Trend of Performance in Board Licensure Examination for Professional Teachers in Selected Philippine Teacher Education Institutions: Policy Recommendation

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Abstract: Are the premier Teacher Education Institutions ailing in terms of educational quality? It is viewed in the context of current Philippine Higher Education (HE) that performance passing in the board examination is one of the parameters of the institutional quality outcome. Thus, this study primarily attempted to investigate the overall licensure percentage passing of TEIs through a documentary analysis. Archival data were obtained from the Professional Regulation Commission and Commission on Higher Education. The study reported that 3 or 30% TEIs had sustained exemplary overall licensure passing percentage. Interestingly, in contrast to the institutional accreditation and program accreditation that TEIs programs are certified about a total of 7 or 70% indicated a fluctuating trend in the overall passing percentage. It further disclosed that a considerable number of premier TEIs are underperforming and grappling to achieve the 60% national passing standard. The study findings seemed to suggest for the need to incite discussions on the de-contextualization and re-contextualization of policies on teacher education programmes in the Philippines.

Key Words: Teacher Education Institution, Licensure, and Documentary analysis.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Are the premier Teacher Education Institutions ailing in term of educational quality? It is viewed in the context of current Philippine Higher Education (HE) that performance passing in the board examination is one of the parameters of the institutional quality outcome. In the Philippines, the professional practice of the teaching profession requires a valid license and registration from the state licensure agency. This is lucidly elucidated in the Republic Act No.7836 otherwise known the Philippine **Teachers** Professionalization Act of 1994 as (www.chanrobles.com/republicactno7836.htm). This law was enacted to uplift the quality of the country's educational system across all levels.

With the continuous expansion of HE in the country, there is also a prevalence of teacher education programmes proliferation not only in Teacher Education Institutions but also in the private-run HEIs. At present, there is a growing number of tertiary institutions in the country with a total of 2,353 comprised by public schools 233, State Colleges and Universities (SUCs) 111, SUCs satellite 447, Local Colleges (LCUs) 108 and Special Higher Education 14. In terms of private-run institutions, there is a total of 1, 673 indicating non-sectarian with the biggest number 1,232 followed by and autonomous and deregulated private HEIs with the least number (http://web.ched.gov.ph/higher-education-indicators/). The presence of a good number of HEIs in the country indicates access to tertiary education and quality has been a topic of interest. But the question of whether the expansion of teacher education programmes in the country also goes with quality is something that needs to be investigated. Recent statistics show that in terms of educational outcomes, it also one of the courses with poor performance in terms of licensure passing. According to the Commission on Higher Education, the 6 priority disciplines which are sciences, medicines & health related, engineering and technology, agriculture, agricultural engineering, and veterinary medicine, teacher education are at the bottom in terms of licensure performance passing. It has consistently indicated a very distressing passing rate that is below the national standard from the past 3 years from 2014-2017. Specifically, in 2014 it only a passing rate of (33.50%), (34.34%) in 2015 and (32.37%) in (http://web.ched.gov.ph/higher-education-indicators/). These statistics indicate that graduates from TEIs shortfall of the necessary pedagogic theories and competencies needed for the teacher education graduates to hurdle the BLEPT. The low passing rate of teacher education paints a bleak picture of Philippine's quality of teacher education programmes and a much-needed stance to TEIs should be made so as for the national government investment would not just be put to waste.

Literature and studies are consistent with what makes a student successfully pass the licensure examination. For instance, many studies have been undertaken to find out factors to board exam passing. Some recent studies have proven the significant relationship between licensure examination, academic performance and achievement (Rabanal, 2016; Montebon, 2005; Dangan, 2015; Emeralda & Espinosa, 2015; Pascua & Navalta, 2011), predictor of LET passing (Ferrer, et.al., 2015; Quiambao, et.al., 2015 and Gerundio & Balagtas, 2014), high admission and retention (Bañez &

Pardo, 2016, and Gerundio & Balagtas, 2014), mock review and preparation (Puertos, 2015; Consorcia, 2016; Visco, 2015; Tarun, 2017; Gerundio & Balagtas, 2014; Montemayor, et.al. 2009), emotional domain and cognitive as predictors to pass the exam (Cortez, et.al., 2017).

While it is true that the teachers and the university remain to be critical in cementing prospective teachers' pedagogic theories and skills, the role of quality assurance mechanisms cannot just be underscored. This is the reason why state-run tertiary institutions are closely monitored by governmental regulating agencies such as the Commission on Higher Education and the Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines (AACCUP). Aside from regulating and monitoring, these governmental regulating agencies encourage HEIs to submit for voluntary accreditation because the process offers numerous benefits to the institution. Yet there is a scant of research on evaluation of TEIs performance in licensure examination involving a longitudinal investigation. Therefore, this study attempts to examine overall licensure performance in the BLEPT of the leading TEIs through a documentary analysis using archival data. It is hoped that this study could provide empirical data for educationalist, curriculum writers, policy reformist, and governmental quality assurance body to strengthen the TEIs institutional quality outcomes. Additionally, this paper also offers constructive insights for research-based policy recommendation to policy reformist and partner industries in crafting policies that redefine criteria for educational quality.

2. RESEARCH FOCUS AND RESEARCH OUESTIONS:

As referred to in the introduction of this investigation, performance in the board examination of HEIs is a parameter by which higher education institutions is measured in terms of institutional quality outcome. In the underlying investigation, the main focus is to primarily examine the BLEPT overall passing percentage of the leading TEIs. Thus, the study was directed on the research questions below:

- 1. What is the current status of the TEIs
 - 1.1 Program Accreditation:
 - 1.2 Institutional Accreditation;
- 2. What is the overall performance trends of the premier TEIs in the BLEPT?
- 3. What policy recommendations can be offered based on the salient results of the study?

3. METHOD:

This investigation utilized documentary analysis method to analyze archival data on the BLEPT performance of the premier TEIs from A.Y. 2008-2017. The study is premised that examining the performance passing of TEIs in the past 10 years would offer policymakers, curricularist, university stakeholders, and government regulating agencies an empirical data on enhancing teacher education programmes of the country. In this investigation, performance passing is operationally defined as the TEIs overall passing percentage of the TEIs that includes both (1) first-time and (2) retakers of the BLEPT.

Profile of respondent institutions:

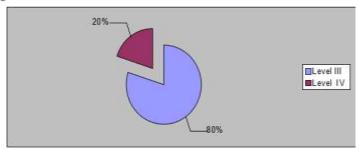
Sampled institutions of the current study comprised 10 premier TEIs from across different regions in the country that includes: Philippine Normal University, Manila; Cebu Normal University, Cebu City; Leyte Normal University, Tacloban City; Palawan State University, Puerto Princessa; Pangasinan State University, Lingayen; West Visayas State University, Iloilo; Bukidnon State University, Malaybalay; Bicol University, Daraga Albay; Mariano Marcos State University, Loag; and Western Mindanao State University, Zamboanga City; These ten TEIs were chosen as samples of the study because of their pivotal role as the country's premier and leading TEIs. The profile of the sampled institutions is presented through a graphical type. Looking at the institutional profile as presented in Figure 1, the sampled premier TEIs hold both programmes and institutional accreditation. There is an overwhelming number of TEIs with programme accreditation by the CHED, (N=7 or 70%), are identified as Center of Excellence and a total of (N=3 or 30%) hold the distinct title of Center of Development.

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Figure 1. Teacher Education Institutions with a program accredited

As regard to the institutional accreditation (see Figure 2) granted by the AACCUP, a government quality assurance body for state-funded higher education institutions, there is a total of (N=2, 20%) Level IV which is the highest level accredited teacher education institutions while there is a total of (N=8, or 80%) had Level III institutional

Figure 2. Teacher Education Institution with institutional accreditation



Data collection and analysis: Collection of data took over a period of 6 months. Governmental agencies websites were the primary source of data in this study. Data on BLEPT results of sampled TEIs from 2008-2017 in BSEd and BEEd were accessed through the website of the PRC while for the institutional and programme accreditation were accessed from the university website and validated through CHED website. Results of the BLEPT on July/August were used in this investigation because most of the takers are fresh graduates and are considered as first-time takers only very few are re-takers. This would provide a more accurate analysis of the current status of TEIs quality of teacher education programmes in the country.

4. FINDINGS:

The succeeding sections provide the salient findings of the study. As Illustrated in Figure 3a, all premier teacher education institutions displayed a "fluctuating" performance passing trends in BEEd. Comparatively, of the 10 premier TEIs that has consistently maintained the national passing standard in the past 10 years, only Philippine Normal University, (88%, 92%, 79.35%, 84.51%, 96.3%, 91.34%, 91.84%, 95.16%, 91.85% and 86.36%) respectively. This was followed by West Visayas State University, (86%, 82%, 68.51%, 89.95%, 99.46%, 94.76%, 96.15%, 87.61%, 82.23% and 88.36%). There are also TEIs that displayed incosistent overall performance passing such as Mariano Marcos State University, (77%, 73%, 70.63%, 54.73%, 89.66%, 74.65%, 77.35%, 78.44%, 87.72%, and 80.63%), Cebu Normal University, (76%, 64%, 56.43%, 70.3%, 89.39%, 71.35%, 80.16%, 80.12%, 73.94%, and 73.85%) respectively. Conversely, there are also underperforming TEIs with performance passing below the national passing standard in the past 10 years such as Bicol University, (63%, 42%, 37.3%, 47.27%, 79.14%, 65.6%, 42.37%, 45.83%, 42.86%, and 30.77%), Palawan State University (56%, 17%, 35.96%, 55.06%, 61.06%, 45.58%, 41.6%, 31.68%, 40.94%, and 49.4%) and Pangasinan State University (38%, 31%, 37.68%, 34.7%, 65.94%, 45.37%, 52.61%, 59%, 51.06%, and 61.24%) respectively. Surprisingly, there are also TEIs that reflected a "perflexing" performance. These TEIs includes: Bukidnon State University (29%, 18%, 12.75%, 19.12%, 47.97%, 26.31%, 31.38%, 27.09%, 30.06% and 26.64%), Leyte Normal University (41%, 24%, 22.47%, 28.35%, 56.36%, 35.17%, 36.2%, 33.52%, 32.97%, and 33.53%), Western Mindanao State University (40%, 25%, 25.48%, 21.82%, 55.16%, 13.16%, 48.47%, 36.08%, 36.3%, and 32.15%) respectively. It can be observed from the figure that the leading TEIs had better performance in terms of the passing percentage with 99.46% in 2012 as the highest by the West Visayas State University.

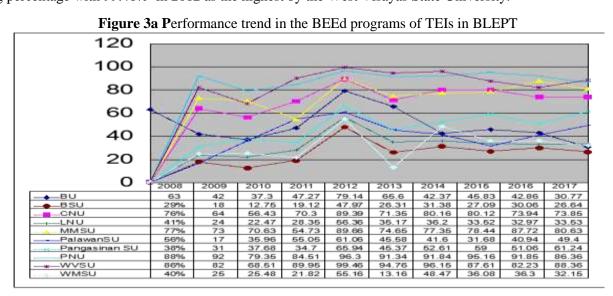


Figure 3b presents the performance trend for the Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSEd) in the BLEPT of Teacher Education Institutions. It can be shown from the figure that the same performance trend was displayed by the premier TEIs. It resembles performance of the BEEd programme, characterized by a "fluctuating" pattern. Of the 10 sampled TEIs, only (N=1, or 10%) Philippine Normal University (88%, 87%, 85.82%, 88.8%, 92.96%, 89.43%, 88.08%, 91.79%, 87.74%, and 94.44%) respectively had persistently maintained beyond the national passing standard that is 60%. This was followed by West Visayas State University (67%, 70%, 59.67%, 62.62%, 77.69%, 67.02%, 62.33%, 67.29%, 60.17%, and 79.6%), Cebu Normal University had declined in 2009 (56%) and 2010 (54.93%). It surpassed the passing percentage in 2011 and the succeeding years (63.15%, 75.24%, 68.5%, 71.61%, 79.02%, 75.08%, and 83.78%) respectively while Mariano Marcos State University had exceeded beyond the national passing rate except in 2010 (42.2%) and 2011 (57.76%) where the passing percentage was below 60 percent (77%, 71%, 75.38%, 71.08%, 66.29%, 76.29%, 70.59%, and 85.14%) respectively.

It can be gleaned from the same figure, that there are TEIs that are underperforming such as: Pangasinan State University (53%, 49%, 48%, 63.91%, 72.37%, 57.06%, 56.38%, 65.16%, 57.14%, and 66.79%), Leyte Normal University (40%, 36%, 33.17%, 41.1%, 60.97%, 51.62%, 34.63%, 57.22%, 52.62%, and 63.73%), Bicol University with only in 2008 obtained a passing percentage parallel with that of the national standard passing percentage which is 60% (60%, 46%, 41.35%, 44.5%, 57.21%, 52.13%, 43.12%, 41.19%, 24.91%, and 41.52%), Palawan State University (52%, 48%, 51.24%, 55.03%, 53.61%, 58.87%, 47.06%, 47.08%, 41.59%, and 54.83%). TEIs with perflexing performance passing are: Bukidnon State University (27%, 15%, 9.42%, 23.44%, 34.92%, 24.35%, 27.09%, 28.71%, 26.89%, and 35.05%). Western Mindanao State University (32%, 28%, 20.79%, 25.19%, 41.54%, 29.58%, 30.34%, 33.39%, 19.94%, 35.81%) respectively. It can also be noted from the graph that TEIs generally had the highest passing in 2012 indicating above the national passing percentage with Philippine Normal University demonstrated the highest passing (92.96%) while 90% of the TEIs had low passing in 2010 having 9.42% as the lowest passing percentage. The above results on the BLEPT passing percentage for the Academic Year 2008-2017 indicate that majority of TEIs are "grappling" to achieve the national passing standards.

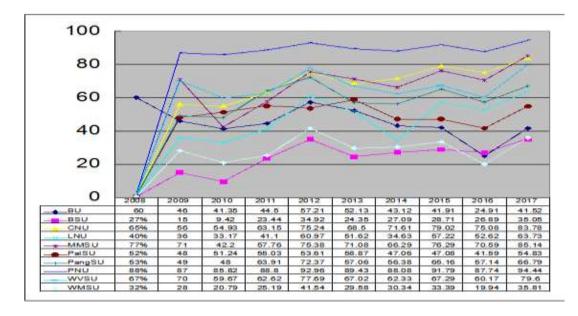


Figure 3b Performance trend in the BSEd programs of TEIs in BLEPT

5. DISCUSSIONS:

In essence, the premier Teacher Education Institutions' programmes are bent on educational quality. This is evidenced by the current status of their institutional and program accreditation granted by governmental regulating agencies. Sustaining excellence on institutional passing percentage in the BLEPT is an indicator of caliber professors in the academe, quality programmes, and institutional quality culture. There are premier teacher education institutions with Level 3 & 4 institutional accreditation and programme certified by the CHED as Center of Excellence that demonstrated high passing percentage in the BLEPT such in the case of Philippine Normal University, West Visayas State University, and Cebu Normal University. This could be ascribed to the fact these TEIs were the oldest among the leading TEIs and has already embedded clear and strong institutional quality assurance mechanisms. The result may be interpreted to mean that quality assurance such as the institutional and programme accreditation could be a factor to the overall licensure performance passing of the institutions in the BLEPT.

The underperformance passing in the BLEPT characterized by "fluctuating" trend of the TEIs depicts that these universities failed to perform their mandate as COEs and CODs in teacher education programmes. The recognition of

TEIs programmes as COE and COD is anchored under Section 8 of R.A 7722 which elucidates that CHED shall "identify, support and develop potential centers of excellence in program areas needed for the development of world-class scholarship, nation building, and national development." (https://www.lawphil.net/statutes/repacts/ra1994/ra_7722_1994.html). It may also point to an incongruence between teacher education preparation programmes and the competencies that teacher education students are to be tested. Not unless PRC would make the BLEPT exam be made accessible to the general public particularly to the educationalist and experts for further analysis and explore its validity and reliability, only then question whether the exam really determines BLEPT takers' competence can be accorded with clear answers. This result could have implications on the enhancement of curricular programmes that is congruent with the minimum standard requirements of the CHED.

The result also disclosed that the majority of the premier TEIs in both programmes BEEd and BSEd can barely maintain the national passing standard that is (60%). This result runs parallel with the study outcome of Ladia, et. al. (2012) wherein COEs and CODs Teacher Education Institutions had below 50% passing percentage. They further recommended that program accreditation should be re-evaluated and awarded to universities that deserve the prestigious title of COEs and CODs. Should their level of institutional accreditation be downgraded and programme accreditation be withheld? The CHED together with the AACUP should try to look into the systemic problems on educational quality of TEIs. It must not just make a close stance of monitoring but likewise find the gray areas and impose an immediate and definitive solutions to the loopholes of the country's enduring issues on quality education. TEIs are the state-operated Higher Education Institutions that receive annual funding for its operation. It is only fitting that they should aspire to obtain a reasonable outcome on the overall licensure passing not because it is mandated by them but more importantly the parents and the government had invested. It is important to note that equitable access in education without quality is not just a waste of government investment and the disservice to the university stakeholders but fuels stagnation of human capital development and redound to the nation's decline of the economy.

6. CONCLUSION, POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS, AND LIMITATIONS:

This investigation, a documentary analysis of the overall licensure passing percentage of the leading TEIs in the Philippines provide empirical evidence of the current status of the country's teacher education programmes. By analyzing TEIs performance in the BLEPT it offers research-based data for policy reformers in reformulating existing policies concerning teacher education preparations. The conclusion below can be drawn from the salient findings of the study.

The results of the study showed that the oldest normal schools (N=3 or 30%) with a distinct title as Center of Excellence (COE) in teacher education programmes and with Level III and IV institutional accreditation demonstrated sustained high overall passing percentage. We can safely deduce that the continuous and rigorous process of institutional and program accreditation plays a pivotal role in educational quality. Therefore, the voluntary and self-evaluation process of quality assurance is tantamount to quality institutional outcomes. Interestingly, there is a good number of TEIs (N=7 or 70%) plagued by fluctuating trends of performance in the overall licensure passing percentage despite the fact that quality assurance is of paramount importance among these sampled TEIs as reflected in their level and status of their institutional and program accreditation. The investigation further showed that there is a considerable number of premier TEIs that are performing below the national standard passing standard. This empirical result is an indication of a loophole in the monitoring and regulation of the country's premier teacher education institutions by the governmental quality assurance agencies. Additionally, it can be inferred from the findings that there is an existence of asymptomatic issues surrounding the teacher education programmes of the premier TEIs. It calls for a paradigm shift in the way Teacher Education Institutions are preparing their students. They have to initiate innovative reforms in teacher preparation programmes while advocating strong academe-industry partnership. Such reform will not only address the gap between theory and practice but more importantly cement students pedagogical theories and skill needed for teacher education graduates to hurdle the licensure examination.

The salient finding indicating the majority of TEIs with low overall BLEPT passing indicates current challenges and caveats to more serious problems not only on teacher education programmes but more so on the present quality assurance framework. The need for an immediate long-term intervention has to be collaboratively endeavored by educationalist, policymakers, university stakeholders and researchers to further explore the cause of such underperformance of TEIs in the BLEPT. The subsequent section discusses policy recommendations that are anchored on the results of the current study.

Re-frame TEIs admission standard and retention policy: For most experts and researchers they are convinced that students' academic achievement and performance could predict their board performance (Esmeralda & Espinosa, 2015; Ferrer, et.al., 2015; Quiambao, et.al., 2015; Gerundio & Balagtas, 2014; Tarun 2017; and Hena, et.al., 2014) Some researchers have pointed out the importance of admission and retention to student's success in the licensure exam (Bañez & Pardo, 2016). Thus, it is suggested that a stricter admission & retention policy should be implemented. On the admission aspect, a National Teacher Admission Test [NTAT] across all TEIs could be introduced. Moreover, revisit

retention criteria and initiate a parallel retention policy that ensures only those who thrive in teacher education programmes are retained.

Cohesive and integrated faculty development [FD] program: Undeniably teachers contribute to the success of students academic preparation and licensure success. Poor Faculty Development (FD) results in poor organizational outcomes. With the presence of a clear institutional FD, it can translate into sustained relevance and excellence in institutional outcomes. Hence, TEIs should capacitate their faculty members through the development of a comprehensive FD plan geared towards enhancing research skills and instructional competence.

Enhanced TEIs curricular content: Within the context of relevance and inclusive development, TEIs should continuously evaluate their curricula. While it's true that any curriculum content should be ideally wholistic and systematic, it must also be crafted in a highly congruent with the CHED & PRC competencies that the teacher candidate shall be tested. This would mean that HEIs have to institutionalize a rigorous process of enhancing and reviewing of their curricula to ensure sustained relevance, rigor, and congruence through a strong academe-stakeholders-industry partnership.

Revisit governmental quality assurance [QA] framework and policy: The findings indicated that the majority of the premier teacher education institutions with distinct title of COEs and CODs has demonstrated low passing percentage in the BLEPT. The governmental regulating bodies should therefore revisit QA framework by refining the quality indicators on the granting of the institutional and the program accreditation for higher education. Since CHED is the sole governmental agency responsible for monitoring and evaluation of the state-funded tertiary institutions, must look into the compliance of TEIs on their institutional and programme accreditation.

The institutionalization of parallel mock examination: There are studies that explore the importance of institutional review programs. It has been proven to be a significant predictor of licensure passing (Tarun, 2017; Montemayor, et.al., 2009; Ferrer, et., al. 2015; and Arce & Belen 2011; Ferrer, et.al, 2015; and Gerundio & Balagtas, 2014). Other studies have indicated a positive correlation with licensure performance (Puertos, 2015), and a positive impact on licensure performance (Tan, 2016 and Banez & Pardo, 2016). It is therefore imperative to offer parallel pre-licensure examinations across all leading TEIs.

The findings should be viewed cautiously because the investigation only involved one type of HEIs. Hence results are not generalizable to a wider context of the population in the Philippine HE. The current study results warrant for further investigation on the structural factors that cause the perplexing overall performance of TEIs in the BLEPT. It is suggested that replication of the investigation with the inclusion of a larger group context such as privately owned, sectarian, non-sectarian and local colleges of their first-time takers and re-takers may be investigated to trace the current state of the country's teacher education programmes.

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