ACADEMIC PREDICTORS OF THE LICENSURE EXAM FOR TEACHERS' PERFORMANCE OF RTU's TEACHER EDUCATION GRADUATES

Salvacion J. Pachejo & Wendelyn A. Allaga

Rizal Technological University

Abstract

One of the pressing concerns of the College of Education of the Rizal Technological University is the batting or passing percentage of its graduates in the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET); thus, this research on determining the predictors of LET performance.

Findings revealed that when the LET performance is correlated with the three components of the academic subjects, there exists a moderate correlation with general education and only a slight correlation between professional education and specialization.

The set of predictors used showed a very weak relationship between student performance in the LET and their academic grades. Equally, a slight variation of LET performance could be accounted for through the combined linear effects of the predictor variables.

Keywords: Academic predictors, LET performance versus academic performance
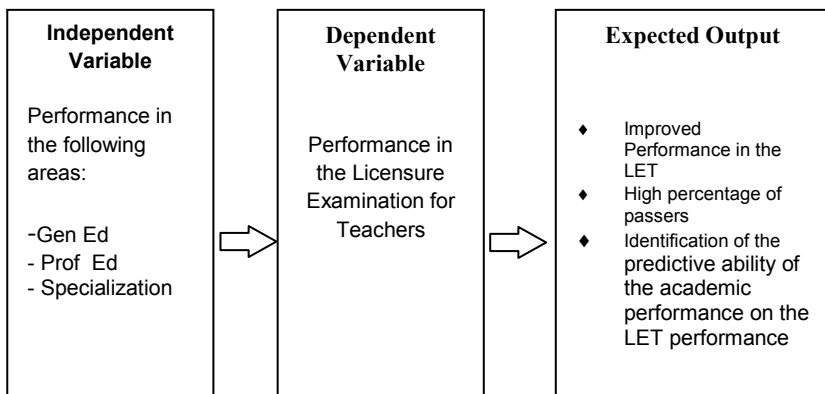
Introduction

Since the young are entrusted to the care of the teaching profession, it becomes the sacred duty of teachers to impart the right type of education to help mold students into better citizens.

The strength of an educational system largely depends on the quality of teachers. Therefore, it is critical to recruit only the most qualified for teacher-education programs and provide training to those who are already in the teaching profession.

The academic institutions offering teacher education programs, including the Rizal Technological University, carry a challenging yet transcending responsibility of producing a bigger corps of competent teachers. The plethora of standards, norms, and decisive factors regarding the success of an institution reflects the people's concern on quality education. One popular way of measuring the success of an education institution lies in the performance of its graduates in the licensure examination.

Every teacher education graduate is required to take the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) to practice his/her profession. Those who passed the board examination will not only gain honor and prestige but will also have a competitive edge over non-LET passers.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Expected Output
Performance in the following areas: -Gen Ed - Prof Ed - Specialization	Performance in the Licensure Examination for Teachers	♦ Improved Performance in the LET ♦ High percentage of passers ♦ Identification of the predictive ability of the academic performance on the LET performance

Research Paradigm

Advanced economies appreciate the importance of evaluating the performance of the public education system. Through the evaluation process a value judgment or decision is made from a variety of observations and from the evaluator's background and training.

Garcia (2008) identified the uses of educational evaluation as follows: (1) Appraisal of the academic achievement of individual students; (2) Diagnosis of the learning difficulties of an individual or as an entire class; (3) Appraisal of the educational effectiveness of a curriculum, instructional materials and procedures, and organizational arrangement; and (4) Assessment on the educational progress of large populations to help understand educational problems and develop sound public policy in education. Being aware of the importance of testing in the educational mainstream, Philippine educators initiated the use of examination to screen those who would be allowed to go to college and later legitimately practice various professions.

The Congressional Committee on Higher Education recommended, among others, "to professionalize teachers and teaching" and "to adopt a periodic licensure examination which shall be given by the professional board under the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC)".

In response to this recommendation, the Philippine Congress passed and enacted into law Republic Act No. 7836, also known as the "Philippine Teachers Professionalization Act of 1994." The law prescribed that the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) be

administered to replace the Professional Board Examination for Teachers (PBET). The Act, primarily aimed at strengthening "the regulation and supervision of the practice of teaching in the Philippines," stated that two years after its effectivity, "no person shall be allowed to engage in teaching as a profession in the pre-school, elementary, and secondary level unless he or she is a duly registered professional teacher".

To pass the LET, the examinee must obtain a general average of at least 75% in all subjects. This passing percentage is five (5) points higher than the PBET passing rate of 70% in all subjects, with no rating below 50% in any subjects. The performance of the academic institutions in the licensure examination is claimed to reflect the quality of education that the institution offers.

Figure 1 above presents the working paradigm of this study. The diagram shows the relationships between the independent variable, the dependent variable, and the expected outcomes of the study.

The independent variable includes the performance of the graduates in general education, professional education, specialization subjects, and overall ratings indicated by their final grade at the end of each term.

The dependent variable includes the performance of the graduates in general education, professional education, specialization subjects, and overall ratings in the licensure examination for teachers.

The primary expected output seeks to determine the predictive ability of the students' academic performance in relation to their performance in the LET.

Statement of the Problem

The study attempted to determine the LET performance of the Rizal Technological University teacher education graduates from 2009 to 2011. Specifically, it intended to shed light on the following questions:

1. What is the level of academic performance of the teacher education graduates along the following areas:
   a. General Education,
   b. Professional Education,
   c. Specialization Subjects,
   d. General Weighted Average

2. What is the level of performance of the teacher education graduates in the licensure examination along the areas of:
   a. General Education,
   b. Professional Education,
   c. Specialization Subjects,
   d. Over-all Average

3. What is the degree of correlation between the teacher education graduates' academic performance and their LET performance along these areas:
   a. Academic average grades in the three areas and the ratings in the subtests of the Licensure Examination for Teachers,
   b. Academic average grades in the three areas and the overall rating in the LET, and
   c. Overall average in the academic subjects and the overall rating in the LET.

4. What academic subject/s best predict/s the teacher education graduates' performance in the LET?

Hypotheses

1. A moderately linear relationship exists between the academic average grades of teacher education graduates in the three areas and their ratings in the subtests of the LET.

    1.1   There is a moderately linear relationship between academic average grades of teacher education graduates in the three areas and their overall rating in the LET, and

    1.2   Moderately linear relationship exists between the overall average in the academic subjects and the overall rating in the LET.

2. The best predictor of the graduates' performance in the LET is the General Education, Professional Education, and the Specialization subjects.

Significance of the Study

Designed to establish any relations between the academic and LET performance of teacher education graduates of RTU, this research expects to yield the following benefits:

- Identify the actual performance of graduates to provide the University's administrative and academic council's basis for formulating of plans and policies.

- Assist curriculum planners in identifying critical areas where student achievement can be raised. These include syllabi content, reference books and materials, teaching strategies and techniques, and nature of assessment.

- Serve as basis in re-examining and re-evaluating the programs and policies relative to the improvement of the curriculum.

Materials and Methods

The research established relationships between the independent variable, the dependent variable, and the expected outcomes of the study.

The independent variable includes the graduates' performance in general education, professional education, specialization subjects, and overall ratings, as indicated by their final grade at the end of each term.

The dependent variable includes the graduates' performance in general education, professional education, specialization subjects, and overall ratings in the LET.

Correlational method was used in finding the degree of relationship of graduates' performance in general education, professional education, and specialization subjects to their LET performance.

Respondents included a total of 343 teacher education graduates of RTU who passed the licensure examination for teachers from October 2009 to September 2011.

For providing qualitative description on the level of academic and LET performance of the respondents, the scale used by the University was adopted.

Table 1. RTU Grading System

Percentage Equivalent	RTU Rating System	Descriptive Rating
97 – 100	1.00	Excellent
94 – 96	1.25	Very Good

91 – 93	1.50	Very Good
88 – 90	1.75	Good
85 – 87	2.00	Good
83 – 84	2.25	Fair
80 - 82	2.50	Fair
78 – 79	2.75	Passing
75 – 77	3.00	Passing
Below 75	Below 3.00	Failed

The documentary analysis technique was used as the main tool to gather the required data for the study. The academic performance of the graduates was obtained from the database of the Management Information Center (MIC) of RTU.

The master list of examinees with corresponding performance ratings from the Dean's office, as certified by the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC), provided the data on LET results.

The following statistical tools were used in the presentation, interpretation and analysis of data.

Percentage was used to determine the relative distribution of the categorical responses in the subsets of academic grades and subsets of LET.

General Weighted Average (GWA). The GWA was used to indicate the level of academic performance of the graduates in general education, professional education, and specialization.

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation. The Pearson r was used to determine the strength or magnitude of relationship between two variables, such as: a) Academic average grades in the three areas and the

ratings in the subtests of the LET, b) Academic average grades in the three areas and the overall LET rating, and c) Overall average in the academic subjects and the overall LET rating.

Multiple Regression Correlation is used to make predictions of the performance of the graduates in the LET. The respondents' academic performance was used as the predictor (Walpole, 1982).

Results and Discussion

Grade Point Average in College

  The table below shows the overall academic performance of the teacher education graduates based on their general weighted averages.

Table 2. Overall Academic Performance of the Education Graduates

Academic Year	GE	PE	Specialization	GWA	Verbal Interpretation
SY 2005-06 to 2008-09	2.14	2.12	2.03	2.09	Good
SY 2006-07 to 2009-10	2.12	2.27	2.02	2.14	Good
SY 2007-08 to 2010-11	2.09	2.01	1.99	2.03	Good

  Table 2 indicates that the graduates achieved above average grades and that they were able to balance their school work since they obtained consistent levels of academic rating in the three subject areas.

Problem No. 1. What is the level of academic performance of the education graduates along the following areas:

  1.1 General Education

  The ratings show a 2.12 overall mean score and interpreted as good. The result proves that most students entering Teacher Education

courses are average students. Most entrants were found to be incoming freshmen who did not pass the academic qualifications of engineering programs. Stringent screening was also relaxed because of lack of enrollees for Teacher Education.

Table 3. Academic Performance of Education Graduates in the General Education Subjects

General Education Subjects	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Social Sciences	1.93	Good
Mathematics	1.93	Good
Science	2.05	Good
Filipino	2.06	Good
English	2.16	Good
Overall	2.12	Good

1.2 Professional Education

Table 4. Academic Performance of CED Students in Professional Education Subjects

General Education Subjects	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Socio./Psycho./Anthro. Found of Education	1.73	Good
Hist., Philo. & Legal Foundations of Education	2.43	Fair
Human Growth & Development	2.22	Fair
Guidance and Counselling	2.17	Good
Introduction to Curriculum Development	2.06	Good

Qualitative Approaches to Research	2.3	Fair
Quantitative Approaches to Research	2.56	Fair
Educational & Preparation of Audio Visual Materials	2.06	Good
Tests, Measurement & Evaluation	2.36	Fair
Principles & Methods of Teaching	2.04	Good
Professional Ethics & Personality Devt.	1.9	Good
Student Teaching In-Campus	1.9	Good
Student Teaching Off-Campus	1.62	Good
Seminar in Education	2.43	Fair
OVERALL	2.13	Good

The rating reveals that education graduates are good in the subjects that require application skills. They got a highest mean score of 1.62 in Student Teaching Off-Campus, followed by a mean score of 1.73 in Sociological, Psychological and Anthropological Foundations of Education. Next are the mean score in both Student Teaching on Campus and Professional Ethics and Personality Development (1.90) subjects. Introduction to Curriculum and Guidance Counseling have mean scores of 2.06 and 2.17, respectively, also interpreted as good.

On the other hand, in the remaining education subjects that require memorization, logic, computation and analysis, the education students showed only a fair performance. They got a mean score of 2.56 in Quantitative Approaches in Education and 2.43 in both Seminar in Education and History, Philosophy, and Legal Foundations of Education subjects. Test and Measurement, Qualitative Approaches to Research, and Human Growth and Development got mean scores of 2.36, 2.30, and 2.22 respectively. This finding also affirms the results above that most

education students are weak in computation. Equally, it implies that these graduates are noticeably good in expressing or showing their abilities.

1.3 Specialization

Table 5. Academic Performance of CED Students in Specialization Subjects

Specialization Subjects	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Computer Education	2.02	Good
English	2.10	Good
Filipino	2.01	Good
Mathematics	1.90	Good
Science	2.05	Good
Social Studies	1.99	Good
Overall	2.01	Good

The overall computed mean in the academic performance of the CED graduates in their area of specialization was 2.01, interpreted as good. Such finding affirms the study made by Aragon (2012) that education graduates achieved grades comparable to an above average performance and opposes the claim in the article of *Manila Bulletin* (2000) that the subject specialization in preparation of teachers is weak.

Problem No. 2: What is the level of Performance in the Licensure Examination of Education Graduates along these areas:

2.1 General Education

Table 6 shows the performance of education graduates in the General Education component of the LET.

It can be seen that the respondents' barely passing rating in this field can be attributed to the fact that the subjects were taken during the

first two years in the University. Thus, many students might have already forgotten General Education concepts during the LET.

Table 6. Education Graduates Performance in the General Education Component of the LET

Rating	Frequency	Percentage	Descriptive Rating
97 – 100			
94 – 96			
91 – 93			
88 – 90			
85 – 87	3	.90	Good
80 - 84	60	17.96	Fair
75 – 79	221	66.17	Passing
Below 75	50	14.97	Failed
Total	**334**	**100**	

2.2 Professional Education

The result of the data in table 7 can be attributed to the common practice of evaluating student learning in professional education subjects through low-order thinking during examinations, in contrast to the LET approach that is relatively application and analysis.

Table 7. Education Graduates Performance in Professional Education of the LET

Rating	Frequency	Percentage	Descriptive Rating
97 – 100			
94 – 96			
91 – 93			

Rating	Frequency	Percentage	Descriptive Rating
88 – 90			
85 – 87	12	3.59	Good
80 – 84	112	33.53	Fair
75 – 79	192	57.49	Passing
Below 75	18	5.39	Failed
Total	**334**	**100**	

2.3 Specialization

Table 8. Education Graduates Performance in Specialization of the LET

Rating	Frequency	Percentage	Descriptive Rating
97 – 100			
94 – 96			
91 – 93			
88 – 90			
85 – 87	8	2.40	Good
80 - 84	65	19.46	Fair
75 – 79	211	63.17	Passing
Below 75	50	14.97	Failed
Total	**334**	**100.00**	

The results in table 8 indicate a possible mismatch between the learning content prescribed by CHED for specialization in the teacher education curriculum and the table of specification of the Board Exam for Teachers released by the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC).

2.4 Overall Average

The overall average of the RTU students implies that despite the very good passing percentage of the College against the national passing

rate, the overall average score of respondents was barely above the minimum of 75 percent, or 77.94 percent.

Table 9. Education Graduates Overall Performance in the LET

Academic Year	GE	PE	Specialization	Average	Verbal Interpretation
2009	77.55	78.86	77.15	77.89	Passing
2010	76.73	78.86	76.84	77.49	Passing
					Passing
2011	76.46	79.10	78.75	78.43	
Overall Average	76.91	78.94	77.58	77.94	Passing

Comparing the academic performance with the licensure examination performance of the respondents, we see a non-parallel result obtained. It can be observed that even though respondents academically excelled in the three subject areas including their overall GWA, it did not automatically correspond to a higher performance on the board examination. In contrast, it means that students who succeed more in the classroom or show a strong academic record all the more succeed in licensure examination.

This finding confirms that of the study, TAQPT (1999), that the mere act of raising passing scores suggests that testing with higher standards holds great promise for ensuring that teachers are academically able.

Problem No. 3: What is the degree of relationship between the academic grades (X) and the ratings in the subtests of the LET (Y)

Table 10. Correlation of Academic Grades and Ratings in LET Subsets

LET Subsets	General Education	Professional Education	Specialization	Overall Academic
General Education	.922	-.918	.847	-.663
Professional Education	.151	-.818	-.896	-.985
Specialization	.845	-.971	-.923	-.777
LET Average	.288	-.891	-.949	-.999*

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The significant correlation between LET Average and Overall Academic Average (-.999, p<.05) reflected the relationship among all the components of LET, since each subtest has a corresponding weight in LET ratings and academic average. The result indicates that despite the negative correlations, LET Average is likely to increase even marginally. A possible reason for the negative correlation maybe linked to the RTU grading system, which uses a grade-point scale where 5 is the lowest and 1 the highest. The study affirms the findings of Boyle, et. al. (2003) to the effect that measures of prior academic achievement in college proved to be the strongest predictors for all measure of academic success. Similarly, Middlemas, et. al. (2001) determined that grade point average (GPA) is a statistically significant predictor of performance in the National Athletes Trainers Association Board of Certification Examination.

Problem No. 4: What can best predict the education graduate's performance in the LET?

Table 11 shows the predictors that can affect the performance of education graduates in the LET.

Table 11. LET Performance Rating Predictor

VARIABLE	Unstd. Coefficient	Std. Coefficient Beta	t-value	Sig
Overall LET Performance	.-8.560	-.999	-29.984	.021

R = .999 R^2 = .999   F Change = 899.024

An enter method of multiple regression analysis revealed that none of the academic grades in General Education, Professional Education and Specialization significantly contributed to the regression model. However, the Overall Academic Average was found to be significant in predicting the variance in LET performance. The data also reveal that for every unit increase in the overall academic performance, LET Performance increased by -8.560 units, a finding that supports Aral's study (2003), to the effect that academic subjects are significant in forecasting examinees' performance in the ECE licensure examinations.

Conclusion

Based on the above findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The College of Education graduates in general education, professional education, specialization and overall general weighted average yielded above average level of performance.

2. The teacher education graduates barely passed the Licensure Examination for Teachers, as reflected in a 77.94 percent overall average, when the passing score is 75.00 percent.

3. The overall academic performance of the graduates had a direct linear correlation with the respondents' LET performance.

4. The Overall Academic Performance is a predictor of LET performance rating.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions, these recommendations are forwarded:

1. The University must encourage teachers and administrators in the College to further raise standards and push students to do better in the teaching profession.

2. Since the respondents' academic grades did not correspond with the students' LET passing rate, teacher education institutions must reevaluate their teaching strategies and content vis-a-vis the table of specification provided by PRC for LET and the manner of test questions in the actual LET.

3. Since overall academic performance can predict student performance in a board examination, the University may consider adopting a minimum qualification grade every school year for relevant programs.

4. A comprehensive examination has to be given in the students' final year to determine their strengths and weaknesses.

5. The University has to review or revisit its recruitment and retention policy for students for the teacher education program.

6. Further research and studies may be conducted using different predictors, such as the qualifications of the faculty and methods

or strategies of teaching used factors that can also contribute to the examinees' academic and LET performance.

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