

Research Article

Correlation of Comprehensive Examination and Licensure Examination among MAPEH Major Graduates of Batangas State University Pablo Borbon I

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Abstract: The study aimed to determine and recognize the correlation of comprehensive examination and licensure examination among MAPEH graduates. Specifically, it sought to find out MAPEH graduates' performance in the comprehensive exam and LET in terms of the professional education, general and major subjects and correlation between the students' comprehensive exam result and their LET performance. The study used the descriptive research method in determining the correlation between the comprehensive exam results and respondents' LET rating. It also utilized a survey questionnaire as the main gathering instrument in order to obtain the necessary information. The respondents were the 44 MAPEH graduates who completed their degree in education within the last three years in the College of Teacher Education, Batangas State University Main Campus. It was revealed that majority of the MAPEH graduates excelled better in the general subject components for both the comprehensive exam and LET rather than in the professional and major subjects. Part also of the findings was that CE results were not significantly related to the respondents' LET rating. The study recommended that the construction and administration of the comprehensive exam should be modified so as to make it a better indicator of the MAPEH graduates' performance in LET. Items for both the professional and major subject areas must be given much attention and that the MAPEH graduates must be provided with regular review sessions for CE and LET. Teachers should also be updated with the curriculum standards prescribed by CHED and PRC as well as the guidelines in constructing pre-board examination.

Keywords: Comprehensive Examination, LET, MAPEH graduates.

Introduction

One of the major concerns of the Philippine government is to improve the quality of education. This is in adherence to the belief that an enhanced educational system is paramount to the holistic development of the citizens necessary for nation building and economic progress. For this reason, much is invested to achieve better quality of education and crucial to this goal is the upliftment of teachers' competency. The need to improve the quality of teachers is then shouldered by the teacher education institutions (TEIs) which produce education graduates who are expected to work effectively in any educational institutions. Trainings provided by TEIs are meant to mold their graduates into becoming individuals who are indeed qualified to exercise their profession. Teacher education institutions in the Philippines consider performance in the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) as a measure of educational quality.

When Republic Act (RA) 7836, (an Act to Strengthen the Regulation and Supervision of the Practice of Teaching in the Philippines and Prescribing a Licensure Examination for Teachers and for Other Purposes) otherwise known as the “Philippine Teachers Professionalization Act of 1994” became a law on December 16, 1994, the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) was tasked to strengthen the supervision and regulation of the teaching profession.

The PRC then prescribed education teacher graduates to take the LET. Article IV, Section 27 of the same Act stipulates that except otherwise allowed under this Act, no person shall practice or offer to practice the teaching profession in the Philippines or be appointed as teacher to any position calling for a teaching position without having previously obtained a valid certificate of registration and a valid professional license from the Commission. The registration for a valid professional license requires the registrant to pass the LET. Legally speaking, the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) is the professional board examination given by the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) to determine who should be allowed to teach. In accordance with the rules of PRC, only qualified and certified teachers are supposed to teach. Salandanan (2001) emphasized that LET provided a valuable framework against which teaching practice can be measured and certified. It can easily be considered a critical venue to continuing professional growth and development. This professional license serves as a passport to practice the profession. As asserted by many authorities in the academe, teaching is a profession with a long and cherished tradition. It is universally acknowledged as a respected and highly-esteemed career. Its lifelong mission consists of relentless pursuit of knowledge, development of skills proficiency in work dimensions, and of course a license to teach obtained by passing the Licensure Examination for Teachers.

Batangas State University in Batangas province, with multiple campuses—the main being in the heart of Batangas City—is one of the public Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in southern part of the Philippines offering Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEd) and Bachelor in Secondary Education (BSEd) courses. As part of a community of state universities whose charters are granted by the legislative act of the State no less through the legislature, BSU endeavored to take matters seriously and therefore embraced the task to produce teacher education graduates who can pass the LET. To maintain a standard, the obtained mean score in the LET must, whenever possible and plausible, be higher than the national percentage rate of passing.

As part of the commitment to help students hurdle the licensure examinations, Batangas State University imposes comprehensive examinations on its students. Technically defined, a comprehensive examination is a mock professional examination which is done in teacher education institutions before graduation. Two levels of rationale backs the logic of school's like BSU in espousing for the conduct of comprehensive examinations: One, to assess how students can fare on the boards; and Two, to give students an honest feedback on their academic standing and help them improve areas that needs development while the board exams are still to happen.

Nevertheless, the use of comprehensive examinations has become overly sensationalized, or in other parlance, heavily overused, by some institutions that inspired debate over its relevance to a students' collegiate studies. Some institutions have used mock examinations or comprehensive examinations as a determinant in permitting a student graduate, advance on a year level (i.e. from third year to fourth year) and/or letting a student take the board exam. As for the last option, it cannot be denied that schools use statistics of results of its students in

board exams as an indicator of the quality of education it teaches, the school has the undeniable stimulus to use comprehensive examinations as a valid step to “weed out” students who are about to graduate but due to some factors are still not “ripe” to successfully hurdle the board exams which will definitely cast adverse effects on the overall performance of the school in the board exams.

For most recent years, there have been reports about the deteriorating quality of teacher education graduates as reflected in the PRC-LET results. Graduates’ low performance in government professional examinations had subsequently put the quality of higher education into question and had indicated a decline in its standards. Recent studies showed that an average teacher education graduate had a weak basic communication ability, literacy, quantitative skills and higher order thinking skills. Moreover, an average teacher education graduate possessed below content knowledge of the subject matter and he was ill-equipped with the teaching skills required to teach.

Teacher education graduates of Batangas State University were not exempted from the foregoing scenario. Bat State U-College of Teacher Education had been consistently documenting a low passing percentage rate particularly in MAPEH graduates’ LET performance. It was also observed that MAPEH students were apprehensive to take comprehensive examinations despite being the last requirement they had to comply with in order to finish their course of study. This was assumed to have resulted from the negative perception of other MAPEH major students who had experienced taking the comprehensive exam for a number of times already. Aware of the above mentioned reality, the researcher was prompted to conduct a study to determine the correlation between the MAPEH graduates’ comprehensive exam result and their LET performance. It was also the premise of the researcher to determine the factors that had a vast influence on the LET achievement of most MAPEH graduates.

Methodology

The descriptive method was used in the study with a researcher-conducted questionnaire as the main data gathering instrument. The respondents of the study were the 44 MAPEH graduates of the College of Teacher Education who had participated in the Licensure Examination for Teachers from years 2013-2016. Frequency, percentage weighted mean, ranking and Pearson-r were the statistical tools applied in the data gathered in this study. To determine the typicality of responses, the following scales were used.

Scoring of Responses

Options	Scale Range	Verbal Interpretation
4	3.51 – 4.00	Strongly Agree
3	2.01 – 3.50	Agree
2	1.51 – 2.00	Disagree
1	1.00 – 1.50	Strongly Disagree

Results

1. Performance of the MAPEH Graduates in the Comprehensive Examination and Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) in the last three years

1.1 Professional Education: This is consists of subject to become professional when they enter the field of teaching. It exposes the students to the possible circumstances once they

become professional teachers. Table 1 presents the result of the performance of the MAPEH Graduates in the Comprehensive Examination and Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) in professional education subjects for the last three years.

Table 1. Professional Education

School Year	No. of Examinees	CE Passers	Percentage	LET Passers	Percentage
2013-2014	10	5	50	3	30
2014-2015	15	1	6.7	5	33.3
2015-2016	19	0	0	6	31.6
Total	44	6	13.6	14	31.8

For the professional subject, 50 percent or five out of ten examinees got a passing score for such area in the comprehensive exam for the academic year 2013-2014. On the contrary during the same school year, there was a decline in the graduates' performance as only three out of ten examinees or 30 percent of the testing group got a passing score for the professional education area in LET. In 2014-2015, only one out of 15 examinees or a passing rate of 6.7 percent was recorded in the said component for the comprehensive result.

In terms of the LET rating, the same batch of MAPEH graduates had remarkably shown a gradual improvement in their performance as 33.3 percent or 5 test takers passed the professional education component. But in the recently concluded comprehensive examination, none out of nineteen examinees or zero passing rate was documented for batch 2015-2016. However, a subsequent course of development on the graduates' performance was recorded as six test takers or 31.6 percent of the current testing population passed the said component in LET.

In CE, there was only a 13.6 passing percentage or six out of 44 test takers, whereas in LET, the results increased to 31.8 percent or 14 out of the entire population. It could be seen from the results that there was again a huge discrepancy between the passing rate achieved in the comprehensive examination result and the LET rating relative to the professional subject area.

The figures still indicated a low passing rate for professional subject area in both comprehensive and licensure examination. This would mean that most MAPEH graduates were not completely knowledgeable of the subjects associated to the teaching profession. Moreover, majority of the MAPEH graduates were not trained to answering items of which contexts would require situational analysis. This would also suggest that many of the faculty members assigned on professional subjects were not qualified to teach the area due to students' inability to comprehend items related to the said component. This would further agree with the recommendation of Soriano (2009) that MA/MS and PhD/EdD graduates should be assigned to teach professional subjects in education.

1.2 General Education: This is the academic introduction to the university. It exposes students to the fundamental ideas and intellectual activities that scholars across school scholars in the arts, the humanities, the social sciences and natural sciences draw on their work. Table 2 presents the result of the performance of the MAPEH Graduates in the Comprehensive Examination and Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) in general education subjects for the last three years.

Table 2. General Education

Academic Year	No. of Examinees	CE Passers	Percentage	LET Passers	Percentage
2013-2014	10	6	60	6	60
2014-2015	15	0	0	5	33.3
2015-2016	19	1	5.3	14	73.7
Total	44	7	15.9	25	56.8

As what could be gleaned from the table, the first batch of MAPEH graduates had the same percentage of passers amounting to 60 percent or six out of ten examinees in terms of the general subject component for both comprehensive and licensure examinations. In the succeeding year, none of the testing population or zero passing percentage rate was recorded in the general subject for the comprehensive test whereas 33.3 percent or only five out of 15 examinees was able to pass the said area for LET. The recent batch of MAPEH graduates achieved a 5.3 passing rate or one out of 19 CE test takers passed the general subject area while 73.7 percent or 14 out of the same number of examinees passed the general subject component for LET. In total, out of 44 examinees recorded in the last three years, there were only a 15.9 percentage of passers or seven test takers did not fail in the general education subject for the comprehensive examination. Further, 56.8 percent of the total number of LET examinees or 25 test takers were able to pass the general subject component in LET. The general evaluation implied that there was a big disparity between the students' comprehensive result and their LET rating in relation to the general component area.

Respondents' LET rating for this part could suggest that majority of the MAPEH graduates might have a good mastery of the general subjects though they were not related to their field of specialization and that the content of the general education curriculum had sufficiently matched the content of the comprehensive and licensure exams.

1.3 Major subjects: This is consists of the subjects that develops the students, mentally, and skillfully about the MAPEH subject. It allows the students to learn the skill and theories that are needed when they start teaching. The table 3 presents presents the result of the performance of the MAPEH Graduates in the Comprehensive Examination and Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) in major subjects for the last three years.

Table 3. Major Subject

Academic Year	No. of Examinees	CE Passers	Percentage	LET Passers	Percentage
2013-2014	10	6	60	3	30
2014-2015	15	2	13.3	5	33.3
2015-2016	19	0	0	7	36.8
Total	44	8	18.2	15	34.1

From 2013–2014, more than half or 60 percent of the testing population passed the major subject in the comprehensive examination. Unfortunately in the same academic period, only half of CE passing rate or 30 percent of the testing group succeeded in their field of specialization for LET. In the following academic period, only two out of fifteen or 13.3 percent passed the major subjects in the comprehensive exam while five or 33.3 percent of the group made it to the passing rate cut-off in LET. In 2015-2016, none of the testing population passed in the area of specialization for comprehensive exam but surprisingly,

seven out of 19 examinees or 36.8 percent got the passing score for the said component in LET. In summary, out of 44 examinees, only eight or 18.2 percent passed in the major subject for the comprehensive examination while 15 or 34.1 percentage of passers was recorded in LET. It could be observed that similar to the outcomes yielded from the MAPEH graduates' performance in general and professional subjects, there was again a big difference in the passing rate between the comprehensive results and LET rating. Despite the gradual improvement noted from the comprehensive and the LET result, it could still be noticed that MAPEH graduates had been consistently earning low passing rates for the last three years. This was indicative of the inadequacy of the students' knowledge on their area of specialization. This would also go against the findings of Soriano (2009) who concluded that majority of the respondents who passed the LET from the secondary level belonged to MAPEH major. This would clearly imply that MAPEH graduates also lacked the mastery of the subject that they were supposed to teach.

2. Correlation between the Students' Comprehensive Exam Result and their LET Performance

This showed the tabular representation on correlation between the students comprehensive examination result in their LET performance. The table 4 presents the correlation between the students Comprehensive Examination results and LET results. The researchers made use of Pearson -r correlation test.

Table 4. Relationship of Class 2014-2016 BSED (MAPEH) Graduates' Comprehensive Exam Results and LET Results

Component	Pearson-r value	Correlation Interpretation	p-value	Decision on H_0	Interpretation
Gen. Ed.	0.029	Negligible	0.854	Accept	Not Significant
Prof. Ed.	0.212	Negligible	0.167	Accept	Not Significant
Major	0.111	Negligible	0.474	Accept	Not Significant
Over-all	0.201	Negligible	0.192	Accept	Not Significant

Significant at p-value < 0.05

As seen in the results, the obtained Pearson-r value was a 0.029 which meant that their ratings on the general education component of the comprehensive examination had a negligible positive correlation with the ratings they acquired on the general education component of their LET. This meant that at the very least, that the graduates' comprehensive results could not tell whether they would achieve the same rating or higher in LET. Also, it could be seen that the p-value of 0.854 was greater than the 0.05 alpha level or significance level. This indicated that the null hypothesis stating that there was no significant relationship between the graduates' ratings on the general education component of their comprehensive examination and LET was thus, accepted. This also meant that the researchers were 95% confident that though there was a negligible positive correlation between the two, their relationship was still insignificant.

On the other hand, the acquired 0.212 Pearson-r value suggested that that the respondents' rating on the professional education component of the comprehensive examination had a negligible positive correlation with the ratings they obtained from the professional education component of their LET. This meant that at the very least, the rating of the MAPEH graduates in the professional education component of their comprehensive exam could not really specify if they were to get the same rating or higher in their LET. Further, it could be observed that p-value of 0.167 was greater than the 0.05 alpha or significance level which

meant that the researchers were to accept the null hypothesis asserting that there was no significant relationship between the graduates' ratings on the professional education component of their comprehensive examination and LET. This also implied that the researchers had a 95 % assurance that whatever negligible correlation the two had, it was still insignificant.

Also, when the graduates' ratings on the major subject component of their comprehensive examination and LET were compared, the researchers obtained a 0.143 Pearson-r value which meant that the respondents' rating on the major subject component of the comprehensive examination had a negligible positive correlation with the ratings they acquired on the major subject component of their LET. This manifested that at the very least, the rating of the MAPEH graduates in the major subject component of their comprehensive exam could not really predict whether they would get the same rating or higher in their LET. In addition, it could also be noted that the p-value of 0.474 was greater than the 0.05 alpha or significance level which meant that the null hypothesis affirming that there was no significant relationship between the graduates' ratings on the major subject component of their comprehensive examination and LET was thereby accepted. This also implied that the researchers were 95% confident that whatever negligible correlation the two had, it was also insignificant.

Lastly, when the graduates' over-all ratings on their comprehensive examination and LET were compared, the obtained Pearson-r value of 0.201 indicated that their rating on the comprehensive examination had a negligible positive correlation with the ratings they acquired on their LET. This meant that at the very least, the respondents' rating in the comprehensive exam could not specify whether they would attain similar rating in LET. It could also be gleaned from the results that the p-value of 0.192 was greater than the 0.05 alpha or significance level which led the researchers to accept the null hypothesis that there was no significant relationship between the graduates' ratings on the comprehensive examination and LET. This meant that they were 95% confident that even if there was a negligible positive correlation between the two, it was not significant.

On a general perspective, the foregoing results were found to be consistent with the findings depicted in the MAPEH graduates' performance on all components in both comprehensive and licensure examination. Results on correlation of the components as well as students' over-all rating in both exams further supported the varying achievements of the respondents in relation to the different areas in CE and LET. This was a manifestation that comprehensive results could not be considered a good predictor for identifying students' chances of passing the LET. This was also in contrast with the findings of Arce and Belen (2011) who found out that there was a significant correlation between the pre-board and LET results both in the general and professional courses.

Discussions

From the results of the study, the following findings were obtained.

1. Performance of the MAPEH Graduates in the Comprehensive Examination and Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) in the last three years

1.1 Professional Education: Five or half of the testing population passed the part in CE while only three or 30 percent got the passing score for LET during the academic year 2013-2014. The second batch got a passing percentage of 6.7 percent for the professional subject in CE while there were five takers or 33.3 percent of the group passed it in LET. In 2015-2016,

one of the poor performances in this component for CE was recorded as none from the batch of examinees passed while 14 or 31.8 percent of the group passed in LET. In total, 13,6 percent or six passers were documented in this area for CE while 14 takers or 31.6 percent got a passing score in this component for LET.

1.2 General Education: In 2013-2014, six or 60 percent of the takers passed this part in both comprehensive examination and LET. In 2014-2015, a zero passing percentage was recorded in this area for comprehensive examination whereas five or 33.3 percent of the testing group passed it in LET. From 2015-2016, only one examinee or 15 percent of the testing population got a passing score in the general subject component for the comprehensive exam while 14 out of 19 examinees or 73.7 percent passed this part in LET. In general, out of 44 examinees, there were only seven takers or 15.9 percent passed this component in the comprehensive exam and 25 examinees or 56.8 percent made it to the passing percentage cut-off in LET.

1.3 Major Subject: In 2013-2014, 60 percent or six CE takers passed this component whereas only three LET takers or 30 percent of the group passed in this area. For the following academic period, only two out of 15 examinees or 13.3 percent passed this component in CE while five LET takers or 33.3 percent of the batch passed in this area. In 2015-2016, this batch recorded another zero passing percentage rate for this area in CE and seven LET examinees or 36.8 percent passed the professional subject. In general, out of 44 examinees, only eight CE examinees or 18.2 percent passed in this component while 15 or 34.1 percent of the LET testing population passed in the same area.

2. Correlation between the Students' Comprehensive Exam Result and their LET Performance

The findings revealed that there was only a negligible positive correlation between the CE results and the LET rating in terms of the general education component as this part obtained a pearson-r value of 0.029 and a p-value of 0.854. In the same vein, there was also a negligible positive correlation between the CE outcome and the LET result in relation to the professional education area as this gained a pearson-r value of 0.212 and a p-value of 0.167. Likewise, a negligible positive correlation was again revealed between the CE result and the LET rating relative to the respondents' field of specialization as only 0.111 was the obtained pearson-r value and 0.474 p-value was achieved. In summary, the pearson-r value of 0.201 and a p-value of 0.192 indicated a negligible positive correlation between the over-all CE result and LET rating. These further implied that all the components for both CE and LET had no significant relationships despite their slight correlations.

It was concluded that majority of the MAPEH graduates excelled better in the general subject components for both the comprehensive exam and LET rather than in the professional and major subjects. There was no significant relationship between the comprehensive result and the respondents' LET rating.

From the findings and conclusions of the study it was recommended that the focus should be given in making the test items for professional and major subjects parts of the comprehensive examination as this was where students mostly failed in CE and LET. Similar studies for checking correlation between CE and LET in other years should be conducted for validation of the results obtained in this study and the exploration of other predictors in LET.

Conflicts of interest: The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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