

Simulated licensure examination for teachers (SLET) as a predictor of pre-service teachers' success in the licensure examination for teachers (LET)

*Dolores D. Mallari
Daphne R. Tadeo
Grace D. Tiqui*

Abstract

This study primarily aimed to determine if the simulated licensure examination for teachers (SLET) may serve as a predictor for the success of pre-service teachers in the licensure examination for teachers (LET). It utilized a descriptive-correlational type of research. A total of 110 participants from the three batches of the fourth year pre-service teachers comprised the study. The instruments used were teacher-made tests aligned with the licensure examination for teachers' items. Results indicated that the correlations between SLET and LET in all the three batches show a p-value of 0.000 which show strong linear correlations at 0.01 level. Hence, it can then be construed that SLET is a good predictor of performance in the LET board examination. It is recommended to have it as a basis for the university to come up with programs or interventions to help the pre-service teachers perform well in the examination which will mark their professionalization.

Keywords: simulated, licensure, predictor

INTRODUCTION

A licensure examination is only one factor that influences the overall quality of teachers and teaching. Mitchell et. al. (2014) stated that "changes in the quality and effectiveness of teachers depend on many things. The primary goal of licensing beginning teachers is to

ensure that all students have competent teachers.” This implies that only skillful, resourceful and capable teachers may perform delicate tasks of molding the minds of the learners.

Initially, teacher licensure tests are planned to determine candidates with some of the knowledge and skills needed for competent initial practice. The tests currently used measure basic skills, general knowledge, content knowledge, and knowledge of teaching strategies. They are designed to separate teacher candidates who are at least minimally competent in the areas assessed from those who are not. (Mitchell et. al., 2014). Initial teacher licensure tests do not provide information to distinguish moderately qualified from highly qualified teacher candidates nor are they designed to test all of the competencies relevant to beginning practice.

According to Corpuz and Salandanan (2013), the professional teacher is one who went through four to five year period of rigorous academic preparation in teaching and one who is given a license to teach by the Board for Professional Teachers of the Professional Regulation Commission after fulfilling requirements prescribed by law such as passing the licensure examination for teachers. A license is very important in order to practice the principles and theories learned in the classroom. It is a certification which may recognize the competency of an individual.

Based on the Republic Act No. 7836 also known as “Philippine Teachers Professionalization Act of 1994”, it is an act to strengthen the regulation and supervision of the practice of teaching in the Philippines and prescribing a licensure examination for teachers and other purposes. For this reason, one of the requirements of hiring teachers in every school both in public and private is a license.

Basic teaching skills and teacher licensure are the first gatekeepers to the teaching profession. A few number of the aspiring teachers who take the said examination make it on the first attempt. While critiques of these exams are warranted, critiques alone will do little to help certify more teachers. This solution simulated licensure examination makes both a theoretical and practical contribution to this area. First, it provides a selected overview of two theoretical areas that have relevance to understanding teacher licensure testing. These theoretical areas are self-efficacy and socio-cultural theory. The research then draws from the years of preparing pre-service teachers for licensure

exams to illustrate how these theories can shape practice at both programmatic and classroom levels.

The aim of the minimum requirement of 75% passing rate in all types of examination is one of the dreams of every institution though various factors once in a while may affect the teaching learning process. Every private higher educational institution never cease to find means to raise and surpass its previous passing rate in the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET). In the UA College of Education, the results for more than five years reveal that there was a failure in achieving the requirement, thus the university continues its efforts to meet the said target. The faculty of the pre-service teachers did not consider this as a liability but rather a basis for motivation and a challenge in setting its vision towards the realization of its dream of succeeding in the board examination.

Today, there are few signs that teacher the licensure examination in the country will change in the immediate future. Licensure exams and the so-called rigor of passing scores are one of the proverbial battles in the war for "high standards." State legislatures and departments of education that wish to argue for more rigor compared to neighboring states often do so by the standards they set for teacher licensure through their licensure exams. Furthermore, some states such as Ohio are moving to retest teachers in the lowest-performing urban schools (Koebler, 2011). Given this reality, researchers and practitioners seek to find ways to empower candidates to pass licensure exams en route to becoming licensed teachers. Such a stance requires a new application of theoretical constructs to develop promising practices. Without doing so, there is little possibility of diversifying the teaching force.

However, some universities whose state department of education does not have these requirements still elect to have these exams as program admissions requirements.

Traditionally, teacher education and licensure take place at the undergraduate level and not the post-baccalaureate level as in law and medicine. Consequently, prospective teachers must pass the basic skills in licensure examination.

There is a need for a standardized test along with the contemporary placement exams to qualify teacher Education programs as what critiques would stress placement as gatekeepers in teacher

education programs (Bennett, McWhorter & Kuykendall, 2006; Flippo, 2003; Memory, Coleman & Watkins, 2003; Mikitovics & Crehan, 2002). Some of these critiques are theoretical and generate from the history of standardized tests more broadly (e.g., IQ tests) and their clear ties to positivistic efforts to delimit the intelligence of people (Au, 2009).

From this perspective, any standardized test invariably privileges some cultural orientations over another therefore bias is an inherent quality of teacher licensure exams. Other scholars such as Bennett and Associates (2006) concluded that the contemporary placement of licensure examinations as gatekeepers into teacher education programs is a key source of inequality. Other critiques are derived from empirical studies. For example, Goldhaber and Hansen (2010) found that teacher licensure exams in North Carolina do not function uniformly across race. Rather, the exams have different levels of predictive validity about teacher effectiveness for different groups. In conducting such an analysis, the researchers do not attempt to lower standards for teacher admission but instead weigh the larger and longer-term benefits of increasing teacher diversity with the setting of an arbitrary passing score.

These critiques to teacher licensure exams (LET), both theoretical and empirical, are important to continue developing, particularly in light of the historical use of standardized testing instruments to measure people's intelligence and skills. However, these critiques alone will do nothing to improve the passing rates of test takers.

Student motivation is another area that is being developed and tapped by the SLET. As Egger and Kauchak (1997) discussed that motivation is a force that energizes, sustains, and directs the behavior toward a goal (Baron, 1992; Schunk, 1990) further defines, motivation is when students pay attention, turn in their work, study for tests that it is manifested. Seemingly, there is a positive correlation between motivation and achievement (Ugurogulu & Walberg, 1979; Way, Hartel & Walberg 1993) where once a student is motivated, he or she has a positive attitude toward a goal. Therefore, SLET may be a motivational tool for every semester for the aspiring student to achieve his goal of becoming a full-fledged teacher. The college's tradition where names of successful SLET examinees are posted in the school and also in the social media invigorates them to strive more on the coming SLETs much more in the actual LET.

Given this background, this proposed solution- Simulated Licensure Examination (SLET) of a private higher educational institution makes both theoretical and practical contributions to this area. First, the researcher provides an overview of two theoretical areas that have relevance to understanding teacher licensure but have been largely overlooked in context with this phenomenon. These theoretical areas are self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Usher & Pajares, 2008) and socio-cultural theory (Nasir & Hand, 2006; Vygotsky, 1978). Overall, this research can guide researchers and practitioners to better understand teacher licensure exams and outlines promising practices that generate results and outcomes.

According to Balajadia (2012), their graduates are made familiar with the circumstances in the licensure examination, especially the content of the test. He also added that the exam that they used to take in the licensure examination for teachers (LET) has the same level of difficulty and pressure.

The SLET's content is patterned on the test questions/ items given in the licensure examination for teachers. Through the different LET reviews, experiences of successful examinees and referral and research aided by review materials provided by some educational organizations such as the Philippine Association for Teacher Education (PAFTE) and the Council of Deans in the College of Education (CDCE) which aims to have a 100% passing rate among education students, the simulated licensure examination was introduced and developed.

The researchers arrived at this study to test the effectiveness of the SLET as regard its application in observing the actual LET practices. The study targets to increase the passing rate in the licensure examination of teachers and to meet the university's goal of having a 100% passing rate. The simulated licensure examination for teachers serves as a springboard for the pre-service teachers in achieving their target to become full-fledged teachers.

This study primarily aims to determine that the SLET may serve as a predictor for the success of pre service teachers in the licensure examination for teachers specifically it sought to answer the following:

1. What is the performance of the pre-service teachers in the simulated licensure examination for teachers from Batches 2011 to 2013?

2. What is the performance of the graduates in the licensure examination for teachers from Batches 2011 to 2013?
3. Is there a significant relationship between their performance in SLET and their performance in LET for three years?

To fully understand the study, the following terms are operationally defined:

simulated examination for teachers (SLET) - An examination given to the pre-service teachers as a means to predict actual performance in the LET

licensure examination for teachers (LET) - To qualify in this exam makes a teacher fit in the professionalization of his teaching practice

pre-service teachers - Students who are taking up the education course

METHOD

This is a descriptive-correlational type of research that used quantitative method in order to determine whether the SLET may be used as predictor for LET. Based from Gabuyo (2012), correlation refers to the extent to which the distributions are linearly related or associated with two variables.

A total of 110 participants from the three batches of the fourth year pre-service teachers comprised the study: fifty (50) in Batch 2011, twenty-five (25) in 2012 and thirty-five (35) in 2013.

The instruments used in simulated licensure examination for teachers were teacher-made tests aligned with the licensure examination for teachers' items given to those who will take the licensure examination for teachers.

The frequency and means were computed to identify the degree of the participants' performance in SLET and LET.

The null hypothesis was tested using the statistical tool of Pearson product moment correlation.

The study is only limited to the SLET and LET results of Batches 2011, 2012 and 2013. This may serve as a measure of the success of the pre-service teachers in the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1

Performance of the pre-service teachers in the simulated licensure examination for teachers

Batch 2011			
Performance in SLET	No. of Pre-service Teachers	Percent (%)	Mean Score
Passed	26	52	79.98
Failed	24	48	
Total	50	100	
Batch 2012			
Performance in SLET	No. of Pre-service Teachers	Percent (%)	Mean Score
Passed	19	76	78.65
Failed	6	24	
Total	25	100	
Batch 2013			
Performance in SLET	No. of Pre-service Teachers	Percent (%)	Mean Score
Passed	25	71	79.57
Failed	10	29	
Total	35	100	

As shown in Table 1, the percentage of passing rate of Batch 2011 in the simulated licensure examination for teachers (SLET) is fifty-two percent (52%), seventy-six percent (76%) came from Batch 2012 and seventy-one percent (71%) from Batch 2013. For Batch 2011, the mean average passing score of 26 passers is 79.98, 78.65 for 19 passers of Batch 2012 and 79.57 for 26 passers of Batch 2013.

Table 2
Performance of the graduates in the licensure examination for teachers

Batch 2011			
Performance in LET	No. Of Pre-service Teachers	Percent (%)	Mean Score
Passed	22	44	77.48
Failed	28	56	
Total	51	100	
Batch 2012			
Performance in LET	No. Of Pre-service Teachers	Percent (%)	Mean Score
Passed	18	72	78.1
Failed	7	28	
Total	25	100	
Batch 2013			
Performance in LET	No. Of Pre-service Teachers	Percent (%)	Mean Score
Passed	25	71	78.5
Failed	10	29	
Total	35	100	

Table 2 shows that only 44% of the graduates of Batch 2011 passed the LET while Batch 2012 obtained a passing rate of 72% and Batch 2013 obtained a passing rate of 71%. The mean average passing score of 22 passers of Batch 2011 is 77.48, 78.1 for 18 passers of Batch 2012 and 78.5 for 25 passers of Batch 2013. This average passing score for three batches is 78.03.

The correlations between SLET and LET in all the three batches show a p-value of 0.000 which indicates strong linear correlations at 0.01 level. This result indicates that as SLET increases, LET performance has the tendency to increase as well. Hence, it can then be construed that SLET is a good predictor of performance in the LET board examination.

Table 3
Relationship between performance in SLET and performance in LET

Bivariates	Pearson r	p-value	Verbal Interpretation
SLET 2011 and LET 2011	0.78	0.000, highly significant	Strong linear correlation
SLET 2012 and LET 2012	0.81	0.000, highly significant	Strong linear correlation
SLET 2013 and LET 2013	0.72	0.000, highly significant	Strong linear correlation

Correlation is significant at 0.01 level

According to Villamorán et al. (2010), a high correlation does not imply causality. The only safe conclusion when a high correlation is observed in the sample data is that linear trend may exist between SLET and LET.

This study could be used for future reference for review classes and assessment of students' readiness in the licensure examination for teachers (LET).

It can also be used as basis to determine those who will not be able to pass on their first take of the licensure examination for teachers which makes it a basis for the university to come up with programs or interventions to help the pre-service teachers perform well in the much awaited examination which will mark their professionalization.

This study may be significant for those who will take and plan to take the Licensure Examination for Teachers so they can enhance their capabilities and strengthen the readiness in taking the board exam.

For those who passed the simulated examination for teachers that they may not be over confident in succeeding in the licensure examination for teachers instead search for more ways on how to be more prepared and equipped in taking the board examination for teachers.

The result of the SLET may inspire and motivate pre service teachers to invest on more review and focus in the items encountered which they find difficult. The SLET is indeed one good strategy/ technique to determine the preparedness of a pre service teacher who aspires to succeed in the licensure examination. The process of administering LET patterned examinations for every semester and giving the students a feel of the actual LET experience increases their preparedness and confidence when the right time comes to take the LET and this attitude would further equip them in their future tasks as teachers.

References

Balajadia, D., Basilio, C., Mallari, D., Tadeo, D. & Tiqui, G. (2010). Student tracking and achievement rerouting: Rekindling pre-service teachers' drive to improve academic performance, *AdMeliora*, Faculty Research Journal of the University of the Assumption.

Egger, P. and Kauchak, D. (1997). *Educational Psychology*. Prentice Hall. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey.

Gabuyo, Y. (2012). *Assessment of Learning 1*. Rex Bookstore, Sta. Mesa Heights, Quezon City.

http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=10090&page=122.

<http://www.prc.gov.ph/prb/default.aspx?id=38&content=223>.

McMillan, J. (2001). *Classroom Assessment (Second Edition). Principles and Practice for Effective Instruction*. Pearson Education, USA.

Mitchell, K., Robinson, D., Plake, B. & Knowles, K. (2014) *Testing Teacher Candidates*. National Academy of Sciences, Washington D.C.

Oosterhof, A. (2003). *Delivering and Using Classroom Assessments (Third Edition)*. Pearson Education. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey.

Salandanan, G. & Corpuz, B. (2013). *Principles of Teaching 1*. Lorimar Publishing, Inc., Quezon City, Manila.

Villamorán, (2010). *Statistics*. TCS Publishing House, Plaridel Bulacan.