

Taking the Licensure Examination for Teachers: Why a hard job for BEED Graduates?

Dr. Susan B. Pineda, Ms. Charissa May R. Fernandez, Mr. Jerome J. Revidizo

College of Education, Marinduque State University, Philippines

Corresponding Author email: susanbarbosapineda@gmail.com,
fernandezcharissal@gmail.com, revidizojerome58@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper explores the Licensure Examination for Professional Teachers (LEPT) experience of Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED) examinees in 2014-2018 because this is one of the pressing concerns of the department in consonance to higher accreditation level of the department. This study attempted to determine the factors that make it a hard job for the graduates to take and pass the board examination. Data were obtained from the PRC results and the survey questionnaire administered to the respondents inclusive of five years since these years were the most challenging periods for the results obtained. This study adopted the descriptive qualitative research design in investigating the problem to describe the trend of the results in each year and identify the factors that make it a hard job for the examinees in taking and passing the board exams. In this study, findings revealed that among the five factors, LEPT content is moderately related to the LEP results attendance similar to attendance in the review classes. Meanwhile, preparation for the examination and the program curriculum were also claimed by the participants moderately related and do not affect them very much in taking the teachers' board examination. It is only the Course Preference/Career Choice with 3.96 composite mean that make it difficult in taking and passing the board examination a hard job. Majority of the graduates claimed that education course is not their course preference that made them reluctant to enhance their skills and abilities in the first three years of their stay in college. Still, others were not very serious when studying the program. They enrolled and took the program because this was the choice of their parents and other members of the family. LEPT results varies for the general education and professional education. Institutional passing rate is generally higher when compared to the national passing rate in 2014 and 2016 but lower in 2015 and 2017. It can be gleaned from the data that the general education passing rate varies. It dropped in 2015, increased in 2016, then dropped again in 2017. Meanwhile, the passing rate in professional education increased in 2016 but dropped constantly from 2016 to 2017. The results can be attributed to the fact that the examinees found the items in the general education easier and can be easily recalled.

Keywords: Trend Analysis, General Education Courses, Major Courses, Professional Courses, Licensure Examination for Professional Teachers

INTRODUCTION

Eligibility is the most essential qualification for a degree program required of a board examination like medicine, law, engineering courses, teacher education, etc. It qualifies an individual to be a part of the register/roster of confirmed professionals in different fields. It also

holds a stature and prestige that differentiates a normal college graduate to a full-pledged eligible teacher for instance. Moreover, eligibility serves as a passport to practice legally one's profession in his/her field of specialization to serve other people, clients, and groups who he/she should cater services. This eligibility on the other hand is earned by taking a board or bar examination as promulgated in the constitution and is conducted/administered by the Philippine Regulation Commission. The Licensure Examination for Professional Teacher (LEPT) is a qualifying exam for all graduates of Education program and who aspire to become eligible teachers. It is administered twice a year particular on the months of March and September of the year. In a couple of more or less three months, the results are uploaded on the website, hence, takers/examinees do not have to wait for a long time. Obtaining good results of the graduates' performance in the board exams is a big achievement for the graduates and to their respective institutions. However, for some graduates, it becomes a stressful situation as they become pressured due to different factors related in taking the board exams and there could be other reasons why some education graduates consider it a hard job.

Meanwhile, Ilanan, Abulencia, De Lara, and Fulgado (2020) emphasize the policy of the Philippine state that it "recognizes the vital role of teachers in nation building and development through a responsible and literate citizenry. Toward this end, the State shall ensure and promote quality education by proper supervision and regulations of the licensure examination and professionalization of the practice of the teaching profession.

Different studies were investigated as to the performance results of the examinees in the licensure examinations and as to the factors that influence the graduates in taking licensure examinations. For instance, in the study of Puertos (2015) on the performance on the licensure exam for teachers among the graduates of Liceo de Cagayan University, the General Weighted Average and the Pre-Board Examination results among the BEEd and the BSEd graduates of the university are found valid predictors in passing the LET.

Similarly, when Antiojo (2017) analyzed the results of the performance of BSED and BEED graduates of Cavite State University among their graduates from 2013-2015, the results indicate that though the performance of the examinees in terms of number of passers which was above the National Passing Rate, still the performances are quite low because those who passed might not have high ratings and those who failed have low scores. This situation was considered quite alarming if the trend continues, hence, a serious intervention must be done by the campus to reverse the trend.

On the other hand, Delos Angeles (2023) identified the variables that best predict the performance of the Teacher Education Graduates of a university in Cagayan Valley, Philippines to assess the quality of the process variables like curriculum and instruction which resulted to be LET most significantly related to LET performance. Attainment of course objectives, the relevance of course requirements, and mastery of the subject matter, were the curriculum variables, whereas, the relevance of written requirements and performance of instructors are for instructional quality. For Bellen, Abela, and Truya (2018) academic achievement in college and high school is associated with licensure performance specifically college academic achievement predicted LET performance. Meanwhile, Alova (2019) studied the graduates' performance in a certain public higher education institution in the Philippines and found that let results is generally passing but still quite low. The Math and English majors, however, exhibit high performance in the General and Professional Education subjects compared to the other programs and the Math majors got the highest performance in the Major subject among the other programs. It is noticeable that in the study of Murro, et.al. (2023), that the performance of both BSED and PEC

Graduate Takers in General Education Courses is higher compared to Professional Education Courses, hence, there is a significant difference in the results of performance. It was also found that there is a significant relationship between the general education course result and professional education course result. For Daddag et.al (2017), LET performance of the 146 Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education graduates in one higher education institution in the Philippines is influenced by low performance in academics and admission test including limited course audit units taken. On the other hand, in the study of Abrea et al. (2019), it was found that the graduates received outstanding performance in student teaching and showed more than one half of the graduates had fairly satisfactory rating in the comprehensive examination, however, most of them did not meet the expectations in the teachers' board examination, hence, there is a significant relationship between the LET results and the performance of the graduates in student teaching and in comprehensive examination.

Meanwhile, Bagadion and Tullao (2018) in their article wrote that in September 2017 LET Results, the Professional Regulations Commission announced that the board exams results is alarming considering the results for the elementary and secondary education teachers which had been the trend for the last 15 years. The test sets for General Education, Social Science/Social Studies including Professional Education. Philippine Education System were assessed to recommend possible action plans to enhance licensure examination item sets and align it to the required skills of the 21st century.

It is in this context that the researcher attempted to investigate the trend results of the board examination among the BEED graduates who took the Licensure Examination for Teachers in 2014-2018. This was the most critical period compared to the previous examinations since the results was sporadic as it significantly fluctuates when compared to the national passing rate requirement. Most of the graduates attend review classes in the province like CBRC who handle intensive sessions every weekend on Saturdays and Sundays of the week. There are also other review centers organized by private individuals or schools in the province. Meanwhile, other graduates go to Manila to attend reviews in PNU, MET, and other review centers. The main concern here is to investigate the factors that make it a hard job for the BEED graduates take and pass the Licensure Examination for Professional Teachers.

Objectives

The study aimed to investigate the different factors why it became a hard job for some BEED graduates of Marinduque State University to take and pass the Licensure Examination for Teachers in the school year 2014-2018.

Specifically, this aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What is the results of the licensure examination for teachers for the BEED graduates in 2014-2018 in the following components:
 - 1.1 general education subjects;
 - 1.2 professional subjects?
2. Is there a significant difference between the performance of the two groups of examinees in the months of March and September in 2014-2018?
3. What factors are related to taking and passing the Licensure Examination for Teachers

as claimed by the BEED examinees?

4. What interventions could be proposed based from the findings of the study?

Hypothesis

With the posed statement of the problem, the following hypotheses were drawn:

1. There is no significant difference in the performance of the graduates in 2014-2018 per March and September results.
2. There are no factors that are related in taking and passing the Licensure Examination for Teachers as experienced by the BEED examinees.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted the mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative (descriptive-comparative) analysis of LET results with qualitative exploration of the challenges faced by graduates in taking and passing the board examination. The used of mixed-methods is used in this study for an appropriate and precise interpretation of the findings. As defined by Dovetail Editorial Team (2023) mixed-methods allows for a deeper exploration of a research question. It can answer complex research queries that cannot be solved with either qualitative or quantitative research.

Population and Sampling

The respondents of the study were the BEED graduates in the school year 2014-2018 composed of male and female participants. The study is inclusive of five years because the results in these periods were sporadic. The population of the study consisted of 360 BEED graduates. The researcher intended to include them all to obtain a comprehensive understanding of their performance in the Licensure Examination as well as the factors that affect them in taking and passing the board exam.

However, despite the researcher's efforts to reach out and encourage participation from all 360 graduates, only 42 respondents were able to complete the survey. This response rate may be attributed to the fact that the target participants were likely engaged in various personal or professional commitments, making it difficult for many to respond despite multiple attempts to contact them. Still, the responses gathered from the 42 participants were thoroughly analyzed and provided valuable insights into the LET performance and the challenges faced by BEED graduates.

Data Gathering Instruments

In this research, survey questionnaire was the principal instrument used by the researcher. This was crafted after having read reviews of related literature. The copy was presented to an expert for evaluation and checking and was recommended for validation. An interview was also conducted to selected graduates of the program who were not members of the participants of the study. Questions were prepared in order to elicit information from each of the interviewees. Moreover, results of the examination inclusive of five years were the principal source of the data. These documents were released by the PRC per request made to the office.

Data Gathering Procedure

Data for this study were taken from different sources. It includes planning process, administration phase, and the retrieval phase.

Planning Process – Each president of the graduated batch were sent a letter through their email addresses and others were reached through chat messaging. Some of them were also interviewed to generate other information that may not be found in the survey.

Administration Phase – Survey Questionnaires were administered through the help of a representative in each batch. The same were retrieved after a week from the date of its distribution.

Retrieval Phase – When all the copies were retrieved, responses were coded and presented in a tally sheet before it was referred to the statistician for analysis.

Treatment of Data

Various statistical tools were used to present and analyze the gathered data in this study. Specifically, to present the results of the licensure examination for teachers for the BEED graduates both in general and professional education subjects, the mean was utilized by computing the average rating of the respondents in each examination component. Similarly, the mean was also used to determine the factors that affect the graduates in taking and passing the licensure examination for teachers, based on the average responses from the Likert-scale items in the survey.

On the other hand, to assess if there is a significant difference in the performance of the graduates between March and September examination periods, Independent Sample T-Test was conducted using Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS), a software program that is widely used by researchers in analyzing complex quantitative tests.

Lastly, qualitative analysis was used to discuss the interventions that could be proposed based on the findings of the study.

Ethical Consideration

The researcher adhered to the ethics in research and observed the protocols in conducting a study of this type.

Result and Discussions

This section presents the findings of the study sequenced on the statement of the problem that were answered.

Table 1: BEED Graduates who took the LEPT in 2014-2018

Year Graduated	F	%
2014	4	9.5
2015	21	50
2016	4	9.5

2017	6	14.3
2018	7	16.7
Total	42	100

It can be observed from the table that there are 42 LET takers from 2014-2018. They are all first timer examinees who took the board examination in 2014-2018. These consecutive five years were the periods that the results were sporadic, hence, chosen to be covered period of study based on the results of the examination. Only those who graduates who responded to the interview conducted were included and whose ratings were lower per examination results in the period they took the board exams.

Table 2: Performance Results by Subject Component

Year T	March Takers		September Takers	
	General Education	Professional Education	General Education	Professional Education
2014	68.9	66.7	68.1	64.5
2015	68.1	67.6	67.6	70.3
2016	69.7	66.7	65.6	69
2017	59.2	64.8	66.7	66.6
2018	-	-	62.5	66.6

The table illustrates the performance results in General Education and Professional Education subjects. These components were the focus of the study because elementary education does not have a field of specialization. In general education, the lowest percentage obtained was in 2017 (59.2) whereas the highest percentage was attained in 2016 (69.7%) by the graduates who took the examination in March. In professional education, the lowest percentage was obtained in 2014 (64.5) and the highest was obtained in 2015 (70.3) by the examinees who took the examination in September. Comparing the results in the two areas, examinees in March and in September got lower scores in the general education. Meanwhile, results in the professional subjects in March and September periods do not indicate a big edge on the results in general education since the percentages are almost near the ratings. It can be noted that there was no result indicator in March 2018 since nobody took the examination in this period.

Similarly, Alova (2019) in her study found that that the Math and English majors exhibit high performance in the General and Professional Education subjects compared to the other programs and the Math majors got the highest performance in the Major subject among the other programs. Meanwhile in the article of Bagadion and Tullao (2018) Board exam results is alarming for the elementary and secondary education teachers for the last 15 years. The test sets for General Education, Social Science/Social Studies including Professional Education.

Figure 1. March examinees' passing rate per component of the board examination

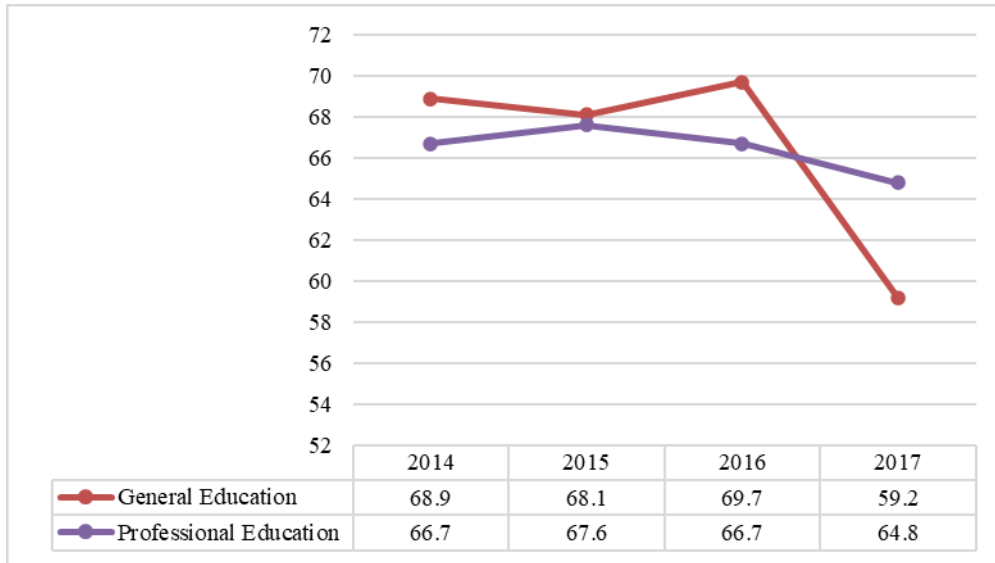


Figure 1 illustrates that the BEED March examinees' passing rate in general education is higher than their passing rate in professional education. It can be gleaned on the table that the general education passing rate varies. It dropped in 2015, increased in 2016, then dropped again in 2017. Meanwhile, the passing rate in professional education increased in 2016 but dropped constantly from 2016 to 2017. The results can be attributed to the fact that the examinees found the items in the general education easier and can be easily recalled.

Figure 2. September examinees' passing rate per area

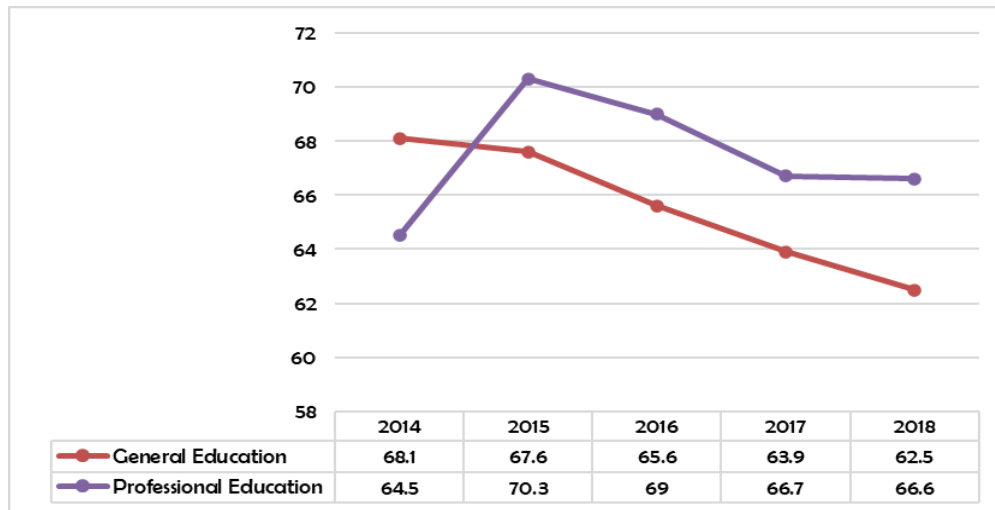


Figure 2 shows that from 2014 to 2018, the passing rate for BEED September examinees' passing rate declined steadily. However, while their rating in professional education rose in 2015, it also fell between 2016 and 2018. Despite that, it can be noted that it has a better passing rate than in general education. Hence, the results for both component area rise and fall irregularly in results from year to year in a wave-like pattern. This confirms mismatch on the examinees choice of program they took in college as majority of them have other program preferences that they wanted to take up.

Figure 3. Institutional and national passing rate

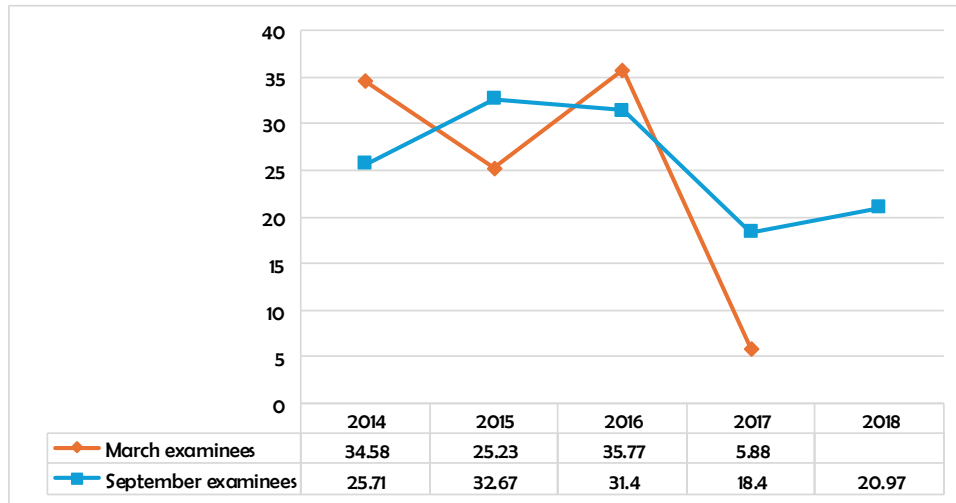


Figure 3 shows the institutional passing rate of March and September examinees from 2014 to 2018. March examinees' rates fluctuated and reached their lowest rate in 2017 (5.88%). On the other hand, the September examinees' rate increased in 2015 from its results of 25.71% in 2014. It decreased starting in 2016 until 2017, then rose again (20.97%), however, it is the lowest passing rate of the September examinees. This results reveal a blast in the five year results because of the rising falling trend indicating variation in the performance of the examinees.

Antiojo (2017) also analyzed the results of the performance of BSED and BEED graduates of Cavite State University among their graduates from 2013-2015. It was indicated that although the performance of the examinees is above the National Passing rate the performance is still low because those who passed might not have high ratings and those who failed got low scores.

Figure 4. September examinees' institutional passing rate vs. national passing rate

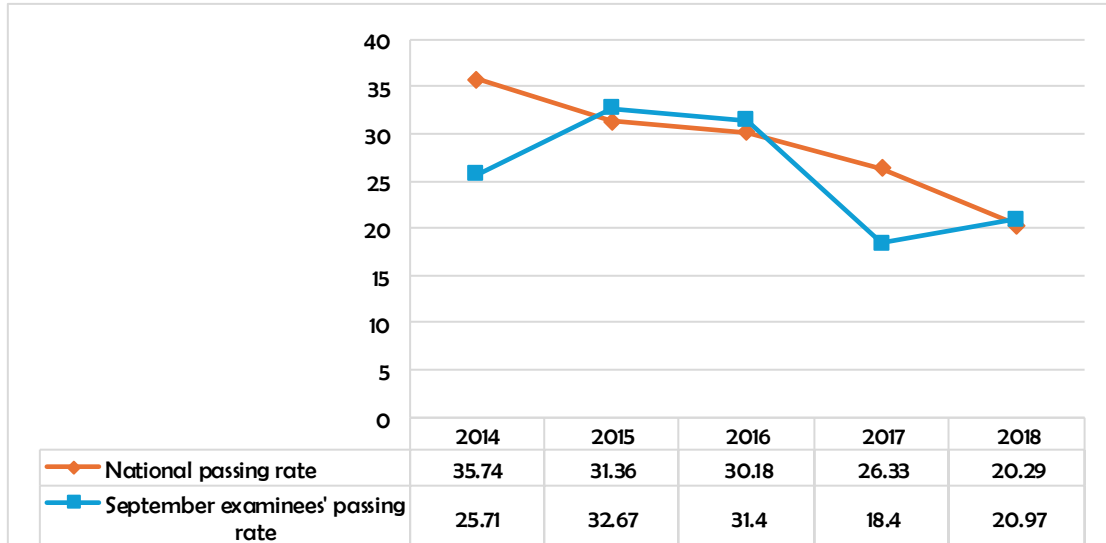


Figure 4 shows that September examinees national passing rate continuously decreased from 2014 to 2018. The figure also shows that the September examinees' institutional passing rate is higher than the national passing rate during 2015, 2016, and 2018. However, it was lower than the national passing rate in 2014 and 2017. Still, the examinees failed to reach the target results because it is in three years that national passing rate was not met.

Figure 5. March examinees institutional passing rate vs. national passing rate

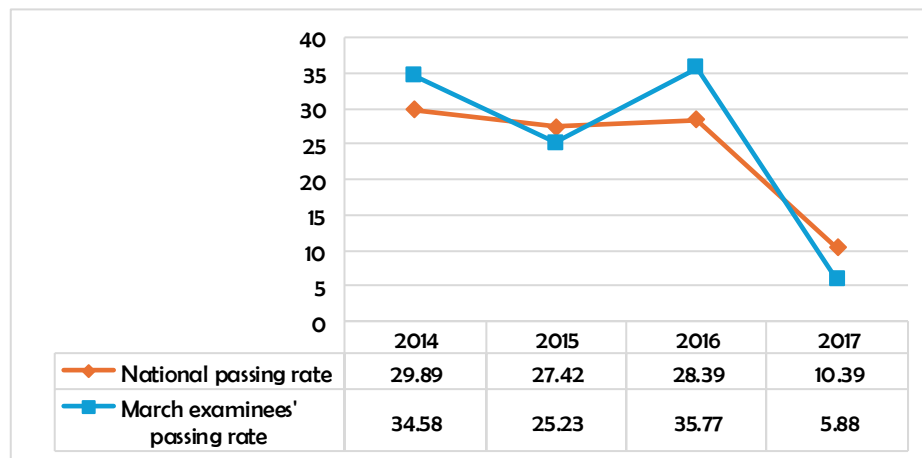


Figure 5 illustrates that both the institutional and national passing rates from 2017 and 2018 are fluctuating. The examinees' institutional passing rate was higher than the national passing rate in 2014 and 2016 but lower in 2015 and 2017.

Table 3. Significant difference on the performance of the graduates in the area of general education and professional education

Variable	p-value	Interpretation	Decision
LET Rating	.291	Not Significant	Do not reject the null hypothesis

An independent sample test was used to determine the significant difference on the performance of the graduates in the area of general education and professional education. Results revealed that there is no significant difference ($p - value = .291 > .05$) at 0.05 significant level. Based on the result, the null hypothesis should not be rejected. This means that the performance of the graduates in the area of general education and professional education do not differ among the examinees.

Table 4. Factors related to taking and passing the licensure examination for teachers

Factors	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
A. LEPT Content		
1. The items in the exam are not familiar and were just read for the first time.	2.95	Moderately Related
2. The directions/instructions are complicated for most part of the exam.	2.65	Moderately Related
3. The examination is too long to finish in four hours.	2.83	Moderately Related
4. The time intended is very limited to 350 items covered in the exams.	2.02	Moderately Related
5. The items for general subjects are relatively easy compared to the items for the professional subjects.	2.87	Moderately Related
Composite Mean	2.86	Moderately Related
B. Attendance in the review classes		
1. Schedule of review classes are held only every weekend for three months' time.	2.65	Moderately Related
2. There are cases that special classes (any day of the week) are announced on the spot affecting other work schedules.	2.74	Moderately Related
3. Cannot afford to pay the fees and related expenses in the duration of the review.	2.71	Moderately Related
4. Conflict to schedule in the office (for those who are working already)	2.70	Moderately Related
5. Traffic and house rentals (for those who attend review classes outside the province)	2.63	Moderately Related
Composite Mean	2.69	Moderately Related
C. Preparation for the Exam		
1. Slow connection for online payments for board exam application	2.80	Moderately Related
2. Filing leave of absence before the schedule of board	2.37	Moderately

examination		Related
3. Stress and anxiety is being experienced before taking the board exam.	3.03	Moderately Related
4. Distance in travelling from the province like in Lucena City or in Manila	2.82	Moderately Related
5. Limited budget in filing, attending review classes, and in taking the exams	3.02	Moderately Related
Composite Mean	2.81	Moderately Related
D. The Program Curriculum		
1. Some of the courses/subjects in the curriculum are not related or significant	2.77	Moderately Related
2. The theories learned were not internalized in the real setting.	2.95	Moderately Related
3. Knowledge acquired does not significantly link the contents of the exams	2.82	Moderately Related
4. Classroom learning is not 90% to 100% in board exam items	2.78	Moderately Related
5. The curriculum has been revised already the time that the board examination was taken	4.00	Very Difficult
Composite Mean	4.25	Most difficult
E. Course Preference/ Career Choices		
1. The chosen course is not really within the range of interests.	3.93	Very Difficult
2. Skills and abilities were not fully developed during the four-year period enhancement in the school environment	3.97	Very Difficult
3. Had not focused well on course perspectives like taking the board exams to highlight career/	3.92	Very Difficult
4. Had taken the course because it is the course other members of the family preferred.	4.03	Very Difficult
5. Did not take it seriously when studying in college for other personal reason.	3.93	Very Difficult
Composite Mean	3.96	Very Difficult
GRAND MEAN	4.03	Very Difficult

Table 4 illustrates the different reasons why majority of the graduates consider that taking the board examination is a hard job.

Results indicate that the LEPT content got the composite mean of 2.86, followed by the Preparation for the examination with 2.81 composite mean, however, moderately related.

The Program Curriculum got similar 4.25 composite mean and it was it is noted that the revision of the curriculum was observed to be the most difficult item considered by the respondents. Attendance to Review Classes has 2.69 composite mean and is secondary to course preference. Most of the examinees have part time jobs and others are contracted employees, hence, they find it difficult to attend review classes in times that the schedule falls on weekdays. Other cannot afford to pay fees and related expenses in the duration of the review considering the meager salary they receive from their employer, hence, they have to stop and drop or miss the meetings on the weekdays.

It is only the Course Preference/Career Choice with 3.96 composite mean that make taking and passing the board examination a hard job. It is interesting to note that education course is not within bounds of the respondents' interests. Some of them were not able to enhance their skills and abilities in the first three years of their stay in college. Others did not focus well on course perspectives like taking the board examination after graduation. Still, others were not very serious when studying the program. They enrolled and took the program because this was the choice of their parents and other members of the family. Had been given a preference, they should have taken another program that they most preferred. When Delos Angeles (2023) identified the variables that best predict the performance of the Teacher Education Graduates of a university in Cagayan Valley, Philippines, attainment of course objectives, the relevance of course requirements, and mastery of subject matter where the curriculum variables that best predict the performance of the graduates, while written requirements and performance of instructions speak for instructional quality.

Table 5. *Proposed intervention to sustain the passing rates of the graduates taking the LEPT*

Intervention	Mean	VI
1. Review of the existing curriculum for the program.	3.15	Highly relevant
2. Assigning faculty handle the subjects in their field of expertise	3.33	Very much relevant
3. Updating the reference materials particularly the books for professional subjects.	3.32	Very much relevant
4. Offering a review center in the campus or at the main campus.	3.33	Very much relevant
5. Proposing a refresher program for the old graduates of the program.	3.27	Highly relevant
6. Administering a pre-board exam before graduation.	3.42	Very much relevant
7. Conducting a diagnostic test for the professional subjects taken within the semester.	3.22	Highly relevant
8. Taking a pre-board examination and must have passed it first before filing to the PRC.	3.08	Highly relevant
9. Consider curriculum sensitivity to meet the needs of the sudden changes in the educational system	3.15	Highly relevant
10. Focus on literacy development particularly on the contents of the course syllabus for professional subjects since the PRC results indicate low ratings in the Professional Education subjects.	3.15	Highly relevant
Composite Mean	3.24	Highly relevant

In the proposed intervention, respondents claimed that “Administering pre-board examination before graduation is very much relevant. This is a good thing to recall the learnings they acquired in the previous semesters to assess mastery and retention. “Offering a review

center in the college” and “Assigning faculty in his/her field of specialization to handle the subject” were secondary suggestions for the proposed intervention. Academic preparations of the instructors simultaneous with a review center inside the college will give more justice in the delivery of instructions, hence, will sustain the learning of the students, “Consider curriculum sensitivity to meet the needs of the everchanging educational system” and “Focus on literacy on the course contents for professional subjects” deemed to be not very relevant.” This only indicate that the program is attentive to the needs of the program and adherent to the new policies and regulations as implemented.

Verbal Interpretation

1.00 – 1.75 – Not relevant

1.76 – 2.51 – Relevant

2.52 – 3.27 – Highly relevant

3.28 – 4.00 – Very much relevant

Conclusions

Findings has shown that those who failed and got low ratings in the board examination took the program lightly. They took the examination, however, majority did not make it.

Examinees’ regular attendance in review centers demonstrates a powerful link in the mastery of previous lectures and the recall of the salient points in passing the board examination. Those who failed claimed that they were not able to attend regularly the review classes.

Graduates who completed the degree were not able to deepen their love and passion for teacher education program that indicate evidence of complexity of real-life dreams and aspirations.

Recommendations

The department head of the program may design a concept map to guide the students enrolled for good opportunities that await them in the future once they pass the board exams.

Regular consultation with concerned students who may be halfway interested in taking the program in order to attend to their needs immediately.

It is more desirable should the department administer beforehand a pre-board examination to identify those who needed coaching and mentoring before enrolling in a review center.

In revising the curriculum, propose the inclusion of Course Audit in the first semester of the fourth-year level before the students’ deployment for off-campus training to be more prepared in the board examination.

Have a parent consultation regarding the provision of financial support to their graduating children to avoid working after graduation simultaneous with their review classes.

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