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Between Local Relevance and Global Visibility: A Bibliometric and Content Analysis of Faculty Publications at a Philippine State University

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Research Article

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Abstract

Mapping the publication output of regional state universities in the Global South reveals structural conditions of knowledge production that aggregate statistics conceal. This study presents a systematic bibliometric and content analysis of 154 unique faculty publications from Mariano Marcos State University (MMSU), a chartered state university in Northern Philippines, covering 2018 to 2025. Drawing on four independently compiled extraction datasets coded across 34 variables, the analysis examined publication trends, authorship configurations, disciplinary distribution, research paradigms, methodological approaches and designs, data collection and analysis methods, theoretical framework adoption, funding acknowledgment, local or regional relevance, and research implications. Output volume rose sharply from 2021 onward, peaking in 2023 (n = 36) and sustaining activity through 2025 (n = 26). Journal articles constituted 96.1% of the corpus. Education (general) dominated at 48.7%, and quantitative approaches were most frequent (43.5%). Collaborative (2–3 author) publications represented 50.0%, with a mean authorship of 3.09. Three findings warrant particular analytical attention: only 29.2% of publications cited a theoretical or conceptual framework; only 1.3% acknowledged external funding; and 77.3% reported practical implications only. These patterns are interpreted through the lens of peripheral knowledge production theory, institutional research ecology, and the structural constraints operating on Philippine regional state universities. The findings provide an empirical baseline for research governance and faculty development in Philippine SUCs and in comparable institutions across the Global South.

1. Introduction

A university's publication record is, in one sense, the legible trace of its intellectual life: the accumulated decisions its faculty have made about what problems to investigate, which methods to trust, which theoretical traditions to draw upon, and which audiences to address. In practice, the publication profiles of most universities in the Global South remain undocumented, analyzed only in aggregate through national bibliometric databases that systematically undercount locally published output and overrepresent institutions with established international visibility (Altbach, 2004; UNESCO & ISSC, 2010). For regional state universities in developing countries, this invisibility is not merely a measurement problem; it is an accountability problem, a governance problem, and a research development problem.

In the Philippines, research is formally mandated for state universities and colleges (SUCs) under Republic Act No. 7722 (Republic of the Philippines, 1994), which charges the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) with promoting and supporting research and development, and under Republic Act No. 8292 (Republic of the Philippines, 1997), which aligns SUC governance with national development priorities. These legislative frameworks establish research as a core institutional function, yet they do not prescribe the methodological depth, theoretical orientation, or international reach of the research that SUCs are expected to produce. The result is a policy environment that counts publications without systematically examining what those publications contain, how they are constructed, or what intellectual traditions they inhabit.

The consequences of this documentation gap are practical. Research managers cannot allocate faculty development resources rationally without knowing the methodological and thematic profile of existing output. Institutional research leaders cannot position their universities within national or regional scholarship without a systematic characterization of disciplinary strengths and gaps. CHED and other national bodies cannot design evidence-based research capacity programs without knowing where theoretical depth, methodological diversity, and international orientation are weakest. The absence of granular institutional publication analysis in Philippine SUCs is thus a structural gap in the evidence base for higher education research governance (Gopez et al., 2024; Malaga, 2025; Quimbo & Sulabo, 2014).

Mariano Marcos State University (MMSU) is a chartered state university in Batac City, Ilocos Norte, Northern Philippines. As the sole comprehensive state university in its province, MMSU serves a predominantly agricultural and coastal region. Its faculty spans teacher education, liberal arts, science and technology, agriculture, engineering, and health sciences. Despite institutional prominence in the region, the actual profile of its faculty's publication output has not been subjected to systematic bibliometric or content analysis in peer-reviewed literature. This absence makes MMSU an instructive case: its structural conditions — regional location, SUC governance, limited external funding, locally oriented mandates, and faculty teaching loads that compete with research time — are shared by dozens of similar institutions across the Philippines and by hundreds of regional state universities across the Global South (Elechicon & Paris, 2026; Vecaldo et al., 2019).

The present study is motivated by the recognition that examining one well-documented institution in depth can produce insights with broader applicability, provided the analysis moves beyond description toward interpretation and provided the institutional case is situated within the theoretical and empirical landscape of higher education research. Systematic bibliometric analysis of a single institution's output is a recognized method for generating evidence about research culture, disciplinary tendencies, methodological orientations, and collaborative structures that aggregate national studies cannot capture (Tabuzo et al., 2025; Gopez et al., 2025; Bernardo, 2011). When that analysis is combined with content analysis of the substance of publications — their theoretical frameworks, research implications, gap framing, and thematic priorities — the result is a richer account of what a university's scholarly culture actually produces and what it still needs to develop.

This study therefore conducts a combined bibliometric and content analysis of 154 unique faculty publications from MMSU spanning 2018 to 2025. It addresses four research objectives: (1) to describe the bibliographic profile of MMSU faculty publications, including temporal output trends, publication types, journal outlet distribution, authorship configurations, and language of publication; (2) to characterize the methodological profile, including research paradigms, approaches, designs, and data collection and analysis methods; (3) to analyze the content and thematic profile, including disciplinary distribution, theoretical framework adoption, and thematic clusters; and (4) to examine scholarly discourse indicators, including local or regional relevance framing, funding acknowledgment, research implications type, gap identification, and future research directions. The study does not analyze citation impact or indexing status, as these data were not uniformly available across the corpus.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 Bibliometrics as an Institutional Diagnostic Tool

Bibliometrics, a term codified by Pritchard (1969) and theoretically refined by Broadus (1987, p. 373) as "the study of the quantitative aspects of the production, dissemination, and use of recorded information," has expanded from library science origins into a primary instrument of research evaluation. Donthu et al. (2021, p. 285) describe bibliometric analysis as enabling researchers to "unpack the evolutionary nuances of a specific field" and to understand its current state and future directions, making it applicable to institutional research profiling. Zupic and Cater (2015, p. 430) argue that bibliometric methods "introduce a measure of objectivity into the evaluation of scientific literature and hold the potential to increase rigor and mitigate researcher bias." The most widely applied bibliometric laws provide a structural vocabulary for interpreting publication distributions: Bradford's Law predicts that a small number of core journals will account for a disproportionate share of any field's literature (Mayr, 2013); Lotka's Law predicts an inverse-square relationship between authors and productivity, such that a small fraction of contributors generates most output (Mondal & Raychoudhury, 2018).

For institutional corpora where publications are concentrated in locally indexed or unindexed journals — as is the case in most Philippine regional SUCs — citation-based bibliometrics are limited. Publication-profile bibliometrics, which examines document characteristics rather than citation impact, is more appropriate. Krippendorff (2004, p. xiv) describes content analysis as a method that "takes meanings seriously" and is both "powerful and unobtrusive," making sense of what is mediated between people through textual matter without perturbing its producers. Neuendorf (2002) operationalizes content analysis as requiring systematic, objective, and replicable procedures applied to all message characteristics. The combined bibliometric and content analysis design adopted in this study follows Grant and Booth's (2009) characterization of systematic mapping: a structured examination of a defined corpus that describes its characteristics and identifies patterns and gaps.

2.2 Research Productivity in Philippine and Southeast Asian Higher Education

Gopez et al. (2024) analyzed Philippine HEI research productivity profiles using Scopus data, finding that the National Capital Region dominates publication volume and that intra-institutional collaboration is the strongest predictor of increased output. Their finding that only the proportion of papers in top-10% journals is a statistically significant predictor of citation impact (beta = 0.194, p = 0.003) establishes journal quality, not volume, as the key determinant of scholarly visibility. Gopez et al. (2025) confirmed that within a mission-driven institutional network, the overwhelming majority of indexed output originates from a small minority of member institutions, affirming that concentration of research productivity is a structural feature of Philippine higher education.

Malaga (2025, p. 1631) found empirically that "the level of research productivity of HEIs' faculty is extremely far below the acceptable margin" and identified inadequate academic preparation, near-absent

logistical and funding support, and insufficient research training as the proximate causes. Quimbo and Sulabo (2014) documented how institutional policies and incentive structures in Philippine HEIs shape output patterns, finding that faculty in institutions with structured research programs produce measurably more output than those without such structures. Elechicon and Paris (2026) showed that research is consistently subordinated to teaching demands in Philippine SUCs, a structural constraint on productivity that bibliometric profiles will inevitably reflect. Vecaldo et al. (2019) captured the lived dimension of this constraint: Philippine education faculty-researchers experience publishing as characterized by limited resource access, unfamiliarity with international publication processes, and institutional pressure without commensurate support.

In the broader Southeast Asian context, Wu et al. (2026) demonstrated that publication volume and citation impact diverge sharply by country and that policy alignment partially explains this divergence. Xiao (2025) found increasing methodological diversification but persistent thematic concentration in a limited number of clusters. Suwanmanee and Mongkolhutthi (2025) demonstrated that bibliometric analysis of faculty publication corpora reliably tracks evolving scholarly priorities, a rationale directly applicable to longitudinal analysis of an institution's emerging output.

2.3 Research Paradigms, Methodological Profiles, and Theoretical Engagement

Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 107) established that "questions of method are secondary to questions of paradigm," situating epistemological commitment as the primary determinant of research design and providing the theoretical architecture within which methodological distributions in a publication corpus can be read as indicators of deeper epistemological orientations. Eusafzai (2014) and Mustofa (2023) document the persistence of positivist objectivism in Asian institutional research frameworks, arguing that it reflects not only disciplinary convention but also institutional prestige hierarchies that reward quantifiable outcomes. Creswell and Creswell (2018) provide the classification framework for quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods approaches applied here, while Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) ground mixed methods in pragmatic inquiry logic.

Imenda (2014, p. 186) argues that a theoretical framework "is essentially derived from one or more theories" and that its absence signals that the study "lacks an anchoring explanatory structure." Biesta (2007, p. 1) critiques the reduction of educational research to the question of "what works," arguing that purely applied orientations systematically exclude questions of value, equity, and democratic deliberation. Bernardo (2011) provided the foundational disciplinary critique of Philippine education research, documenting systematic preference for descriptive survey designs and the absence of experimental, longitudinal, and review-based work necessary for the field to generate cumulative knowledge.

2.4 Knowledge Production at the Periphery

Altbach (2004, p. 5) argues that universities in the developing world operate in "an unequal environment, a global knowledge system that is dominated by a small number of powerful universities, journals, and publishers located mainly in North America and Western Europe." Arnado (2023) applied Bourdieu's field theory to analyze how structured inequalities in the academic publishing field reproduce hierarchies of institutional and geographic position. The UNESCO and ISSC (2010) World Social Science Report documented that social scientific knowledge is "often the least developed in those parts of the world where it is most keenly needed," identifying fragmentation of knowledge production capacity and under-resourcing of regional research infrastructure as primary barriers. Mitchell et al. (2020) documented that the absence of external funding, limited international publication network access, and strong local relevance orientations produce publication profiles structurally similar to those observed in Philippine regional SUCs. Tecson-Mendoza (2015) addressed the specific structural challenges of Philippine academic journals, documenting their limited international database visibility and the paradox whereby local scholars publish locally precisely because international publication barriers are prohibitively high. Edwards (2022) examined why academics in resource-constrained environments conduct unfunded research, finding motivations rooted in professional identity and institutional loyalty — a finding with direct resonance for MMSU faculty.

2.5 Authorship, Collaboration, and Research Impact

Lariviere et al. (2015) demonstrated across a century of publication data that "an increase in the number of authors leads to an increase in impact" and that larger and more institutionally diverse teams are necessary to sustain citation gains as collaboration norms intensify. Fu and Marques (2022) corroborated this in the context of higher education research, documenting the evolution of international collaboration networks and their relationship to thematic and institutional productivity. Thelwall (2024) further demonstrated that domestic co-authorship improves output volume but not citation impact, while international co-authorship improves both — a finding that establishes the strategic stakes of collaboration structure for institutional visibility. (Susanti et al. (2023) and Uwizeye et al. (2022) both identified institutional support mechanisms as primary determinants of faculty productivity, confirming that structural factors, not individual capability, primarily explain the output levels observable in institutional publication corpora.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Epistemological Positioning

This study employs a descriptive-analytical design integrating bibliometric analysis and systematic content analysis. Bibliometric analysis addresses structural patterns across the corpus — publication trends, authorship configurations, journal concentration — while content analysis, in Krippendorff's (2004, p. xiv) formulation as "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts to the contexts of their use," accesses the semantic substance of individual publications. The combined design aligns with Grant and Booth's (2009) systematic map: a structured examination of a defined

publication corpus aimed at describing its characteristics and identifying patterns and gaps. The epistemological position is pragmatic in Guba and Lincoln's (1994) sense, with research questions rather than paradigm allegiance driving method selection, consistent with Johnson and Onwuegbuzie's (2004) account of mixed methods inquiry logic.

3.2 Corpus Construction and Data Sources

Four independently compiled extraction datasets, each prepared from the same source population of MMSU faculty publications using a standardized 34-variable coding instrument, were consolidated into a master file using Python. Title-based deduplication identified four duplicate records, yielding a final corpus of 154 unique publications. The source population comprised publications accessible through the university's research office records, institutional repository, and faculty-submitted documentation. No external database served as the primary source. This is both a methodological delimitation and a substantive finding: the majority of publications in the corpus appear in locally or regionally indexed journals absent from Scopus, Web of Science, or ERIC. A Scopus-based study would have excluded this output by design, rendering the bulk of the institution's actual scholarly production invisible.

3.3 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Publications were included if authored or co-authored by MMSU faculty members, in any discipline or format (journal article, book, book chapter, conference paper, technical report), within the documented range. Both English and Filipino language publications were included. Unpublished manuscripts, graduate theses and dissertations, working papers without an identifiable publication outlet, and records with insufficient bibliographic information to confirm authorship affiliation were excluded.

3.4 Coding Instrument and Variable Operationalization

Each publication was coded on 34 variables under six domains: (1) Bibliographic Information (title, authors, number of authors, authorship pattern, year, publication type, journal/venue, volume/issue/pages, DOI); (2) Methodological Profile (paradigm, approach, design, data collection method, data analysis method); (3) Content and Thematic Profile (subject discipline, sub-discipline, research problem focus, key themes, keywords, theoretical framework); (4) Context and Relevance (study locale, local/regional relevance, target beneficiaries, funding acknowledgment); (5) Scholarly Discourse Indicators (implications type, implications summary, research gap, future directions); and (6) Quality Indicators (reference count, peer-review status, language). Authorship patterns were coded as Solo, Collaborative (2–3), or Multi-authored (4+), following Lariviere et al. (2015). Research paradigms followed Guba and Lincoln's (1994) typology; research approaches followed Creswell and Creswell (2018); theoretical framework presence was operationalized per Imenda (2014); implications type followed the practical-policy-theoretical taxonomy articulated by Biesta (2007).

3.5 Analytical Procedures and Trustworthiness

Descriptive statistics — absolute frequencies and proportions — were computed for all categorical variables. Temporal trend analysis was restricted to the 123 publications (79.9%) with a stated year.

Cross-tabulation of research approach by paradigm was produced to assess alignment. The corpus constitutes the full available institutional population; accordingly, no inferential statistical tests were applied. The analytical posture is descriptive-interpretive: frequencies are assessed through comparison with benchmarks in the literature on Philippine and Southeast Asian faculty publication profiles. The absence of documented inter-rater reliability statistics across all four extraction datasets is acknowledged as a limitation, consistent with the standards Krippendorff (2004) and Neuendorf (2002) specify for rigorous content analysis. Future replications should apply formal reliability coefficients (e.g., Krippendorff's alpha) to each coding category.

4. Results

4.1 Bibliographic Profile

Table 1
Bibliographic Profile of MMSU Faculty Publications (N = 154)

Variable	Category	n	%
Publication Type	Journal Article	148	96.1
	Technical Report	2	1.3
	Book/Chapter/Conference	4	2.6
Authorship Pattern	Collaborative (2–3 authors)	77	50.0
	Multi-authored (4 + authors)	44	28.6
	Solo (1 author)	31	20.1
	Not stated	2	1.3
Language	English	152	98.7
	Filipino	2	1.3
Year Published (stated; n = 123)	2018–2020	5	4.1
	2021–2022	35	28.5
	2023–2024	56	45.5
	2025–2026	27	22.0
	Not stated	31	—
Number of References (n = 123)	M = 25.41, SD = 13.83, Mdn = 25, Range = 0–109	—	—
Journal Outlets (n = 126)	Total unique outlets: 73	—	—
	Top 5 outlets: 39 publications (25.3%)	—	—

Note. M = mean; SD = standard deviation; Mdn = median. Year percentages for stated publications are calculated from n = 123. Reference count percentages are calculated from publications with a stated count (n = 123). '—' indicates not applicable.

4.1.1 Publication Volume and Temporal Trends

Of the 154 unique publications, 123 (79.9%) carried a stated publication year, and 31 (20.1%) were undated. The high proportion of undated records reflects incomplete bibliographic documentation practices and may indicate that older or lower-visibility publications are underrepresented, potentially understating the institution's historical output. Among the 123 dated publications, the temporal distribution was: 2018 (n = 2, 1.6%), 2019 (n = 1, 0.8%), 2020 (n = 2, 1.6%), 2021 (n = 11, 8.9%), 2022 (n = 24, 19.5%), 2023 (n = 36, 29.3%), 2024 (n = 20, 16.3%), 2025 (n = 26, 21.1%), and 2026 (n = 1, 0.8%). Output was minimal through 2020, increased sharply in 2021, and reached its peak in 2023 (see Fig. 1).

The sustained output in 2025 (n = 26) suggests the post-pandemic productivity gain has persisted, though the underlying structural conditions remain unchanged (Malaga, 2025).

Note

n = 123 publications with a stated year of publication. Publications with year not stated (n = 31) are excluded. The 2026 datum (n = 1) is preliminary.

4.1.2 Journal Outlet Distribution

Journal articles constituted 96.1% of the corpus (n = 148). Among the 126 publications (81.8%) with a named outlet, 73 distinct journals were identified. The distribution follows a concentration pattern consistent with Bradford's Law (Mayr, 2013): five journals accounted for 39 publications (25.3%), while 68 journals accounted for the remaining 87 (56.5%). The three most frequent outlets were: International Journal of Research Publications (n = 11, 7.1%), American Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Innovation (n = 10, 6.5%), and Amianan Journal of Research Innovation and Development (n = 8, 5.2%). The predominance of "international" in journal titles does not correspond to international indexing; these outlets are largely absent from Scopus, Web of Science, and ERIC, a pattern characteristic of Philippine academic publishing (Tecson-Mendoza, 2015).

4.1.3 Authorship Configurations

Collaborative (2–3 author) publications were most frequent (n = 77, 50.0%), followed by multi-authored (4 + authors; n = 44, 28.6%) and solo publications (n = 31, 20.1%). The mean number of authors was 3.09 (SD = 2.19; median = 2; mode = 2; range = 1–12). Figure 5 displays the authorship distribution. These figures situate MMSU's profile in the lower range of collaboration documented by Lariviere et al. (2015), whose analysis established that citation impact scales with the institutional and geographic diversity of authorship. The predominance of small, likely intra-institutional teams is consistent with Gopez et al.'s (2024) finding that Philippine HEI output is driven primarily by intra-institutional collaboration rather than by inter-institutional or international networks. Solo authorship (20.1%) consistently underperforms collaborative publications in citation impact (Thelwall, 2024), suggesting this portion of the corpus has structurally limited international reach.

4.2 Methodological Profile

Table 2
Methodological Profile of MMSU Faculty Publications (N = 154)

Variable	Category	n	%
Research Paradigm	Positivist	74	48.1
	Pragmatic	40	26.0
	Interpretivist	35	22.7
	Critical	3	1.9
	Not stated/Other	2	1.3
Research Approach	Quantitative	67	43.5
	Mixed Methods	44	28.6
	Qualitative	38	24.7
	Theoretical-Conceptual	5	3.2
Research Design (top 6)	Descriptive (combined subtypes)	62	40.3
	Quasi-Experimental/Experimental	14	9.1
	Descriptive Survey	14	9.1
	Descriptive-Correlational	14	9.1
	Phenomenological	11	7.1
	Action Research	11	7.1
Data Collection Method	Survey/Questionnaire	83	53.9
	Interview	25	16.2
	Document/Content Analysis	18	11.7
	Test/Assessment Instrument	13	8.4
	Observation	5	3.2
	Mixed/Other	5	3.2
	Laboratory/Clinical	2	1.3
	Not stated	3	1.9

Note. Percentages are calculated from the total corpus (N = 154). Research design top 6 categories are listed; see Fig. 4 for the complete design distribution. Data collection method categories are not mutually exclusive in mixed-method studies.

4.2.1 Research Paradigms

Positivist paradigm publications were most frequent (n = 74, 48.1%), followed by pragmatic (n = 40, 26.0%), interpretivist (n = 35, 22.7%), and critical (n = 3, 1.9%). The positivist plurality reflects what Eusafzai (2014) and Mustofa (2023) document as the persistence of positivist objectivism in Asian institutional research frameworks, where disciplinary convention and institutional prestige hierarchies converge to reward quantifiable, generalizable outcomes. The near-absence of critical paradigm research (n = 3, 1.9%) is analytically significant: it indicates that the publication culture does not yet support systematic inquiry that interrogates the power structures, historical conditions, and ideological dimensions of educational practice — even though several thematic clusters in the corpus (Ilokano cultural decolonization, gendered literary portrayals) address precisely such concerns. See Fig. 3 for the complete paradigm and approach distributions.

Note

Percentages calculated from the full corpus (N = 154). "Not stated/Other" paradigm (n = 2) not displayed.

4.2.2 Research Approaches and Designs

Quantitative publications constituted the largest group (n = 67, 43.5%), followed by mixed methods (n = 44, 28.6%), qualitative (n = 38, 24.7%), and theoretical-conceptual (n = 5, 3.2%). Cross-tabulation confirmed strong paradigm-approach alignment: 98.5% of quantitative publications carry a positivist or pragmatic paradigm; 84.2% of qualitative publications are interpretivist, consistent with Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004). Figure 4 presents the complete design distribution. Descriptive designs, when all subtypes are combined, account for 40.3% of all publications — replicating the pattern Bernardo (2011) identified as the defining characteristic of Philippine education research. Systematic review and meta-analytic designs appeared in four publications combined (2.6%), meaning that MMSU's growing output has not yet produced the syntheses that would consolidate its accumulated evidence base.

Note

"Descriptive (combined subtypes)" aggregates descriptive-survey, descriptive-correlational, descriptive-comparative, descriptive-status, and related design variants. "Other" includes designs that could not be classified into standard categories from the extraction data.

4.2.3 Data Collection Methods

Survey or questionnaire-based data collection dominated (n = 83, 53.9%). Interviews (n = 25, 16.2%), document or content analysis (n = 18, 11.7%), and test or assessment instruments (n = 13, 8.4%) followed. Survey dominance, while broadly consistent with the quantitative-descriptive design profile, carries methodological implications noted by Chen (2020): structural challenges including response bias, limited construct validity in locally developed instruments, and difficulty establishing sampling frames that support generalization are particularly acute in under-resourced institutional contexts where convenience samples predominate.

4.3 Content and Thematic Profile

4.3.1 Disciplinary Distribution

Education (general) accounted for 75 publications (48.7%), establishing it as the institution's defining disciplinary cluster by a margin that no other category approaches. Other/interdisciplinary (n = 30, 19.5%), management, business, and economics (n = 10, 6.5%), language, literature, and linguistics (n = 9, 5.8%), science education (n = 8, 5.2%), and health and food science (n = 8, 5.2%) followed. The complete distribution is presented in Fig. 2. Klein (1990) argues that disciplinary concentration of this magnitude reinforces single-field methodological norms and limits the cross-fertilization of ideas and methods that produces the most original and visible scholarship.

Note

Categories were grouped from coded sub-disciplines. "Other/Interdisciplinary" includes publications that did not align with a single primary discipline or whose sub-discipline was cross-field. Percentages calculated from N = 154.

4.3.2 Theoretical Framework Adoption

Of 154 publications, only 45 (29.2%) cited at least one theoretical or conceptual framework; the remaining 109 (70.8%) provided no identifiable theoretical grounding. Figure 6 presents framework presence disaggregated by subject discipline. Imenda (2014, p. 186) argues that the absence of a theoretical framework signals that a study "lacks an anchoring explanatory structure," leaving findings without a principled basis for interpretation or integration into cumulative knowledge. Among the 45 publications that cited frameworks, the most frequently referenced included Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory (three publications), the TPACK framework, and the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) policy framework. The infrequent use of critical frameworks — postcolonial theory, feminist literary criticism, translanguaging theory — contrasts with the presence of critical-paradigm research topics in the corpus, suggesting that faculty engage critical problem areas without consistently employing the theoretical vocabulary that would make those engagements analytically coherent and internationally legible.

Note

"Framework Cited" = at least one theoretical or conceptual framework explicitly identified in the publication. "None/Not Stated" = no framework identified. Red dotted line indicates the overall corpus average (29.2%). Disciplines with fewer than three publications are excluded. n = total publications per discipline.

4.3.3 Authorship Pattern Visualization

Note

Inner circle displays N = 154 (total publications). Percentages indicate proportions of the full corpus. "Not stated" (n = 2, 1.3%) indicates records for which authorship count could not be determined from available bibliographic data.

4.4 Scholarly Discourse Indicators

Table 3
Contextual and Scholarly Discourse Indicators of MMSU Faculty Publications (N = 154)

Variable	Category	n	%
Local/Regional Relevance	Yes (Ilocos Norte / Northern PH)	98	63.6
	Partial	45	29.2
	No	11	7.1
Funding Acknowledgment	Yes (external funding confirmed)	2	1.3
	Explicitly no funding	32	20.8
	Not stated	120	77.9
Theoretical Framework	Framework cited	45	29.2
	None/Not stated	109	70.8
Research Implications Type	Practical only	119	77.3
	Policy only	16	10.4
	Theoretical only	12	7.8
	Combinations (2 + types)	7	4.5
Peer-Review Status	Yes (peer-reviewed)	122	79.2
	Not indicated	30	19.5
	No	2	1.3
Language of Publication	English	152	98.7
	Filipino	2	1.3

Note. Percentages calculated from the full corpus (N = 154). Funding "Not stated" does not confirm unfunded status; it indicates the absence of a funding acknowledgment statement. "Combinations" for implications type includes practical-and-policy (n = 5), practical-and-theoretical (n = 1), and all three types (n = 1).

4.4.1 Local and Regional Relevance

Of 154 publications, 98 (63.6%) were explicitly locally or regionally relevant, and 45 (29.2%) were partially locally relevant (Table 3). Only 11 (7.1%) showed no identifiable local connection. The combined proportion of 92.9% establishes the corpus as fundamentally oriented toward the knowledge needs of the institution's immediate geographic context. This orientation is consonant with the trifocal SUC mission (Elechicon & Paris, 2026) but constitutes the primary structural barrier to international publication, since globally indexed journals require that studies address problems or produce insights with transferable significance beyond local settings. Amnuai (2021) and Gustilo (2011) argue that the capacity to move from a local problem to an internationally legible scholarly contribution depends on theoretical positioning — precisely the capacity that 70.8% of publications in this corpus have not yet developed.

4.4.2 Funding Acknowledgment

Only two of 154 publications (1.3%) acknowledged external funding (Table 3). Thirty-two (20.8%) explicitly stated no funding; 120 (77.9%) made no mention of funding at all. The near-total absence of confirmed external funding is not merely a bibliometric detail; it is the material condition that explains the methodological characteristics of the corpus. Edwards (2022, p. 908) describes unfunded academic research as conducted under institutional compliance conditions combined with personal professional identity motivations, producing genuine scholarship constrained by the resource limits that prevent large samples, longitudinal designs, advanced instrumentation, and comprehensive database access. Mitchell et al. (2020) documented the same structural dynamic in sub-Saharan African education research, confirming that the combination of unfunded research and local relevance orientation produces scholarship that is valuable within its context but structurally excluded from global knowledge circuits.

4.4.3 Research Implications and Gap Framing

Practical implications dominated: 119 of 154 publications (77.3%) reported practical implications only (Table 3; Fig. 7). Biesta (2007, p. 1) provides the sharpest theoretical interpretation: when educational research is oriented exclusively toward "what works," it reduces scholarship to technical prescription and removes from the research agenda the fundamental questions about what education is for, for whom it works, and at what cost to other values. The 12 publications (7.8%) reporting theoretical implications were disproportionately concentrated in the indigenous and cultural studies cluster, consistent with the observation that researchers engaged with questions of cultural identity and decolonization are more likely to recognize the theoretical stakes of their work. Research gap framing showed a consistent rhetorical pattern: the most common claim was "limited local studies on [topic] in Philippine settings" — what Gustilo (2011) identifies as the geographic-specificity gap claim that positions a study's contribution at the level of data rather than argument.

Note

"Combinations" includes practical-and-policy (n = 5), practical-and-theoretical (n = 1), and all three types (n = 1). Annotation refers to the 77.3% proportion of publications reporting practical implications as the sole type.

5. Discussion

5.1 The Structural Logic of a Locally Bounded Publication Culture

The convergent pattern across all four analytical dimensions — disciplinary concentration in education, descriptive and survey-based methodologies, local relevance orientation in 92.9% of publications, practical-only implications in 77.3%, and theoretical framework absence in 70.8% — is not a set of independent findings; it is the coherent expression of a single structural logic. MMSU faculty produce research that is responsive to the problems of their immediate professional context, constrained by the resource conditions under which they work, and governed by the publication standards of locally indexed journals that neither require nor reward theoretical depth, methodological sophistication, or international positioning. This logic is self-reinforcing: locally oriented research produces locally applicable findings, which are submitted to local journals, which are reviewed against local standards, which do not develop faculty toward the international scholarly conversations that would build the capacity for theory-engaged, methodologically ambitious work. Altbach (2004) describes this dynamic as the structural condition of peripheral science; Arnado (2023) explains it through Bourdieusian field theory; both converge on the conclusion that the patterns are structurally generated, not individually caused.

5.2 The Theoretical Deficit and Its Consequences for Cumulative Knowledge

The finding that 70.8% of publications lack a stated theoretical framework has specific and damaging implications for the cumulative character of MMSU's scholarship. When publications cannot be situated within an established explanatory architecture, they accumulate data without accumulating explanations, and the institutional scholarly record grows numerically without growing intellectually. Imenda (2014, p. 193) argues that without a theoretical framework, "researchers have no basis for making credible predictions about likely outcomes," and findings from one study cannot be compared with findings from another in a principled way. The practical implications pattern amplifies this problem: a study that produces practical recommendations without a theoretical warrant cannot explain why those recommendations should work in contexts other than the one studied, cannot predict failure conditions, and cannot be integrated into any systematic framework for understanding educational improvement. Biesta (2007) argues that this kind of scholarship not merely fails to contribute to theory but actively excludes normative questions — about equity, about educational ends, about democratic deliberation — from the research agenda.

5.3 The Funding Gap as a Determinant of Methodological Scope

The near-total absence of acknowledged external funding (1.3%) is the material root cause of the methodological profile documented in Section 4.2. Research without dedicated resources cannot recruit large or diverse samples, cannot conduct longitudinal follow-up, cannot access specialized instruments or databases, and cannot afford the time for systematic literature review. The predominance of single-institution convenience samples, cross-sectional designs, and self-developed questionnaires is a predictable consequence of unfunded research conditions (Edwards, 2022; Mitchell et al., 2020; Uwizeye et al., 2022). The policy implication is direct: CHED's research mandate, as encoded in RA 7722 (1994) and RA 8292 (1997), requires SUCs to conduct research but does not allocate funding commensurate with the mandate. Quimbo and Sulabo (2014) documented this policy-funding disconnect a decade ago; the present findings confirm it persists as a structural condition.

5.4 Authorship as a Strategic Variable

The dominance of small intra-institutional teams (50.0%) and solo authorship (20.1%) reflects the self-contained character of most MMSU research projects. Lariviere et al. (2015) and Thelwall (2024) are unambiguous: citation impact scales with the institutional and geographic diversity of authorship, not with publication volume. An institution that produces 154 publications primarily through intra-institutional small teams cannot expect those publications to generate the international visibility that attracts external funding, graduate students, or recognition in regional university rankings. Gopez et al. (2024) found that intensifying intra-institutional collaboration drives output volume growth; Lariviere et al. (2015) found that inter-institutional and international diversity drives citation impact. These findings describe two stages of a research development trajectory, and MMSU appears to be completing the first stage while the second remains largely unbegun.

5.5 The Indigenous Studies Cluster as Comparative Advantage

The indigenous and cultural studies cluster represents an area where MMSU possesses a genuine comparative advantage that is not yet fully realized. The institution's location in Ilocos Norte gives its faculty unique access to Ilokano literary and cultural materials, oral traditions, indigenous games, and cultural practices documented nowhere else in peer-reviewed literature. Gustilo (2011) and Amnuai (2021) both argue that the capacity to convert local knowledge into internationally legible scholarship depends on theoretical positioning: a study of Ilokano oral tradition grounded in postcolonial theory or linguistic landscape theory can speak to international audiences; the same study framed only as local documentation cannot. The present corpus includes several promising studies in this cluster but most lack the theoretical grounding that would make them competitive for high-visibility international journals. Developing theoretical depth in this cluster specifically could simultaneously honor the institution's local mission and produce scholarship with genuine international contribution.

6. Conclusion

This study has produced the first systematic bibliometric and content analysis of faculty publications at Mariano Marcos State University, documenting the profile of 154 unique publications across 34 variables and six analytical domains. The principal findings converge on a coherent institutional portrait: an expanding publication record, concentrated in education and descriptive survey research, locally oriented in problem framing and implications, predominantly published in accessible but minimally indexed journals, produced almost entirely without external funding, and lacking the theoretical grounding and methodological diversity that characterize internationally competitive scholarship.

These findings should be read not as a deficit narrative about individual faculty but as a structural account of the conditions under which regional state universities in the Global South produce knowledge. The patterns documented at MMSU are consistent with those in other Philippine SUCs (Bernardo, 2011; Gopez et al., 2024; Malaga, 2025), in Southeast Asian HEIs (Xiao, 2025; Suwanmanee & Mongkolhutthi, 2025), and in comparable developing-country institutions (Mitchell et al., 2020; Uwizeye et al., 2022). This cross-contextual consistency is the primary argument for the study's contribution beyond its institutional case: MMSU's publication profile is not idiosyncratic; it is structurally generated, and the structural conditions it reflects are shared by many institutions that have not yet been analyzed at this level of granularity.

The study makes three contributions to the higher education literature. First, it provides an empirically grounded characterization of a Philippine regional SUC's research culture, filling a gap in the national higher education evidence base. Second, it demonstrates the analytical value of combining bibliometric and content analysis in institutional publication studies, producing insights that neither method alone could generate. Third, it offers an interpretive framework — drawing on peripheral knowledge production theory, institutional research ecology, and the structural analysis of funding constraints — applicable to comparable institutions across the Global South.

For institutional leaders, the most actionable implications are: (1) developing a research capability program that explicitly addresses theoretical framework literacy; (2) supporting faculty in seeking external funding through grant-writing training and seed funding mechanisms; and (3) building international collaboration pathways that move authorship configurations toward the inter-institutional and cross-national diversity that produces citation-visible scholarship. For national policy bodies, the findings provide evidence that the CHED research mandate cannot be discharged by publication volume alone, and that commensurate funding support is a prerequisite for the quality improvement the mandate implies.

Future research should extend this analysis comparatively across multiple Philippine SUCs using the same 34-variable instrument. Longitudinal cohort analysis would reveal whether the post-pandemic publication surge is accompanied by quality improvement or sustained only by volume. Disaggregated analysis by college, department, and faculty rank would identify within-institution variation that this study's aggregate profile obscures. Qualitative inquiry into the conditions that produce the small

proportion of theoretically grounded, externally funded, and internationally placed publications in the corpus would generate insights most directly actionable for institutional research development.

Declarations

Data Availability Statement

The datasets are available from the author upon request.

Disclosure of AI Use

NotebookLM was used in reviewing related literature. ChatGPT was used to assist in clarifying concepts and refining the wording of certain sections. QuillBot was used for grammar checking. All AI-assisted outputs were reviewed, edited, and verified by the author to ensure accuracy and academic integrity.

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Clinical Trial Number

Not applicable.

Ethics, Consent to Participate, and Consent to Publish

Not applicable.

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Figures

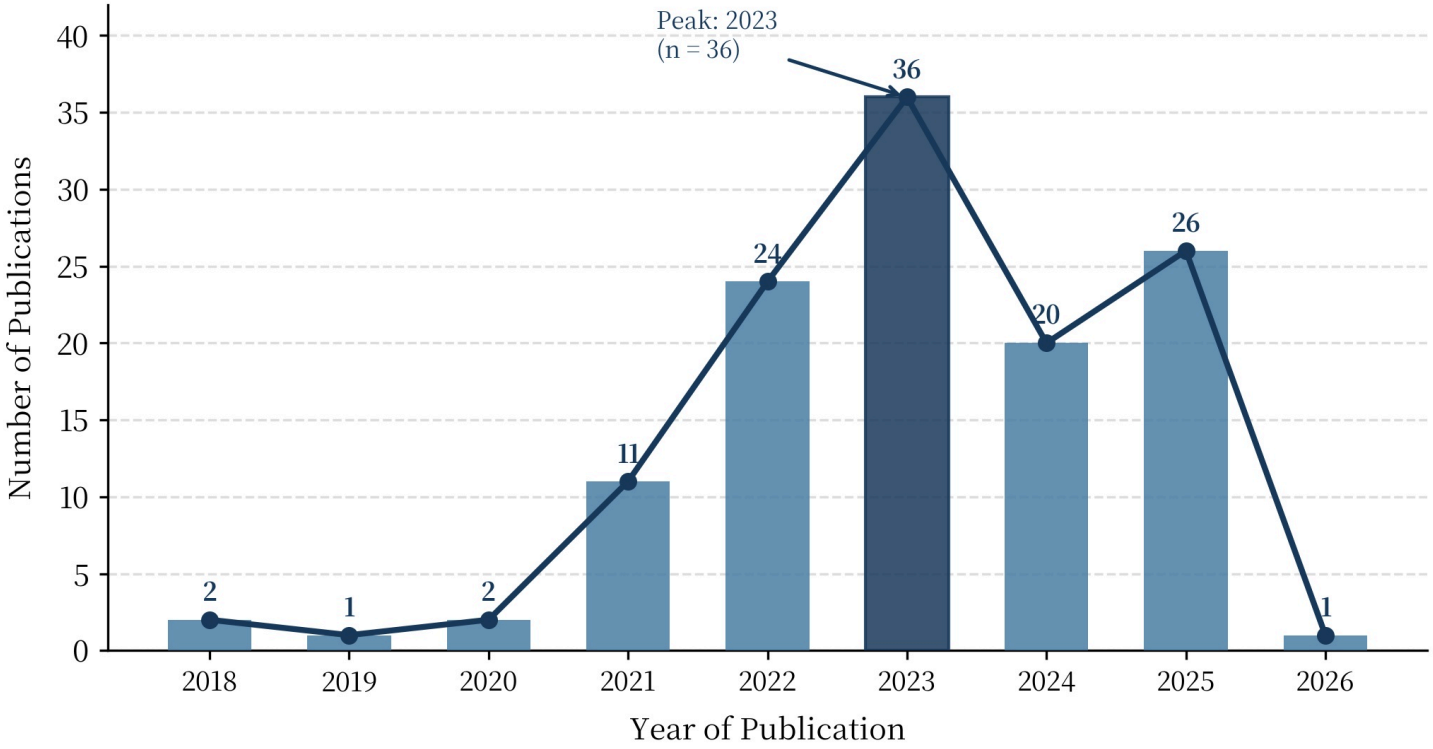


Figure 1

Annual Publication Output of MMSU Faculty, 2018–2025

Note. n = 123 publications with a stated year of publication. Publications with year not stated (n = 31) are excluded. The 2026 datum (n = 1) is preliminary.

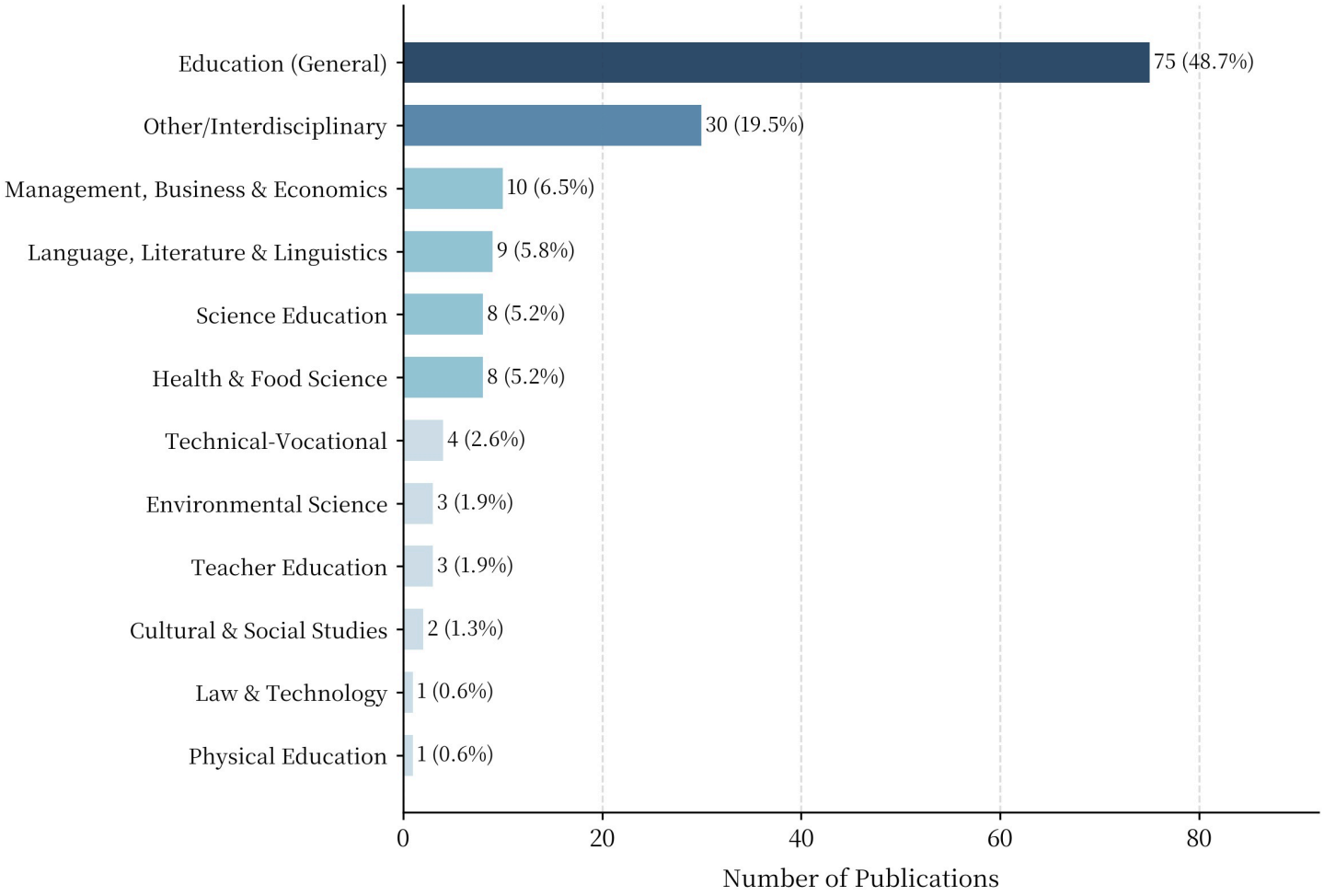


Figure 2

Distribution of MMSU Faculty Publications by Subject Discipline (N = 154)

Note. Categories were grouped from coded sub-disciplines. "Other/Interdisciplinary" includes publications that did not align with a single primary discipline or whose sub-discipline was cross-field. Percentages calculated from N = 154.

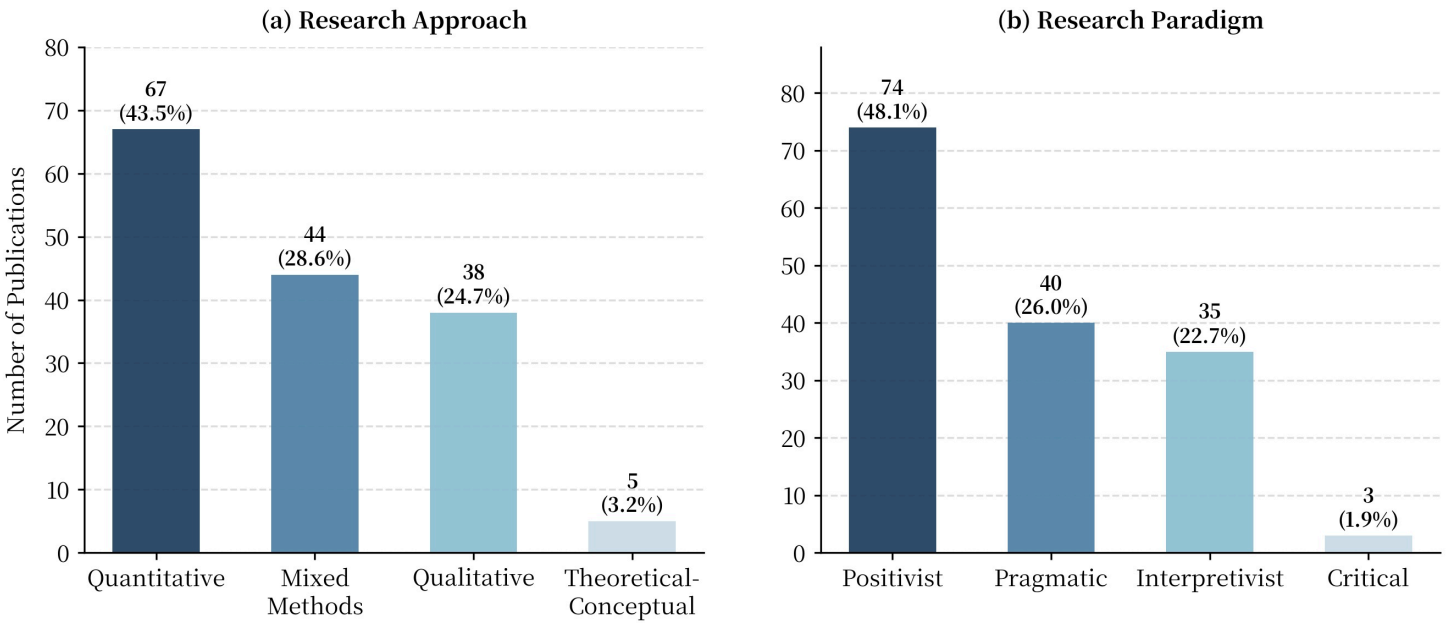


Figure 3

Research Approach (Panel a) and Research Paradigm (Panel b) Distribution of MMSU Faculty Publications (N = 154)

Note. Percentages calculated from the full corpus (N = 154). "Not stated/Other" paradigm (n = 2) not displayed.

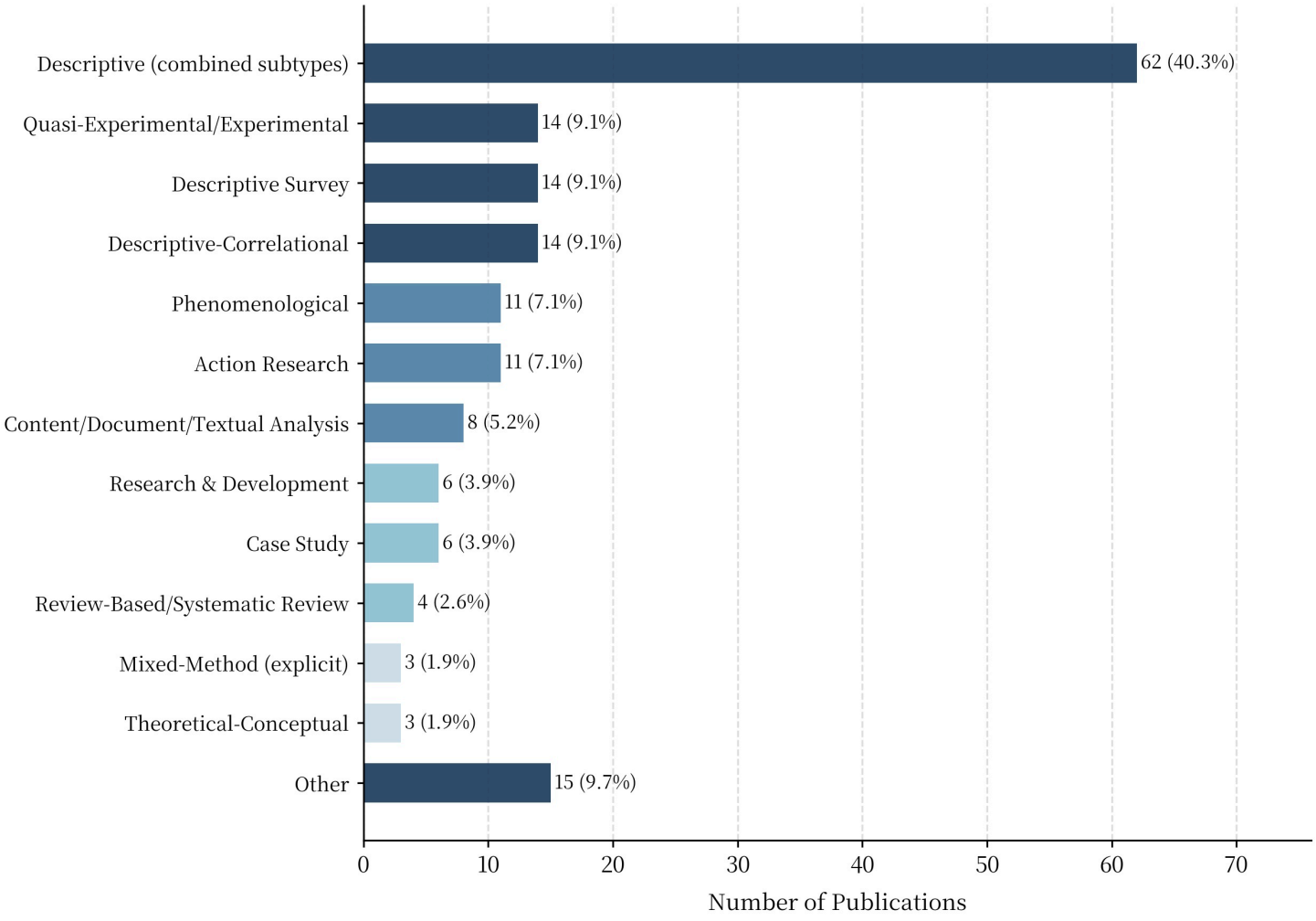


Figure 4

Distribution of MMSU Faculty Publications by Research Design Category (N = 154)

Note. "Descriptive (combined subtypes)" aggregates descriptive-survey, descriptive-correlational, descriptive-comparative, descriptive-status, and related design variants. "Other" includes designs that could not be classified into standard categories from the extraction data.

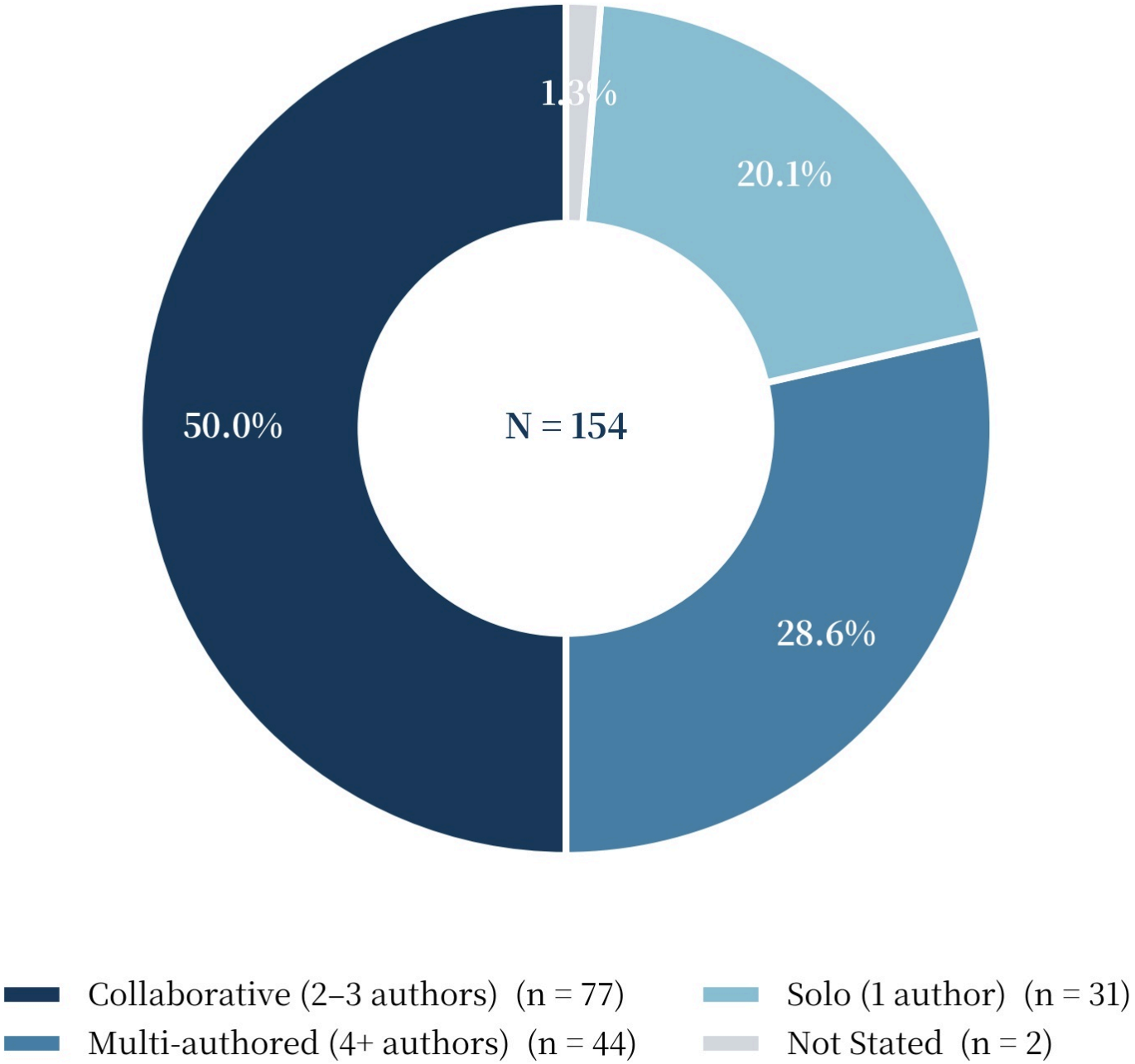


Figure 5

Proportion of MMSU Faculty Publications With and Without a Stated Theoretical Framework, by Subject Discipline

Note. Inner circle displays N = 154 (total publications). Percentages indicate proportions of the full corpus. "Not stated" (n = 2, 1.3%) indicates records for which authorship count could not be determined from available bibliographic data.

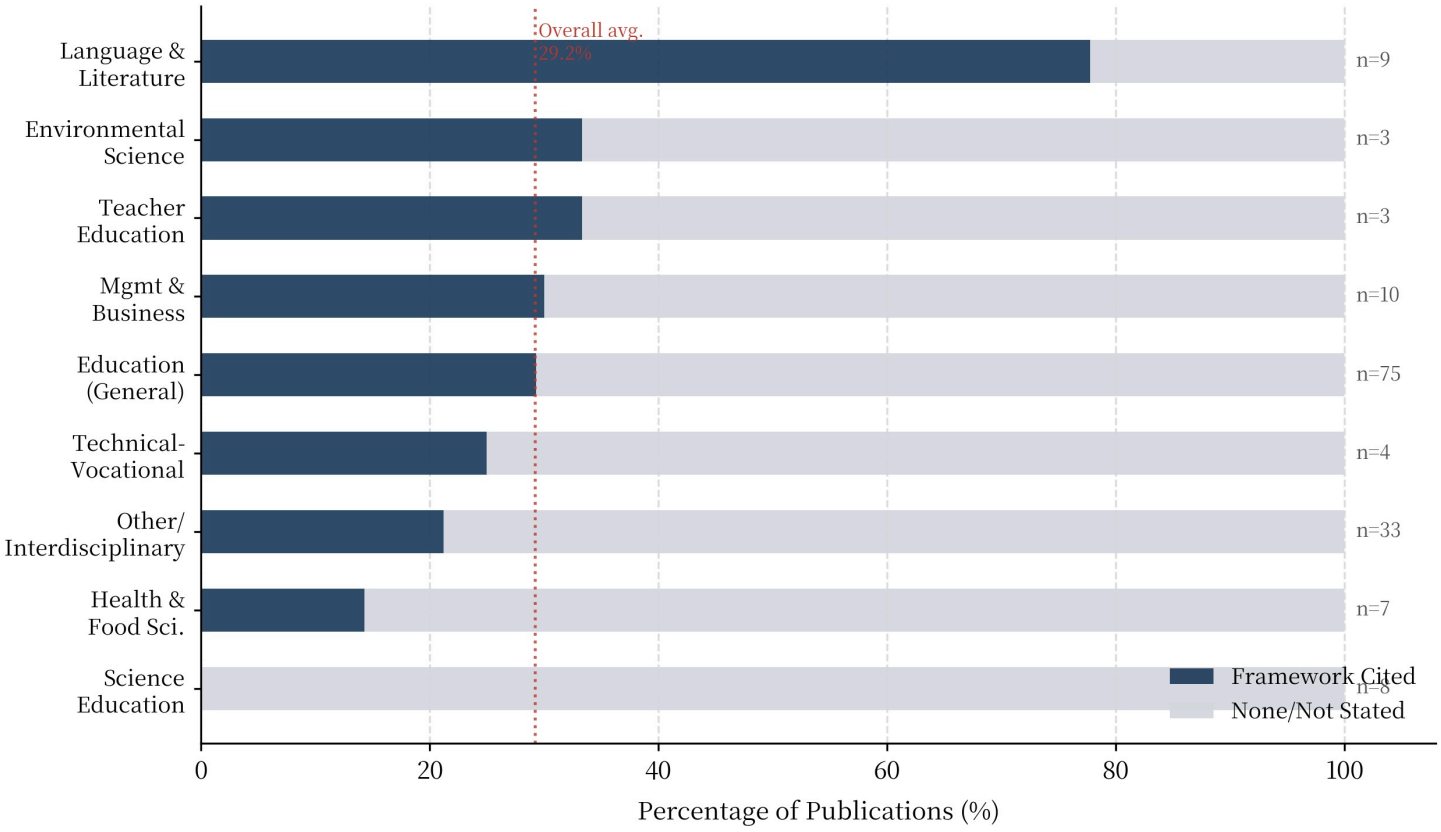


Figure 6

Proportion of MMSU Faculty Publications With and Without a Stated Theoretical Framework, by Subject Discipline

Note. "Framework Cited" = at least one theoretical or conceptual framework explicitly identified in the publication. "None/Not Stated" = no framework identified. Red dotted line indicates the overall corpus average (29.2%). Disciplines with fewer than three publications are excluded. n = total publications per discipline.

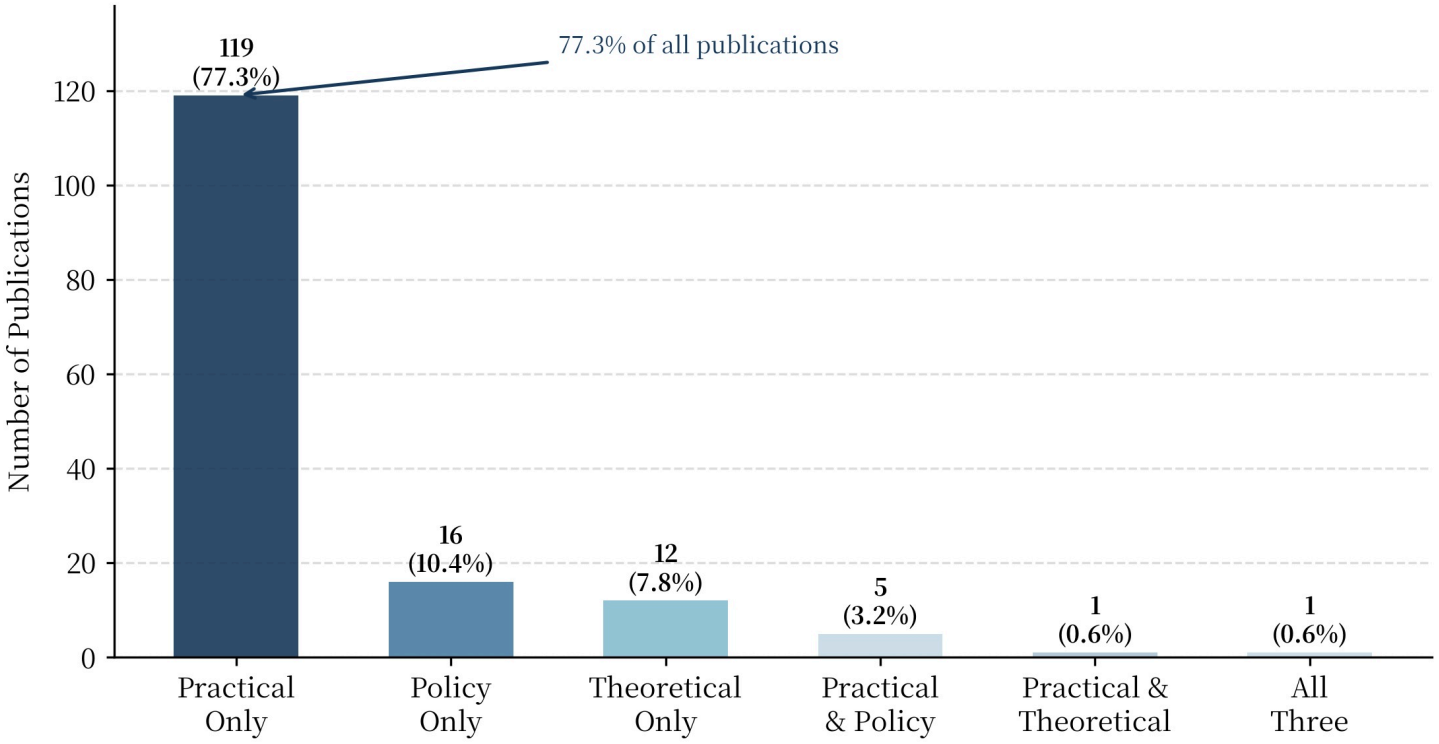


Figure 7

Distribution of Research Implications Type in MMSU Faculty Publications (N = 154)

Note. "Combinations" includes practical-and-policy (n = 5), practical-and-theoretical (n = 1), and all three types (n = 1). Annotation refers to the 77.3% proportion of publications reporting practical implications as the sole type.