

Pedagogical Competence and Academic Performance of Pre-Service Elementary Teachers in Tuguegarao City, Philippines

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Abstract - *The study aimed to determine the association between the pedagogical competence of pre-service elementary teachers and their academic performance. The study employed descriptive-correlational research design. Data used in this study came from a survey of pre-service teachers (n=154) and supervising teachers (n=154) in Tuguegarao City, Philippines. A questionnaire consisting of the specific indicators of National Competency-Based Teacher Standards was the main data gathering instrument and the Grade-Point Average (GPA) of the respondents along their professional education subjects was used to ascertain their academic performance. The study revealed that in terms of pedagogical competence using NCBTS as framework, generally, the pre-service elementary teachers are very competent. They also have good academic performance. Only the domain Community Service has a significant negative relationship with the academic performance while the other domains are not significantly correlated. The cooperating teachers have significantly higher perception on the pedagogical competence of the pre-service teachers than the perception of the pre-service teachers themselves except along the domains Diversity of Learning and Curriculum. Ultimately, the results of the study can be used as basis for curriculum enhancement geared toward quality teacher training programs.*

Keywords: *pedagogical competence, academic performance, pre-service elementary teachers*

INTRODUCTION

The Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) in the Philippines are mandated to provide quality, relevant and goal-oriented experience to would-be-teachers. As Commission on Higher Education (CHED) accentuates, “Quality pre-service teacher education is the key factor in Philippine education”[1]. Teacher education curriculum is expected to ensure that the quality of training tailors to the pressing needs of the Filipino learners and the demands of society in general. Soblingo [2] cites that teacher education students must be exposed to an improved and focused curriculum to facilitate and enrich their understanding of the learning content as well as the art of teaching in order for them to rightfully share their knowledge to the students. Certainly, the 21st century clearly calls for a kind of teaching that supports students’ critically and creative thinking and mastery of intricate subject matter [3].

In this context, student teaching is an essential component of teacher training. It is actually the

culminating experience that broadens and enhances the capability of the pre-service teachers who must cope with the multi-faceted responsibilities of teaching [4][5]. In other words, it serves as the training of students in real world scenario as they put into practice the educational theories and philosophies, teaching approaches and strategies and instructional technologies that they significantly learned in their professional education learning areas.

In view of that, a quality teacher training could be evident through the lens of the pedagogical competence and performance of the pre-service teachers. Malik, Mansoor and Jumani [6] posit that instructional or pedagogical competence is a many-sided concept, with its characterization falling within many domains. According to Gliga as cited by Suci and Mata [7], pedagogical competence refers to the “minimum professional standard, often specified by law, which should raise a person in fulfilling a particular role of the teaching profession”. This implies that the competence is attributed to the ability

of the student teachers to demonstrate the specific performance indicators set for the practice of teaching. They further emphasize that pedagogical competence should be understood in its sense as integrated qualities that delineate the capacity to find answers to arising pedagogical issues by creatively using one's knowledge, personal and professional experiences, values and talents that lead to proper and desirable outcomes.

In the Philippines, the professional standard refers to the National Competency-Based Teacher Standards (NCBTS). CHED spells out through a memorandum circular that NCBTS must form the core competencies that teacher education students should imbibe and possess [8] because NCBTS is a framework that delineates the varied dimensions of teaching that are outlined in terms of actual competencies. Essentially, it forms the core of the Teacher Education and Development Program (TEDP) that enables education stakeholders to recognize the intricate yet integrated set of views, behaviors, values and skills that Filipino teachers must acquire so that they can carry out successfully their dignified responsibilities [9].

Moreover, Del Corro-Tiangco [10] points out that NCBTS serves as a "guide for teachers in their commitment and their accountability to provide classroom instruction resulting to good student learning outcomes". It is composed of seven domains namely: (a) Social Regard for Learning; (b) Learning Environment; (c) Diversity of Learners; (d) Curriculum; (e) Planning, Assessing and Reporting; (f) Community Linkages; and (g) Personal Growth and Professional Development. These domains are cascaded into observable indicators of pedagogical performance.

Some studies utilized the NCBTS as their framework to expound on the pedagogical competence of pre-service teachers. Somblingo [2] found out that pre-service teachers developed high level of competencies along the seven domains of the NCBTS after taking their field study courses as assessed by themselves and their Field Study teachers; however, on the side of their cooperating teachers, prospective teachers' competencies were assessed as average level. In addition, Biong [11] compared the NCBTS level of competence between the graduating students and graduates of the College of Education in a university in Mindanao. Results showed that the graduating and graduates had acquired high level of competence as assessed by the student respondents

themselves, teachers and administrators. In detail, the graduates demonstrated better performance than the graduating students probably because they had been hired already as teachers and have applied the theories they have learned in their pre-service education.

Additionally, a significant aspect that is examined in the study of pre-service teachers is the academic performance that is basically described through grades. Falsario, Muyong and Nuevaspaña [12] cite that pre-service teachers have good academic performance based on their grades in The Teaching Profession subject while in the study of Pagaduan [13], the pre-service teachers have average academic performance in terms of their grades in Field Study courses. Nonetheless, the challenge remains among scholars wherein there are claims that grades are not valid indicators of academic performance [14].

Nevertheless, conflicting researches exist regarding the validity of grade point average and its association to pedagogical competence. There are studies asserting that grades are biased and unreliable indicators of teaching performance but there are findings that show favorable correlation between grade point average and teaching performance [15]. In the study of Pagaduan [13], the researcher found out that academic performance and off-campus teaching competence are significantly related. Hall and West [16] affirm this by citing that the higher is the grade point average of the pre-service teacher, the better is the final student teaching performance. The greater is the sense of teaching efficacy of pre-service teachers, the higher is their academic sense of intrinsic interest, task value, and control of time and study environment [17]. In contrast, Kunter, Klusmann, Baumert, Richter, Voss and Hachfeld [18] uphold that teachers' general academic ability does not affect their instruction. This is supported by Zumwalt and Craig [19] disclosing that there is no correlation between grade point average and teacher's pedagogical effectiveness.

Clearly, existing literatures bare the gray areas that call for an in-depth study to explore further the variables. To date, only few studies considered the National Competency-Based Teacher Standards as framework in determining pre-service elementary teachers' competence. Also, there is no identified study yet that explores the relationship between pre-service elementary teachers' pedagogical competence (using the domains of the National Competency-

Based Teacher Standards) and their academic performance.

Ultimately, the study hoped to generate baseline data and an over-all picture of the pre-service elementary teachers' academic performance and pedagogical competence along with the acceptable national standards. This can clearly provide empirical evidence on which areas still need further improvement and intervention. In essence, the results of this study may be used to form recommendations that may specifically guide the Teacher Education Institutions in their curriculum enhancement and policy-making geared toward quality instruction.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study aimed to find out the level of pedagogical competence of pre-service elementary teachers as assessed by the pre-service teachers themselves and cooperating teachers along the seven domains of the NCBTS. It also determined the academic performance of the pre-service elementary teachers in their professional education subjects. Furthermore, it compared the perception of the pre-service teachers and cooperating teachers regarding the level of pre-service elementary teachers' pedagogical competence. Lastly, it ascertained the significant relationship between the level of pedagogical competence and academic performance of the pre-service teachers.

METHODS

Research Design

The study used descriptive-correlational design since it determined mainly the relationship between pedagogical competence and academic performance of the pre-service elementary teachers. It identified possible patterns of relations that exist between variables and it measured the strength of such association.

Respondents

There were two groups of respondents in the study. The first group consisted of 154 pre-service teachers of the Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED) of Cagayan State University (Andrews Campus) who were enrolled in their student teaching (Field Study 7). The study utilized the sample size determination in simple random sampling to estimate the proportion, with a perceived value of the

population proportion assumed to be 0.30, alpha set at .05, and beta (error of estimation) set at .05. Moreover, the second group of respondents was the 154 cooperating teachers of the said pre-service teachers. They are teaching in the public elementary schools in the Division of Tuguegerao City and Division of Cagayan. In totality, there were 308 respondents.

Research Procedure

Mainly, the researchers sought approval from the Cagayan State University and Department of Education authorities for the conduct of the study. Prior and informed consent were accomplished by the respondents to ensure compliance to ethical standards. The researchers personally floated the questionnaires to the pre-service teachers and cooperating teachers a weeks before the culmination of student teaching. Moreover, the academic performance of the pre-service teachers along professional education was taken from the official data of the registrar of Cagayan State University. Due permission was sought from the concerned office.

Instruments

The study utilized the questionnaire containing the performance indicators of the National Competency-Based Teachers Standards (NCBTS). Specifically, the indicators included the seven domains namely Social Regard for Learning, Learning Environment, Diversity of Learners, Curriculum, Planning, Assessing and Reporting, Community Linkages, and Personal Growth and Professional Development. The questionnaire was composed of statements that both pre-service teachers and cooperating teachers had to answer on a four-point rating scale, which was coded using the following scale: Very Competent (3.50-4.0), Competent (2.50-3.29), Incompetent (1.50-2.29), and Very Incompetent (1.0-1.49). This instrument revealed the self-assessment of the pre-service teachers regarding their pedagogical competence as well as the assessment of the cooperating teachers regarding the pedagogical competence of the pre-service teachers assigned to them during student teaching.

The Grade- Point Average (GPA) of the pre-service elementary teachers along their professional education subjects was used to determine their academic performance. This was taken from their permanent record as reflected in the Higher Education

Enrollment Decision Support (HEEDS) of Cagayan State University. It was coded using the following scale: Excellent (95-100), Very Satisfactory (90-94.99), Satisfactory (85-89.99), Fair (80-84.99), and Poor (75-79.99).

Data Analysis

Mean score was used to describe the level of pedagogical competence of the pre-service elementary teachers based on the responses in the survey questionnaire. Weighted mean was employed to treat the grades of the pre-service teachers. Pearson Product Moment of Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the existence of significant relationship between the level of pedagogical competence and academic performance of the pre-service teachers. Lastly, t-test was employed to compare the assessment of the pre-service teachers and cooperating teachers regarding the level of pedagogical competence of pre-service elementary teachers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The pre-service teachers are “very competent” pedagogically in all the domains of the National Competency-Based Teacher Standards. This means that based on the assessment of the respondents, the pre-service elementary teachers have adequately achieved the expected performance level as stipulated in the CMO No. 52, Series of 2007. This also substantiates the results of studies undertaken by Somblingo [2] and Biong [11] citing that pre-service teachers possess very competent level of teaching performance. Corroboratively, this can be attributed to the intensive training of the pre-service teachers during their practicum that provides an avenue for the interplay of theories and practice facilitating the pre-

service teachers to acquire the fundamental aspects of teaching and to be immersed to the realities of the teaching profession [20].

Specifically, the pre-service teachers are very competent along *Social Regard for Learning* as assessed by them and their cooperating teachers. It is interesting to note that both groups of respondents have the highest rating on “regular attendance in classes and school activities”. This implies that the pre-service teachers abide with the student teaching policies particularly on attendance and participation in academic-related activities as stipulated in the *Experiential Learning Courses Handbook*, which serves as the blueprint in the conduct of student teaching of Teacher Education Institutions in the Philippines. In a broad sense, the finding clearly indicates that the pre-service teachers are “very competent” in acting as role models for learners. This supports the idea of Lumpkin [21] that when teachers model trust, fairness, honesty, respect and responsibility, they could help students imbibe moral virtues. As a model, the teacher must show good behavior and inculcate right attitudes [22].

Moreover, the pre-service teachers are “very competent” along *Learning Environment* with the highest rating on “maintenance of a safe, clean and orderly classroom free from hazards and distraction”. This conforms to the principle that teachers should be competent in managing the learning environment to create an atmosphere conducive for learning [23]. The finding also bears out the study of Alderite, Busquit and Mejica [24] that one among the predominantly manifested mentors’ instructional competencies is providing students with adequate learning environment.

Table 1. Summary Table on the Level of Pedagogical Competence of Pre-service Elementary Teachers along the Seven Domains of the National Competency-Based Teacher Standards

Domains	Cooperating Teacher		Pre-service Teacher	
	Mean	Interpretation	Mean	Interpretation
1. Social Regard for Learning	3.81	Very Competent	3.68	Very Competent
2. Learning Environment	3.65	Very Competent	3.54	Very Competent
3. Diversity of Learners	3.51	Very Competent	3.46	Very Competent
4. Curriculum	3.57	Very Competent	3.52	Very Competent
5. Planning, Assessing and Reporting	3.52	Very Competent	3.41	Very Competent
6. Community Linkages	3.44	Very Competent	3.29	Very Competent
7. Personal Growth and Professional Development	3.62	Very Competent	3.42	Very Competent
Overall	3.59	Very Competent	3.47	Very Competent

The high rating on the ability of pre-service teachers in maintaining a learning environment of courtesy and respect for different learners in terms of capability, culture and gender implies that the pre-service teachers are responsive to the tenets of Gender and Development (GAD) wherein equity and equality, regardless of diversity, must be observed in all undertakings most especially in the educational milieu.

In addition, the pre-service teachers are “very competent” along *Diversity of Learners*. This basically supports Soblingo [2] adducing that pre-service teachers rated themselves to have high level of competence along this domain. This connotes that the pre-service teachers are prepared and are responsive in handling multi-cultural and diverse learners. Vega, Prieto and Carreon [25] state that teachers who recognize that learners come from homes where behavioral and interaction patterns differ from those expected in school are in better position to adapt their instruction than those who have a narrower view of acceptable classroom behavior. According to Ebert and Culyer [26], if teachers understand about learner’s background they may be able to design a learning environment that addresses the social and emotional needs of the students because all learners need to feel valued for themselves within the classroom. They need to experience the sense of belongingness amidst the inevitable existence of diversity.

Along *Curriculum*, the pre-service teachers are assessed to be “very competent”. This substantiates the findings of Biong [11] citing that teacher education students are effective facilitators of student learning as they help students learn the desired curriculum objectives. For pre-service teachers, the highest rating is on the “setting of appropriate learning goals”; whereas, for the cooperating teachers, the highest rating is on “planning lessons to fit within available instructional time”. The finding reveals that the pre-service teachers clearly define their lesson objectives that give sense of direction in the teaching-learning process. Corpuz and Salandanan [23] emphasize that a definite lesson objective preempt teachers from losing sight of what they intend to teach. Moreover, the pre-service teachers properly manage the time as they are seen by the cooperating teachers to be very capable of designing lessons that are time-bound. According to Acero, Javier and Castro [22], an effective teacher allocates and controls the time for instruction as well as the rate of student engagement in the learning activities.

As regards *Planning, Assessing, and Reporting*, the pre-service teachers are assessed to be “very competent”. Among the cooperating teachers, the pre-service teachers are rated highest particularly on the “conduct of regular meetings with learners to report learners’ progress”. On one hand, the pre-service teachers rated themselves highest on “preparing and conducting formative and summative tests”. This is attuned to the idea of Asaad and Hailaya [27] that for the teachers to be able to draw the right feedbacks about the standing of the students and to properly monitor their learning in the class, a teacher needs to employ a precise measurement. Hence, a teacher needs to be equipped with the principles underlying the development of good formative and summative tests. This indicates that the pre-service teachers are grounded on these assessment principles that are vital facets of the learning process.

In addition, the pre-service teachers are “very competent” along *Community Linkages*. The result connotes that the pre-service teachers have understood the essence of having viable linkages in the community that determines their success in the teaching profession. According to Bilbao, Corpuz, Llagas and Salandanan [28], “the school serves as the center for educational pursuits while the community serves as extended learning centers and sources of instructional materials”. The existence of useful interconnections between and among them guarantees a valuable and promising affiliation that is bound to work effectively for both.

Moreover, the pre-service teachers are “very competent” along *Personal Growth and Professional Development* in all performance indicators as perceived by them and the cooperating teachers. The pre-service teachers are rated highest by the cooperating teachers as regards “articulating and demonstrating personal philosophy of teaching”. This means that the pre-service teachers have an understanding of their educational philosophies and they are able to manifest this in the performance of their duties. Ebert and Culyer [26] share that “an articulated philosophy is the foundation on which individuals’ life work can be built and they find themselves dependable in their interaction with other people as well as in their actions and choices”. On the other hand, the pre-service teachers rated themselves highest on “maintaining stature and behavior that upholds the dignity of teaching”. This supports the findings of Navarro as cited by Bilbao, Corpuz, Llagas and Salandanan [28] that “teachers are expected to uphold the integrity of the profession as

they establish and demonstrate moral standards of community and serve as paragons of virtue that lead to reverence and credibility in the performance of their duties”. Generally, the finding indicates that the pre-service teachers observe the Competency Standards for Teacher Education Institutions, which stipulates that they should be able to demonstrate and practice the professional and ethical requirements of the teaching profession and must be willing to continue learning to better fulfill their mission.

Table 2. Academic Performance of the Pre-service Elementary Teachers in their Professional Education Subjects

Grade Interval	Descriptive Value	f	%
90-94.99	Very Good	9	5.84
85-89.99	Good	85	55.19
80-84.99	Fair	59	38.31
75-79.99	Poor	1	0.65
Total		154	100.00
Mean= 85.60; s.d= 2.71			

The table shows that overall, the pre-service teachers have “good” academic performance in their professional education subjects. The finding supports the study of Barnuevo, Hugo and Hasegawa [29] stating that the pre-service teachers’ level of academic performance is on the average level. Likewise, Falsario, Muyong and Nuevaespaña [12] found out that pre-service teachers have good academic performance based on their grades in The Teaching Profession subject and in the study of Pagaduan [13],

the pre-service teachers have good academic performance in terms of their grades in Field Study courses.

Table 3. Relationship between the Level of Pedagogical Competence and Academic Performance of the Pre-service Elementary Teachers

Domains	Correlation Value	Decision Ho
Social Regard for Learning	0.02339	Accept
Learning Environment	-0.10493	Accept
Diversity of Learners	-0.08407	Accept
Curriculum	-0.04987	Accept
Planning, Assessing and Reporting	-0.1207	Accept
Community Linkages	-0.1608*	Reject
Personal Growth and Professional Development	-0.10803	Accept

*Significant at $\alpha = 0.05$

The table shows that generally, there is no significant relationship between the level of pedagogical competence of the pre-service elementary teachers and their academic performance. This affirms the findings of Kunter, Klusmann, Baumert, Richter, Voss and Hachfeld [18] that teachers’ general academic ability does not affect their pedagogical competence. Likewise, Zumwalt and Craig [19] cite that there is no correlation between grade point average and teacher effectiveness. Only the domain Community Linkages has a significant negative relationship with the academic performance.

Table 4. Comparison in the Assessment of the Pre-service Elementary Teachers and Cooperating Teachers regarding the Level of Pedagogical Competence

Domain	Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	p-value
Social Regard for Learning	Cooperating Teachers	3.81	0.44	3.5889	*0.0003
	Pre-service Teachers	3.68	0.59		
Learning Environment	Cooperating Teachers	3.65	0.52	2.5167	*0.0123
	Pre-service Teachers	3.54	0.56		
Diversity of Learners	Cooperating Teachers	3.51	0.62	0.7711	0.4412
	Pre-service Teachers	3.46	0.62		
Curriculum	Cooperating Teachers	3.57	0.59	1.1217	0.2628
	Pre-service Teachers	3.52	0.59		
Planning, Assessing and Reporting	Cooperating Teachers	3.52	0.58	2.3745	*0.0181
	Pre-service Teachers	3.41	0.65		
Community Linkages	Cooperating Teachers	3.44	0.56	2.5185	*0.0123
	Pre-service Teachers	3.29	0.69		
Personal Growth and Professional Development	Cooperating Teachers	3.62	0.52	3.7080	*0.0002
	Pre-service Teachers	3.42	0.70		

*Significant at $\alpha = 0.05$

This implies the tendency that the more the pre-service elementary teachers are engaged in community services and activities, the lower is their academic performance. The table reveals that there is a significant difference in the assessment between the pre-service teachers and cooperating teachers regarding the level of pedagogical competence of pre-service elementary teachers except for the domains *Diversity of Learners* and *Curriculum*. The mean scores show that the cooperating teachers have higher rating compared to the pre-service teachers. This simply suggests that the cooperating teachers have the enormous trust and confidence that the pre-service teachers can execute, at a very competent level, their roles and responsibilities as indicated in the competency standards. On the other hand, the homogeneity of perception of the cooperating teachers and pre-service teachers along *Diversity of Learners* and *Curriculum* can be attributed to the fact that the two domains embody the specific teachers' undertakings connected to the technical side of teaching and learning processes [9].

CONCLUSION

Given the fact that the pre-service elementary teachers are assessed to be very competent pedagogically and they have good academic performance, it can be deduced that they possess the necessary competencies and acumen to teach in the K to 12 program and to embrace the diverse challenges of the teaching profession. Notably, the findings of the study fill some gaps in the literature and provide evidence that generally, the pedagogical competence of the pre-service elementary teachers is not significantly associated to their academic performance.

Clearly, the study serves as an input for teacher training institutions in enhancing their curricular affairs and activities on student teaching experience particularly along community linkages. The tendency of the pre-service elementary teachers to have lower academic performance as they engage more on community linkages calls for a revisit on the practices and guidelines on the said domain. A further investigation on this aspect is indispensable to determine the root causes and possible factors.

Finally, it must be noted that the study is only limited to the pre-service elementary teachers and it only relied on the survey of the assessment of both the pre-service teachers and cooperating teachers as regards the former's pedagogical competence. It is suggested that a parallel study be conducted using

triangulation with the inclusion of pre-service secondary and technical-vocational teachers in both private and public Teacher Education Institutions in a regional scope to have a more comprehensive picture of the pedagogical competence and academic performance of the pre-service teachers.

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