Offices across the surveyed institutions and contributed to the comprehensive interpretation of the study's findings.

3. Results and discussion

3.1 Institutional Profile of PHEIs and Registrar's Offices

The results show that a large majority of the participating private higher education institutions (PHEIs) in Eastern Pangasinan are long-established: 73.33% have been in existence for more than 20 years, while only 13.33% have operated for less than 5 years and 6.67% each for 5–10 and 11–20 years. Most institutions also serve sizeable student populations, with 60.00% enrolling more than 2,000 students and only 26.67% reporting fewer than 500 students. In terms of academic breadth, 33.33% offer more than 15 programs and 26.67% offer 11–15 programs, while 40.00% offer between 1–10 programs. Registrar's Offices, however, are relatively lean: 40.00% of institutions have only 1–3 registrar personnel, 20.00% have 4–6, 13.33% have 7–10, and 26.67% have more than 10 staff. Regarding systems, 60.00% of PHEIs reported using hybrid (manual and computerized) systems, 53.33% use computerized systems, and 26.67% still rely entirely on manual processes. These figures indicate a structural imbalance between institutional maturity, student volume, and administrative capacity. Long-standing institutions with large enrollments but small registrar teams are likely to experience workload pressure, especially during peak enrollment. The dominance of hybrid systems confirms earlier literature which notes that many provincial HEIs still combine paper and electronic records, leading to risks in duplication, retrieval delays, and version control (Joy, 2018; CHED, 2021). The coexistence of manual, computerized, and hybrid systems also reflects broader national and global trends where digital transformation is uneven and resource-dependent (UNESCO, 2021). While the presence of computerized and hybrid systems suggests movement toward modernization, the continued reliance on manual processes underscores the need for targeted investments in infrastructure, staff training, and system integration, consistent with calls for improved higher education information systems and enrollment management efficiency (Marcel, 2019; Esquivel & Esquivel, 2021).

3.2 Level of Practice in Enrollment Processes

3.2.1 Student Records Management

Quantitative results reveal a very high level of practice in student records management, with an overall weighted mean of 3.83 interpreted as "Always Practiced." All ten indicators fall within this range. The highest mean (4.00) is for "Records are securely stored." Several indicators share a mean of 3.93, including regular updating of student records, proper use of modern systems and facilities, proper filing for fast retrieval, and the assignment of a specific employee as records manager. "Accurate student information is maintained" has a mean of 3.87, while pleasant working conditions and adequate training for records personnel each have a mean of 3.80. "Files are never lost" has a mean of 3.67, and "Records are automated" has the lowest but still high mean of 3.40, all within the "Always Practiced" category. These findings suggest that PHEIs in Eastern Pangasinan have institutionalized sound records management practices that align with both CHED expectations and international records management standards, such as ISO 15489, which emphasize integrity, confidentiality, accessibility, and retention of records (Smallwood, 2013; Ngulube, 2011). The high rating for secure storage and accurate, updated information reflects strong compliance with data governance principles and supports the notion that systematic record-keeping reduces operational inefficiencies and safeguards institutional memory (Alegbeleye, 2010). The presence of designated records personnel and reasonably automated systems points to progress in professionalizing registrar operations and transitioning from purely manual to more digital workflows, consistent with broader movements toward electronic records management in higher education (Smallwood, 2013; Ngulube, 2011). However, the relatively lower mean for automation (3.40) indicates that full digital integration has not yet been achieved, echoing concerns that many HEIs, particularly in developing contexts, remain in a transitional phase between paper-based and fully electronic systems (Alegbeleye, 2010).

3.2.2 Student Evaluation

The level of practice in student evaluation is likewise high, with an overall weighted mean of 3.81, also interpreted as "Always Practiced." The results show that "Permanent records of students are updated regularly" and "Evaluation results are communicated promptly" both share the highest mean of 3.87. Indicators such as the presence of an evaluation officer, clearly defined evaluation processes, and coordination between Academic Deans and the Evaluation Officer each have a mean of 3.80. "Student evaluations are conducted consistently" has the lowest mean at 3.73, but this still falls within the "Always Practiced" range, indicating uniformity in implementation. These results demonstrate that PHEIs in Eastern Pangasinan maintain structured, reliable evaluation processes that support academic transparency and student progression. The high scores for timely communication of results and updated permanent records are consistent with CHED

Memorandum Order No. 9, s. 2013, which stresses timely reporting and accurate documentation of student performance. The presence of an evaluation officer and strong coordination between deans and the registrar aligns with literature emphasizing that collaborative structures are essential in academic management and quality assurance (Smallwood, 2004; Brennan & Shah, 2000). The consistency of evaluation practices suggests that despite system and resource constraints, institutions are able to uphold standards of fairness and accountability, reinforcing the broader observation that registrar offices serve as key stewards of academic integrity and student progression decisions (CHED Memorandum Order No. 9, s. 2013; Smallwood, 2004; Brennan & Shah, 2000).

3.2.3 Encoding of Student Data

For encoding of student data, all indicators again fall within the “Always Practiced” range, with an overall weighted mean of 3.72. The highest mean (4.00) is for “The registrar has access to the encoded data of students,” reflecting direct registrar oversight of digital records. “Encoding systems are user-friendly” has a mean of 3.87, while both “The college has a data encoder to create and manage student data” and “Data is checked for accuracy after encoding” have means of 3.67. “The college has an automated system of student data that begins from enrollment to graduation” has a mean of 3.60, and “Data encoding is completed without delays” has a mean of 3.53. These findings indicate that PHEIs have established clear encoding workflows, with dedicated personnel, user-friendly systems, and built-in checks for accuracy. The strong access of registrars to encoded data aligns with the literature that identifies registrars as central custodians of academic information, responsible for ensuring data integrity and appropriate system use (Smallwood, 2004). The presence of encoders and verification mechanisms supports recommendations for double-entry checks, supervisory review, and validation rules to reduce human error (Gulliford & Eccles, 2019; CHED, 2013). The relatively high rating for automated systems from enrollment to graduation mirrors global trends toward integrated student information systems, which are associated with improved productivity, real-time access, and better reporting (Sembiring, 2015). Meanwhile, the positive rating for timeliness (“Data encoding is completed without delays”) suggests that most institutions effectively manage peak periods such as enrollment and grade encoding, despite earlier findings that hybrid systems and limited infrastructure can create bottlenecks (Gulliford & Eccles, 2019; CHED, 2013).

3.3 Challenges Experienced by the Registrar’s Office

3.3.1 Personnel and Staff

The results show that personnel-related issues are generally perceived as “Minor Challenges,” with an average weighted mean of 2.09. The highest mean (2.40) is for “There is high turnover rate of office staff every year,” followed by “The Registrar’s office has inadequate number of personnel” with a mean of 2.33. “The Registrar’s office has no clear job description for its personnel” has a mean of 2.07, and “The Registrar’s office personnel does not have trainings related to their work” has a mean of 1.93. Only “The Registrar’s qualifications does not meet CHED’s requirements” falls under “Not a Challenge,” with a mean of 1.73. These results suggest that while personnel issues are not crippling, they do affect operational efficiency. High staff turnover and inadequate staffing contribute to instability and increased workload, which literature associates with reduced organizational performance and weakened service continuity (Patterson et al., 2012). The absence of clear job descriptions and limited training opportunities resonate with findings that role ambiguity and insufficient capacity-building undermine accountability and hinder the effective use of information systems (Guilliford & Eccles, 2019; Smallwood, 2004). However, the fact that registrars generally meet CHED’s qualification requirements indicates that institutions comply with regulatory expectations regarding academic and administrative credentials (CHED, 2013). Overall, these results highlight the need for improved human resource strategies such as clearer role definitions, retention mechanisms, and continuous professional development to sustain and enhance registrar operations (Patterson et al., 2012; Guilliford & Eccles, 2019; Smallwood, 2004; CHED, 2013).

3.3.2 Tools and Systems

In terms of tools and systems, the overall average weighted mean is 1.64, interpreted as “Not a Challenge.” Among the specific indicators, only “There is lack of coordination between the Registrar and the Academic Heads relating to student evaluation” reaches the “Minor Challenge” range with a mean of 1.87. “The Registrar’s office is too crowded” has a mean of 1.73, “Policies governing the Registrar’s office are not consistent and keeps changing” and “The Registrar’s office lacks administrative funding support for its operations such as office supplies etc.” each have a mean of 1.60, and “The location of the Registrar’s office operation is not clear in the institutional organizational chart” has the lowest mean of 1.40, all interpreted as “Not a Challenge.” These results indicate that, overall, tools, systems, and organizational placement are not major barriers to registrar operations in the surveyed PHEIs. The minor concern regarding coordination with academic heads on student evaluation suggests a need to strengthen communication and shared decision-making structures, which are widely recognized as critical to effective academic governance (Kezar & Holcombe, 2018). The relatively low ratings for issues such as crowded offices, inconsistent policies, and lack of funding support imply that these institutions have achieved a baseline of administrative stability, clear policy frameworks, and sufficient resource provision to sustain daily operations. This relative stability aligns with literature emphasizing that once core structures are in place, institutions can focus on refining interdepartmental collaboration and strategic use of systems rather than addressing basic deficits (Kezar & Holcombe, 2018).

3.3.3 Administrative Procedures and Institutional Regulations

For administrative procedures and institutional regulations, the overall average weighted mean is 1.88, interpreted as a “Minor Challenge.” The most pressing issue is “The Registrar’s office has no automated system of enrolment,” with a mean of 2.20. This is followed by “The Registrar’s office runs on outdated computer systems” ($M = 2.00$), “Students’ records are not stored in an automated system” ($M = 1.87$), and “Office equipment are inadequate” ($M = 1.80$), all categorized as “Minor Challenges.” “Internet services are insufficient” ($M = 1.73$) and “The Registrar’s office has no records office for storage of student records” ($M = 1.67$) are rated as “Not a Challenge.” These findings highlight that the primary administrative concern is the incomplete automation of enrollment and records systems. The absence of a fully automated enrollment system and reliance on outdated computers and non-automated record storage confirm the transitional nature of many PHEIs, which continue to shift gradually from manual to digital operations (Raju, 2014; Laudon & Laudon, 2021). While basic infrastructure such as internet connectivity and storage space is generally adequate, limitations in automation and modern equipment impede the full realization of efficient, data-driven enrollment workflows. This situation mirrors broader global and national trends where educational institutions strive to digitalize processes but face constraints in funding, technical capacity, and change management (UNESCO, 2021). The results therefore reinforce calls for strategic investment in information systems, hardware, and training to support sustainable digital transformation in registrar operations (Raju, 2014; Laudon & Laudon, 2021; UNESCO, 2021).

3.4 Overall Level of Practice and Overall Challenges

When the three core domains of enrollment practice student records management, student evaluation, and encoding of student data are considered together, the grand mean is 3.79, interpreted as “Always Practiced.” Student Records Management ($M = 3.83$), Student Evaluation ($M = 3.81$), and Encoding of Student Data ($M = 3.72$) all fall within the highest descriptive category, indicating consistently high implementation of standard procedures. In contrast, the summary of challenges reveals that Personnel/Staff ($M = 2.09$) and Tools and Systems ($M = 1.64$) are considered “Minor Challenges,” while Administrative Procedures/Institutional Regulations ($M = 1.88$) is also generally perceived as a minor rather than moderate or major challenge. The overall grand mean for challenges is 1.87, confirming that no area reaches the level of “Moderate Challenge” or “Major Challenge.” These combined results suggest that registrar offices in PHEIs in Eastern Pangasinan are functioning effectively and are largely compliant with institutional and regulatory standards, particularly those set by CHED for records management, evaluation, and enrollment processes (CHED, 2013; CHED, 2021). High practice scores across all domains corroborate the view that registrar offices are capable of maintaining accurate records, conducting transparent evaluations, and managing data encoding reliably, despite variations in institutional size and resources. At the same time, the presence of minor but persistent challenges especially in staffing, system modernization, and automation echoes broader findings in the literature that highlight ongoing needs for digital transformation, improved governance, and strengthened human resource development in higher education (Smallwood, 2013; Ngulube, 2011; UNESCO, 2021). Addressing these challenges through targeted investments and capacity-building initiatives can further enhance service quality, ensure sustainability of registrar operations, and support the long-term effectiveness of PHEIs in Eastern Pangasinan.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concludes that most PHEIs in Eastern Pangasinan are long-established institutions serving large student populations, yet their registrar offices often operate with limited staff and rely on hybrid manual–computerized systems, showing a gap between institutional growth and administrative capacity. Enrollment processes including student records management, evaluation, and data encoding are consistently well-practiced and compliant with CHED standards. Although the challenges identified were only minor, issues such as staffing shortages, outdated systems, and inconsistent policies highlight the need for improved capacity, upgraded technology, and better policy coordination. The first hypothesis was rejected, as encoding is widely practiced, while the second was contradicted since administrative procedures were not the most problematic area. Overall, registrar offices are functioning effectively, but modernization, staffing enhancement, and stronger governance are necessary to sustain and improve operations.

To strengthen registrar operations in PHEIs, institutions should increase registrar staffing or reassign support where needed and consider partnerships or consortia to expand academic offerings. Schools still dependent on manual processes should transition to integrated Student Information Systems compliant with CHED and data privacy laws. Clear and digitized records management policies should be implemented, evaluation procedures standardized, and data encoding systems regularly updated and audited, with encoders receiving proper training. To address existing challenges, institutions must invest in staff development, upgrade outdated equipment, improve internet connectivity, and ensure adequate office resources. Strengthening internal policies and enhancing coordination between registrars and academic heads will also help ensure smoother implementation of institutional regulations. More broadly, institutions are encouraged to pursue partnerships with CHED and local agencies, adopt a phased digital transformation plan, establish continuous feedback mechanisms from stakeholders, and conduct routine internal audits to ensure compliance with institutional, CHED, and data privacy standards. These measures will support long-term efficiency, accountability, and improved service delivery.

in registrar operations.

Compliance with ethical standards

The authors affirm that this research complies with all institutional, academic, and ethical standards for studies involving human participants. No experimental procedures on animals or humans were conducted. All protocols followed ethical principles for educational research, including voluntary participation, confidentiality, and responsible data handling.

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Conflict of interest statement

The authors declare no financial or personal conflicts of interest related to this study or its publication. No institution, organization, or individual influenced the study's design, data collection, analysis, or interpretation.

Statement of ethical approval

This study involved only survey-based data collection with institutional permission and posed no physical or psychological risk to participants. Therefore, separate ethical board approval was not required, but all ethical guidelines for social science and educational research were followed.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all registrars and respondents. Participants were briefed on the study's purpose, procedures, confidentiality measures, voluntary participation, and their right to withdraw at any time. No identifying information was included in the reported results.

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