

Curriculum and Quality of Instruction Factors for Successful Board Examination Performance

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ABSTRACT: Teachers are the agents through which knowledge and skills are communicated. Curriculum and instruction are the instruments the teachers use in order to produce quality outcomes. The study aimed to assess the importance of curriculum and the quality of instruction provided to them during their academic years in the university and their experiential observation on the influence of these variables to their performance in the teachers' licensure examination. Graduates of five batches of Bachelor of Secondary and Bachelor of Elementary Education participated in the survey. Results of the study revealed the general education components of the curriculum are the most influential in the graduates' licensure examination performance. In addition, relevant instructional tasks and sound assessment procedures in both general education and professional education courses lead to more chances of success in the Licensure Examination for Teachers.

KEYWORDS: Board Examination Performance, Curriculum, Quality of Instruction

I. INTRODUCTION

Curriculum and instruction are the heart of the educational process. Real change in education comes with changes in the content that teachers teach and students learn, and in the instructional methods that teachers use. Both curriculum and instruction, in turn, are shaped by expectations about the kinds of educational outcomes that students should manifest by the time they graduate from the university. Whether graduates become successful in the road they tread after graduation will depend largely on the degree of alignment among the curricula, instructions and post-school outcomes [1]-[2].

In the Philippines, the professionalization of the basic education teachers is guided by the Philippine Teachers Professionalization Act of 1994 (RA 7863). The Act requires all individuals engaged in teaching, supervision, and administration of schools to pass the Licensure Examination for Teachers. In addition, a new teacher education curriculum was promulgated to make pre-service training responsive to the rapid changes in the society, through the incorporation of a set of competencies that defines among others the pre-service teachers personal and professional development.

According to Gibson, Boyle et. al (2015), curriculum and instructional aspects of teaching are two of the four dimensions of quality in teaching [3]. The impact of these two factors is reflective of the graduates' performance on the state-conducted board examination. Hence, in this study, an evaluation of the teacher education curriculum and instructional quality according to students' assessment were undertaken.

II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The Department of Education (DepEd) requires prospective basic education teachers to pass the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) as prerequisite to its deployment in the system. LET is a test of the overall knowledge and proficiency of prospective teachers to provide a reliable structure to which the practice of prospective teachers can be measured and proven. It gives access to continuing growth and development. A new teacher education graduate cannot exercise immediately his/her profession. He has to take the standardized test first and one of these tests is the LET. Passing the LET would mean a passport to be a professional teacher. To earn the title "professional teacher" is believed to be a symbol of quality education acquired from the Teacher Education Institution. LET likewise assess the quality of educational services and provisions offered by the teacher-education institutions, such provisions could be the structural (curriculum) and procedural aspects of teaching. The review that follows highlights the variables theoretically believed to predict the performance of the teacher education graduates of Cagayan State University. The study included the factors curricular content and instructional activities and strategies employed.

The Encyclopedia of Educational Research (6th edition) briefly described the results of researches conducted in the '80s and '90s which show that schools make a difference in learners' achievement. The characteristics common to schools found effective can likewise be identified. Hence, these findings convinced educators to believe that school characteristics could be stronger determinants of academic achievement than the learners' personal factors.

The researcher believed that the LET performance of the graduates is affected by the curriculum factor. Students will learn best when curriculum and instruction are congruent with that of the learner's particular needs. LET performance of the graduates depends upon the curriculum offered. A well organized and carefully arranged subject would probably lead to better academic performance of students. The studies of Yanto (2000)[4] and Azurin (2008)[5] revealed that a better performance in the General Education subjects would lead to better performance in LET.

Teacher factor also plays a pivoting role in effective learning. Teachers' educational qualifications can indeed affect their teaching efficiency. The teachers must be intelligent, resourceful, and flexible in order to impart more knowledge to the students. The personal qualities of a teacher play an important factor to develop authentic human relationships with their students. It is said that the teacher is considered as the key to educative enterprise because she/he is the most single important factor outside of the house affecting student's learning development. Teachers, who have goals, actively strive for learning and make use of different methods in order to produce a good result. She is skillful in the practice of teaching and concerned with imparting appropriate knowledge to his or her students.

Another is the student factor. It is believed that LET performance of the graduates depends upon the behavior, attitude and interest of the students developed prior to his/her attendance to tertiary school. These attributes could be carried on and enhance through experience in his/her college life. Thus, the learner is the center stage in the educative process. In the learning process, there would be no teaching without learner. The students would appear to be ideally prepared to take full advantage of a wide variety of intellectually stimulating and demanding contexts. They tend to prepare challenging tasks and assignments in which they stand to learn something new or increase their competence.

According to Educational Psychology, there is no exact pattern or theory of teaching and learning. Theorists such as Thorndike, Bruner, Piaget, Bloom, and many others, have established their own frameworks of teaching and learning. Nonetheless, education is not an exact science. There are too many variables involved in the process. In this study, the focus was on the influence of the quality of the curriculum and instructional activities on the performance in the teachers' board examination.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study made use of a descriptive-evaluative method, the graduates' demographic characteristics were described. A self-administered questionnaire (SAQ) was used to assess the influence of the curriculum and the different instructional activities the graduates were exposed to, to their performance in the licensure examination. Data collection techniques such as snail mail and web survey were both employed in this study.

A total of 81% of the Bachelor of Secondary Education and 76% of the Bachelor of Elementary Education graduates from 2009 to 2013, participated in the study. Names and addresses were identified from a master list issued by the Office of the Registrar of a state university. Both board passers and non-passers of the 2009 to 2013 licensure examination schedules were included as respondents.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Assessment of the quality of the general education course content.

Subject Clusters	Mean	Level of Importance
English Language	4.5	Very Important
Filipino Language	4.3	Very Important
Natural Science	4.3	Very Important
Mathematics	4.6	Very Important
Social Sciences	4.3	Very Important
Mandated Subjects	3.9	Important
Humanities	4.0	Important
Computer	3.9	Important
Physical Education	3.7	Important
Overall Assessment	4.02	Important

Legend: 1.0 – 1.8 (Not Important); 1.81 – 2.60 (Least Important); 2.61 – 3.40 (Fairly Important); 3.41 – 4.20; (Important); 4.21 – 5.0 (Very Important)

Results on the assessment of the importance of the different general education subjects in passing the Licensure Examination for Teachers showed that the graduates considered five (5) general education subjects to be very important in passing the LET, namely: English, Filipino, Natural Sciences, Mathematics, and Social Sciences. These assessment results suggest that the graduates after having exposed to the contents of the Licensure Examination for Teachers, the graduates realized that the attainment of the course objectives of the different general education subjects and being able to discuss as many topics covered within the semester all lead to the success in passing the licensure examination.

Furthermore, considering that the first five (5) subject clusters were taken in the early years of the teacher education program, these results suggest that there is a considerable influence of the subjects to the graduates' final academic performance. Ramona, L, and Bran, C. (2014), in their article *The Assessment of Learning* states that the performance in the earlier years in the university substantially impacts the latter academic success[6]. Eventually, satisfactory performance in the general education courses leads to success in the licensure examination. Ogunyemi& Harris (2004)[7], Neri (2008)[8] and Delos Angeles (2019)[9] all found sufficient evidence that college GPA strongly correlates with licensure examination results. Furthermore, overall assessment by the graduates was that the General Education subjects are important in passing the LET.

Table 2. Assessment of the quality of professional education content courses.

Subject Clusters	Mean	Level of Importance
Facilitating Learning	4.4	Very Important
Child & Adolescent Development	4.5	Very Important
Social Dimensions of Education	4.4	Very Important
Principles of Teaching	4.4	Very Important
Assessment of Student Learning	4.6	Very Important
Educational Technology	4.5	Very Important
Curriculum Development	4.5	Very Important
Development Reading	4.5	Very Important
Teaching Profession	4.5	Very Important
Field Study	4.5	Very Important
Practice Teaching	4.5	Very Important
Overall Assessment	4.47	Very Important

Legend: 1.0 – 1.8 (Not Important); 1.81 – 2.60 (Least Important); 2.61 – 3.40 (Fairly Important); 3.41 – 4.20; (Important); 4.21 – 5.0 (Very Important)

All the professional education subjects were assessed by the graduate-respondents as very important in passing the licensure examination. The results suggest that based on the graduate's licensure examination experience, they agree, that each professional education subject leads to successful licensure examination results. Consistent with these results were the findings of Villarmia, J. (2018) and Tamayo, AM (2013). Villarmia on a focused-discussion interview with Criminology graduates revealed insufficient content discussed by professors made them feel unprepared to take the Criminology Licensure examination [10]. In addition, Tamayo concluded that major courses in Engineering program predict passing the licensure examination[11].

Table 3. Assessment of the quality of instruction

Area of Instruction	Mean	Level of Importance
Instructional Procedures Employed in the General Education courses	3.89	Important
Instructional Procedures Employed in the Professional courses	3.93	Important
Relevance of Instructional tasks/activities in the General Education courses	3.01	Fairly Important
Relevance of Instructional tasks/activities in the Professional courses	4.52	Very Important
Sources of written assessment in the General Education courses	4.35	Very Important
Sources of written assessment in the Professional courses	4.30	Very Important

Legend: 1.0 – 1.8 (Not Important); 1.81 – 2.60 (Least Important); 2.61 – 3.40 (Fairly Important); 3.41 – 4.20; (Important); 4.21 – 5.0 (Very Important)

The quality of instruction in the Teacher Education department was assessed by the graduates in terms of the processes and instructional procedures adopted by the professors. The graduates rated the procedures and practices employed by the faculty as important in preparing them for the licensure examination. Practices include analytical thinking is promoted, good attitude and use of appropriate learning techniques. Moreover, the relevance of instructional tasks and written assessments were considered very helpful in increasing the chances of passing the licensure exam. These reckon that better performance in the LET also depends on the relevance of assignments and the attainment of learning outcomes in both general education and professional education subjects. Meaning, teaching the different courses with relevant assignments, relevant requirements and the like facilitated gaining higher general rating in the board examination. Learning opportunities that enable learners to grow through meaningful experiences, reflection and adaptation are some qualities of effective instruction [12] Moreover, quality education is achieved through quality instructional materials [13]. This also conforms with the fact that learners grasp information faster and retain in their memory longer when discussed topics with concrete objects or materials. In addition, every teacher should have criteria on the basis of assessing students' performance. This variable was rated very important. Thus, the high result of LET is evidence of proper assessment, wherein the purpose of assessment is to improve learning outcomes.

V. CONCLUSION

Satisfactory performance in the licensure examination is a result of a quality curriculum and relevant instructional experiences and learning opportunities offered during graduates' academic stint at the university. Specifically, factors influential to the success in the Licensure Examination for Teachers are quality of the General Education curriculum and relevance of assessment in both general and professional courses. Hence, a regular review of the teacher education curriculum be done, bearing in mind the provision of creating a learning environment where learners and teachers become partners in creating quality learning opportunities.

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