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The MVGFCI Criminology Alumni: A Tracer Study (2015-2018)

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Abstract

A descriptive research design was used to determine the employability of 61 Criminology graduates of the Manuel V. Gallego Foundation Colleges, Inc. (MVGFCI) from batches 2015-2018, including their reasons for pursuing the Criminology Program, the relevance of the skills and competencies acquired in college, and their suggestions to improve the Program. The findings pointed out that the BS Criminology degree was male-dominated (54 or 89% male) and majority (52.17%) were employed in jobs not related to their Program. The participants claimed that it was the influence of their parents, relatives, peers, and their strong passion for the profession that inspired them to take up Criminology. They stressed that passing the Board Examinations for Criminologists is a guarantee to get high-paying jobs in the Philippine National Police (PNP), Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), and Bureau of Jail and Management Penology (BJMP), especially if coupled with good communication and human relations skills. The participants suggested that activities related to communication and human relations skills and job competencies be enhanced for better chances of the graduates to be employed.

Keywords: *Board examinations, employability, job competencies, communication and human relations skills*

Introduction

The Bachelor of Science in Criminology Program is a 4-year college degree program intended for students who want to pursue a career in the fields of crime prevention, crime detection and investigation, law enforcement, public safety, custody and rehabilitation of offenders, and criminological research, among others. The mission of the Program is to provide the community with professionally competent and morally upright graduates who can deliver efficient and effective services in the fields mentioned above. It aims to foster the values of leadership, integrity, accountability, and responsibility while serving their fellowmen, community, and country (CHED Memorandum Order No. 5, s. 2018).

The Criminology Program had a total of 177 units, broken down into 56 units of CHED-mandated general education subjects,

121 units of professional courses, and a two-semester (540 hours) of Practicum 1 and 2 (Community Immersion) with 6 credit units. The unique feature of the Program is the students' contribution to police visibility.

The MVGFCI is a private higher educational institution (HEI) incorporated under the law and recognized by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) in 1962. It was later on converted into a foundation on June 18, 1974. It envisions being among the leading educational institutions in Central Luzon that are known for its accredited academic programs, high ratings in nationally recognized examinations, and high employment rate of graduates.

The Criminology Program was first offered in 1994 with ten pioneering students. From then on, enrollment increased and as of the conduct of this study, it had 356 students. The Program had a Level II re-accredited

status and the School Management is still pursuing a higher level of accreditation from the Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation (PACUCOA).

One of the objectives of the MVGFCI tracer study is to determine the career status of its graduates, locally and abroad. A tracer study is an assessment tool that provides quantitative data on employment and career, the character of work and related competencies, and information on the professional orientation and experiences of the graduates (Millington, 2001, as cited by Pacatang, 2016). The collected data contained important indicators of the capability of higher educational institutions. This is the reason why CHED requires all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) including MVGFCI to conduct tracer studies on their respective alumni because the collective results are important tools in upgrading the educational system in the country (Gicana, Sapul, and Penetrante, 2006, as cited by Pacatang, 2016).

Tracer studies are also among the required documents of HEIs' accrediting bodies such as PACUCOA and AACCU because said studies are important sources of information about the quality of graduates and academic programs in HEIs.

Today's challenging economic situation means that it is no longer sufficient for new graduates to know academic subjects. It is necessary for them to gain skills that will enhance their prospects of employment. It is alumni tracing that will help HEIs determine whether or not they are responsive to these changes. With rapid economic development, they are now giving emphasis on professional training and their prime task is to ensure that education and training are market-driven and responsive to the changing needs of the various sectors of an economy (Quoted from the speech delivered by Y.B. Datos Eri Mohamed

Khaled Nordin, Minister of Higher Education of Malaysia). Similarly, Lalican (2007) emphasized that the acquisition of knowledge in the undergraduate specialization, skills, and competencies will also promote productivity, efficiency, and expertise in the graduates' jobs.

Verona's tracer study (2017) was also used as a tool for curriculum planning and improvement; but it was primarily intended to locate the graduates of its academic programs, and the past recipients of scholarship grants, and to update its alumni's information.

Lastly, the tracer study conducted by Guadamor (2017) disclosed that passing the Criminology licensure examination was a guarantee for immediate employment and permanency in the job and that most of the graduates employed in their field of specialization were on permanent status. The study likewise disclosed that graduates were equipped with several skills as their weapons to compete in the global market of employment. The participants claimed that the human relations, communication, problem-solving and investigative skills that they developed in college were relevant to their jobs. They could easily adjust themselves in their respective jobs because of these skills.

The very intention of conducting this tracer study is somehow similar to those of the tracer studies being reviewed for this paper specifically in terms of determining the employability status of the graduates, how they landed on their jobs, and whether such jobs are relevant to the degree program that they finished.

Statement of the Problem

This study is aimed at determining the employability status of Criminology graduates from 2015-2018 of MVGFCI, and the relevance of the curriculum to job placement.

Specifically, the researchers sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the participants in terms of:
 - a) age;
 - b) gender;
 - c) civil status; and
 - d) highest educational attainment?
2. What is the educational background of the participants:
 - a) reason(s) for taking the Criminology Program;
 - b) professional examinations passed; and
 - c) relevance and extensiveness of seminars/training/advanced studies pursued?
3. How may the employment background of the graduates from batches 2015-2018 be described using the following indicators:
 - a) graduates employed in related field
 - job search methods,
 - job search length or waiting time,
 - number and percentage employed,
 - length of stay on the job, and
 - monthly salary;
 - b) graduates employed in an unrelated field (underemployed) –
 - job search methods,
 - job search length or waiting time,
 - number and percentage employed,
 - length of stay in the job, and
 - monthly salary.
 - c) graduates who are self-employed –
 - number and percentage who are self-employed, and
 - kind of business?
4. What skills and competencies acquired in college are considered very useful to the job?
5. What do graduates suggest to improve the Criminology curriculum?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that guided this study is shown in Figure 1. The inputs consisted of the demographic profile of the participants in terms of age, civil status, sex, occupation, year graduated, and educational and employment background; the process involved the administration and collection of the questionnaire, sorting and coding of collected data, and statistical treatment, analyses, and discussions of these data; while the output shows the results of the study on employment information, employment rate, problems encountered while seeking employment, and acquired skills that contributed to their employability. coupled with adequate and accurate interpretation of such data with or without the aid of statistical methods.

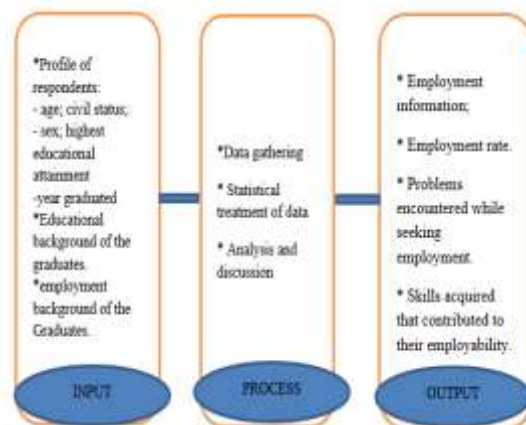


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Significance of the Study

This study is intended to provide information about the employability of Criminology graduates of MVGFCI from 2015-2018 and the relevance of the Program to the job market; hence, this is significant to the following: **CHED** being the key leader in transforming college students into highly competent and productive professionals; **faculty members** in upgrading the standards of teaching by continuously inculcating in the

minds of the students' competitiveness and excellence in their area of specialization; **Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE)** by promoting gainful employment opportunities to deserving employees, protecting and promoting their welfare, and maintaining industrial peace; **MVGFCI** in initiating and implementing development plans for its Criminology Program since this study will provide information about the Criminology graduates' chosen careers; **parents** by encouraging and motivating their children to be serious in their studies, and look up at their children's long-term educational career with great affirmation that they will end up having a good job after the 4-year course; **Criminology students** as this will serve as their motivation to study harder; and **future researchers** since the results of the study will serve as their reference for future studies.

Scope of the Study

This study is limited to the 61 Criminology graduates of MVGFCI, batches 2015-2018. It focused on determining the general profile of the participants, their employment status, and the relevance of their degree program to their jobs.

Methods

This part describes fully the research design used in this study, the participants, the data-gathering instrument and procedure, and the statistical treatment of data.

Research Design

The investigators used the descriptive method of research in which data were collected, described, and analyzed to answer the various questions or problems posed in this study.

Participants

The participants of the study were 61 BS Criminology graduates of MVGFCI from

2015-2018. The researchers made use of the non-probability sampling method in which the participants were selected based on convenience. Convenience sampling is a process of picking out people in the most convenient way to immediately get their reaction to a certain hot and controversial issue (Pacatang, 2016). In this study, readily available and most accessible Criminology alumni who belonged to the target batches were requested and encouraged to participate.

Data Gathering Instrument and Procedure

The main instrument used in data-gathering was the survey questionnaire developed by CHED and modified by the Tracer Study team of MVGFCI upon the approval of the institutional experts based on related studies and literature to suit the present undertaking. After validation of the questionnaire, hard copies were administered personally to the participants in their areas of work, in their homes, or at school during their school visits and once retrieved upon completion. Online administration was also done for some graduates who found convenience in online participation. These graduates were contacted through their e-mail addresses and were given instructions online. A period of one week was allotted for completion after which follow-ups were made to ensure a fair retrieval rate. To gain trust, the participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The investigators treated the gathered data using frequency count and percentage distribution as bases for analyses and discussions.

Results and Discussions

In this portion, results or findings are presented in accordance with the research

problems or questions posed in the Introduction section and are given an appropriate explanation or interpretation for better understanding.

Profile of the Participants

The profile of the participants includes age, gender, civil status, and highest educational attainment.

Table 1 below shows that majority of the participants (54 or 89%) were males, with age levels 34-36 years old. This indicates that the Criminology Program is a male-dominated profession. In the Philippines, law enforcers which include criminology graduates are mostly males. This is because law enforcement requires not only critical thinking, communication, and human relations skills but also a sturdy or strong physique to hurdle evasive lawless elements of society. By nature, the physical build of males is generally stronger compared to females.

The participants were not too young nor too old (age range of 30-39 years old, and this is because they belonged to the more recent batches of graduates (batches 2015-2018).

Table 1. Age and Gender of Participants

Age Range (years)	Frequency			Percentage		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
30-33	10	1	11	18.5	14.3	18.03
34-36	35	5	40	64.8	71.4	65.67
37-39	9	1	10	16.7	14.3	16.39
Total	54	7	61	100	100	100

As to the civil status, as shown in Table 2, majority (91.80%) was still single; those married accounted for only 8.20%. They had just started building their career, not building their own families; marriage to them was not their priority.

Table 2. Civil Status of the Participants

Civil Status	Frequency			Percentage		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Single	49	7	56	90.74	100	91.80

Married	5	0	5	9.26	0	8.20
Total	54	7	61	100	100	100

Reasons for Taking the BS Criminology Program

Table 3 shows the reasons of the participants for taking the BS Criminology Program, and these are as follows: influence of their parents, relatives, and/or peers with the highest frequency of 19 (31.15%), followed by a strong passion for the profession with 18 (29.53%) of the graduates and prospect for immediate employment after graduation. These findings are in agreement with those of Guadamor (2017) that passing the BS Criminology licensure examination is a guarantee for immediate employment and permanency in the job because if the participants' reasons or motivations for taking up Criminology are a strong passion for the profession instilled upon them by their family influencers (e.g. family and relatives), and prospect for immediate employment, it is likely that while in college they will strive hard to pass the board examinations to immediately land a job.

Table 3. Reasons for Taking the BS Criminology Program

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
1. High grades in the course or subject areas related to the course	2	3.27
2. Good grades in high school	1	1.63
3. Influence of parents/relative s/peers	19	31.15
4. Inspired by role models	6	9.83
5. Strong passion for the profession	18	29.53

6. Prospect for immediate employment	15	24.59
Total	61	100

Professional Examinations Taken by the Participants

Table 4 shows that the majority (48 or 78.69%) of the participant graduates passed the Board Examinations for Criminologists, while 12 (19.68%) did not pass and one did not take the examinations. This implies that the professors in the Criminology Department are doing a great job, though not to their fullest. They do not lose sight of their significant role in their student's career success, that passing the licensure examinations for criminologists greatly depends upon their concerted efforts in honing their students' capabilities so that they may be able to successfully hurdle the said examinations and be guaranteed of employment and job permanency.

Table 4. Professional Examinations Taken by the Participants

Criminologist Board Exam Takers	Frequency	Percentage
Passed	48	78.69
Failed	12	19.68
Did not take the exam	1	1.63
Total	61	100

Number of Employed Participants

Among the 61 participants, 23 (37.70%) were employed, and of this number, 11 (47.83%) were employed in related fields such as the Philippine National Police (PNP), Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) and Bureau of Jail and Management Penology (BJMP) while 12 (19.67%) were employed in non-related jobs as service crew and construction workers. (Pls. refer to Table 5)

Table 5. Number of Participants Employed in Related and Not Related Jobs

Employed in Related Job	Frequency	Percentage
PNP	6	26.09
AFP	2	8.70
BFP	1	4.35
BJMP	2	8.70
Subtotal:	11	47.83
Employed in Not Related Job	Frequency	Percentage
Self Employed	1	4.35
Service and Sales	8	34.78
Construction	3	13.04
Subtotal:	12	52.17
Total of Employed:	23	100
*Employed Participants (23 out of 61)		37.70
* Unemployed participants (38 out of 61)		62.30

It is clear in the data that not all those who passed the board examinations got employed, firstly because they belonged to different batches. Generally, those who graduated ahead were employed ahead (other reasons are reflected in Table 7).

Jobs after Graduation

At the time of this study, a great majority (73.91%) of those employed were in their first job, while a few (26%) were not in their first job, meaning, they had other previous jobs (see Table 6). This goes to show that while waiting for the right opportunity, some grabbed any job that came along their way and at the same time established connections with people who could hopefully help them out in seeking the right job.

Table 6. Participants' Jobs after Graduation

First Job After College	Frequency	Percentage
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First Job	17	73.91
Not their first Job	6	26.09
Total	23	100

Reasons, why Some Participants were Not Yet, Employed

Table 7 shows the reasons why some of the participants were not yet employed. The biggest percentage (34.22%) said they had a pending application with the PNP; followed by those who were reviewing for the board exams (23.68%); lack of experience and no job opportunity, with 15.79% and 13.16%, respectively; and waiting for the Board results with 7.89%. Whatever the reasons are, the fact remains that not all board passers get the right jobs immediately. This is one reality that graduates should not lose sight of.

Table 7. Reasons why Respondents were Not Yet Employed

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
No job opportunity	5	13.16
Lack of Experience	8	15.79
With application at PNP	13	34.22
Reviewing for the board exam	9	23.68
Waiting for the result of the Board Exam	3	7.89
Not looking for a Job	2	5.26
Total	38	100

Salary Ranges

Table 8 indicates that 11 out of 23 employed graduates (or 47.83%) were receiving a monthly salary of more than ₱20,000.00; eight (34.78%) were receiving less than

₱10,000.00; while four were receiving salaries ranging from ₱10,000.00 to ₱20,000.00 monthly.

Table 8. Salary Ranges of Employed Participants Respondents

Salary Range	Frequency	Percentage
Less than ₱10,000	8	34.78
₱10,000 - ₱20,000	4	17.39
More than ₱20,000	11	47.83
Total	23	100

The data clearly show that those receiving less than ₱20,000 monthly salaries were those who were employed in non-related jobs. The uniformed personnel employed in the government entities are paid in accordance with the salary standardization scale set by the Philippine government, the minimum of which is not lower than ₱20,000 monthly.

Skills and Competencies Acquired in College

In this area, multiple responses were allowed and the items were sorted based on the frequency and percentage of responses for each skill or competency. As shown in Table 9, communication skills acquired during their undergraduate days in the Criminology Program were the most useful in their jobs with 14 (60.87%) responses, followed by human relation skills with 10 (43.49%) and critical thinking skills with five (21.74%). The least needed were problem-solving and entrepreneurial skills with 13.04% each and skills in information technology with 8.70%.

Criminology graduates have been honed to be law enforcers and as such, they deal with human beings. It is therefore expected that they know how to communicate and deal well with people and

be analytical in their decision-making to resolve whatever problems they are facing.

Table 9. Skills Acquired in College

Skills & Competencies	Frequency	Percentage
Communication Skills	14	60.87
Human Relation Skills	10	43.49
Critical Thinking Skills	5	21.74
Problem-Solving Skills	3	13.04
Entrepreneurial Skill	3	13.04
Information Technology Skills	2	8.70

Suggestions Given to Improve Criminology Curriculum

Table 10 presents the suggestions of the participants to further improve the Criminology curriculum of MVGFCI. Enhancement of communication skills of criminology students got the highest frequency of 25 (40.98%), followed by human relations and criminal investigation skills, with 20 (32.79%) and 18 (29.51%) responses, respectively. Computer literacy got the lowest frequency of 9 (14.75%). Part of the explanation is in the paragraph preceding Table 9. In addition, a vital part of the law enforcement job is criminal investigation; so, it is fitting and proper for criminology students to be thoroughly trained in this area.

Table 10. Suggestions to Improve the Criminology Curriculum of MVGFCI

Suggested Course	Frequency	Percentage
Communication Skills	25	40.98
Human Relations	20	32.79

Criminal Investigation	18	29.51
Computer Literacy	9	14.75

*multiple responses were given

Conclusion

This concluding section consists of the summary of findings, the conclusions, and the corresponding recommendations.

Summary

The 61 participant criminology graduates who belonged to batches 2015-2018 and with ages ranging from 30-39 years old were chosen by convenient sampling. Majority of them were single and males.

Their main reason for taking up Criminology course were the influence of their parents, relatives, and peers; and a strong passion for the profession. Of the 61 participants, 48 (78.69%) passed the Board examinations, and out of these 48 passers, 23 (37.71%) were employed – 11 (18.03%) in related jobs and (12 or 19.67%) in non-related jobs. Those board passers who remained unemployed (38 or 62%) said that they had pending applications with the PNP and some said they lacked experience.

Majority of those employed were on their first job after graduation and those with job-related employment were receiving a gross monthly salary of more than P20,000.00.

The participants believed that communication and human relations skills are very useful to their jobs, and because of this, they suggested that the programs for communication and human relations be enhanced hand in hand with criminal investigation and other core competencies.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Male dominance in the Criminology Program is not unusual because of the nature of work that awaits graduates in the field.

2. Passing the criminology board exams is a guarantee for job-related employment, although, for some reasons, employment may not be immediate. For practical purposes, temporary employment in unrelated jobs is found more practical than no job at all.

3. Criminology graduates' failure in some board courses or areas serves as an avenue for improvement; so, there is a need to identify the loopholes and address them once and for all.

4. Working in job-related fields is tantamount to receiving higher salaries, more so if coupled with good communication and human relations skills and professional competencies.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions above, the following recommendations are offered:

1. The apparent male dominance in the Criminology Program suggests that male-related programs and activities be jointly designed by the program and the guidance officers based on the student's interests and physical nature.

2. In the case of underemployment of some board passers, the guidance officer, in coordination with the Program Coordinator may establish strong linkage with heads of relevant government or private agencies so that graduates from Level III-accredited programs such as the Criminology Program of MVGFCI be given high employment priority for a chance of higher monthly salary.

3. To guarantee a higher or 100% pass rate in the board exams, the Program Dean with selected faculty members may re-examine the board areas where students fail

and take concrete actions to resolve the problems.

4. Criminology programs and activities should include strengthening communication and human relations skills to make graduates more competitive in the job market. These are in addition to the competencies developed in the major or professional criminology courses.

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Healthcare Preparedness of Employees and BS Nursing Students of Manuel V. Gallego Foundation Colleges, for a Return to School during the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

This action research aimed to find out the healthcare preparation of the students and MVGFCI employees for a return to school, to know their challenges, and to come up with a recommendation to improve the healthcare preparation of the school during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. A mixed-method research design was used and 40 MVGFCI employees and twelve 12 BSN students participated in this study. Based on the result, employees of MVGFCI responded that "Hazard Recognition" got the highest next "Safe Work Practices" followed by "Environmental Cleaning and Disinfecting" and last "Access to Public Health Communication". Meanwhile, all the health protocols were practiced all the time by the Nursing students. The highest of which is practicing physical distancing and maintaining good personal hygiene. It is worth noting that most of the protocols laid out by the DOH and the IATF are followed all the time. The employees addressed the challenges they experienced during their preparation for returning to work, these are limited social activities and PPEs, difficulty in maintaining physical distancing, feeling of anxiety both for the threat of virus and possible loss of job, and difficulty in wearing PPE's.

Keywords: *healthcare preparation, COVID-19, return to school*

Introduction

From the beginning of the outbreak of COVID-19, of utmost importance in all organizations and business establishments is the health and well-being of its constituents amidst this global health event. As the situation continues to evolve, focusing on preparedness and efforts to maintain a safe environment to sustain its operation must be implemented. The Manuel V. Gallego Foundation Colleges, Inc. (MVGFCI), is wanting to find out the preparedness of the faculty and staff as well as its students while education is being delivered without compromising the health of everyone.

Health protocols are being developed by concerned government agencies for the safety and welfare of its people. Observing these practices of health preparedness during this pandemic is of utmost importance. Along with this line, emerging decorum has to be

observed as indicative of awareness to maintain a safe work environment to sustain the full operation of the institution. Plans which include enabling work-from-home capabilities, deploying a strategy of coordinating the delivery of services, information drives of best practices, and limiting non-essential travel are only a few of the strategies that can be observed among business organizations. Notwithstanding the preparedness for health and safety issues which is based upon established infectious disease guidelines and protocols, a robust communications strategy, awareness and education, human resources policies specific to pandemic/health crisis planning, facility preparedness and cleaning standards, social distancing protocols, and other resiliency plans.

Limiting any impact of this health event could affect our service together with

our constituents including the students. Therefore, it is essential to ensure that their safety is a major concern and responsibility and must be given priority, otherwise, it may create a bigger problem later.

Life during the COVID-19 pandemic is not easy not only for the government and school administration but for parents and students as well. The return to school by the employer is a welcome step to overcome the effects of the pandemic crisis. However, the question every school should need to address is to ensure adequate time to prepare so as not to compromise the security and health of everyone especially students while quality education is delivered.

A review of the literature revealed the richness of recent information about healthcare preparedness. However, as COVID-19 cases are continuously increasing, communities must take action to prevent further transmission, reduce the impacts of the outbreak, and support control measures. The protection of children and educational facilities is particularly important. Precautions are necessary to prevent the potential spread of COVID-19 in school settings. Care must also be taken to avoid stigmatizing students and staff who may have been exposed to the virus. It is important to remember that COVID-19 does not differentiate between borders, ethnicities, disability status, age, or gender. Education settings should continue to be welcoming, respectful, inclusive, and supportive environments for all. Measures taken by schools can prevent the entry and spread of COVID-19 by students and staff who may have been exposed to the virus while minimizing disruption and protecting students and staff from discrimination.

Furthermore, according to one study by rem.e.gov, planning for schools must be done in collaboration with community partners, since school systems often play key roles in community preparedness plans,

especially in terms of response and recovery initiatives. As a part of COVID-19 planning, it is recommended that school planning teams create or update teaching and learning services in response to planned and unplanned disruptions for individual students, staff, and the whole school community.

World Health Organization (WHO, 2020) listed ways to maintaining the workplace clean. Surfaces like tables and desks and objects like telephones and keyboards need to be wiped with disinfectant regularly because contamination on surfaces touched by employees and customers is one of the main ways that COVID-19 spreads. Next is promoting regular and thorough hand-washing by employees, contractors, and customers; promoting good respiratory hygiene in the workplace; advising employees and contractors to consult national travel advice before going on business trips. Employees, contractors, and customers must be briefed that if COVID-19 starts spreading in their community, anyone with even a mild cough or low-grade fever (37.3 C or more) needs to stay at home.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to:

1. To find out the health care preparation for a return to school during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis by:
 - a. Students, and;
 - b. the academic community of MVGFCI
2. Identify challenges experienced during the health care preparation
3. Find out how these challenges were addressed and how they affected the:
 - a. Students, and;
 - b. the academic community of MVGFCI
4. Recommend an action plan to improve the health care preparation for return to school

Significance of the Study

This Health Care Preparedness for a Return to School during the COVID-19 would be beneficial to the following:

Nursing Faculty Members. The result of the study will help the nursing faculty to be more aggressive and vigilant in applying the different health practices for their safety and the safety of their clientele.

School Management. The findings of this study will provide baseline information in preparing, formulating, and designing a program that will better help its constituents in their preparation for a return to school during the pandemic crisis.

Nursing Students. The findings of this study will provide insight that the health safety practices are not for compliance only but it is worthwhile to adhere to the precautionary measures for their well-being

Conceptual Framework

As shown in Figure 1, this study aims to find out the health care preparation, the challenges they have experienced while preparing, and the strategies they made. As a result, an intervention plan will be made by the institute.

Health care preparations such as hazard recognition, safe work practices, environmental cleaning/disinfecting, access to public health, practicing physical distancing, maintaining good personal hygiene, wearing PPEs, observing stricter precautions, staying at home, and having a healthy lifestyle.

Employees and students identified their challenges and experience while preparing for the above health care protocols and listed also the strategies done to address the challenges.

Given those healthcare protocols, challenges and strategies, an intervention plan has to be made by the institute

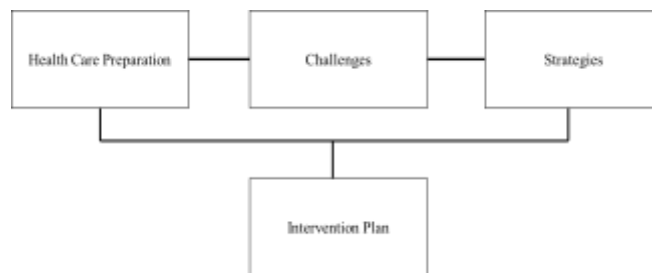


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Methodology

Research Design

Mixed methods were used to come up with a rigorous evaluation of the action or implementation of the intervention plan. Through the integration of multiple quantitative and qualitative data sources, mixed methods research design help ensures better use of the study in other contexts and settings.

Participants of the Study

The participants of the study involved 40 employees, coming from the different academic and non-academic units of MVGFCI and 12 students from the BS Nursing program across year levels and they were selected using the convenience non-probability sampling method.

Instrument

The researchers used a self-made questionnaire to answer the questions that aimed to determine the health protocols observed by the faculty and students. Since the researchers of the study made use of mixed methods, answers of the participants with regards to challenges they experienced and strategies were obtained using the qualitative method. Participants' recommendations to their peers about returning to work were also taken into account.

Data Gathering Procedure

The self-made survey questionnaire was administered with the use of google forms and sent thru the different online communication platforms such as e-mail and

Facebook messenger accounts of the participants of the study. In addition, an online interview was done with the said participants with regards to the questions about their challenges experienced, strategies done and their recommendations with regards to program implementation about the preparation of MVGFCI employees and students for return to school during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Data Analysis

To answer the objectives of the study, different data analyses were used. For qualitative data, thematic analysis was used to analyze the student's responses to the open-ended questions. Meanwhile, on the quantitative data, descriptive statistics (percentages and frequencies), mean and standard deviation using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) ver. 25 were applied.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows the responses of MVGFCI employees on the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. Questions asked were focused on, safe work practices, environmental cleaning, and access to public health. Among these factors, "Hazard Recognition" got the highest mean of 3.54 (sd= 0.72), next is "Safe Work Practices" got a mean of 3.50 (sd=0.80), followed by "Environmental Cleaning and Disinfecting" with a mean of 3.38 (sd= 0.95) and last is "Access to Public Health Communication" with a mean of 2.53 (sd= 1.26).

Table 1. Protocols observed by the employees amidst COVID-19

Items	Mean (\bar{x})	Verbal Description
Hazard Recognition		
Understanding their level of occupational risk, and such risks may change their workload to protect them from exposure	3.53	All the time

Everyone is cognizant about community transmission of COVID-19 evolves	3.43	All the time
Aware of measures to control/preventing from exposure	3.68	All the time
Total	3.54	All the time
Safe Work Practices		
Know how to use Personal Protective Materials (wearing of face shields, masks)	3.58	All the time
Frequent handwashing with soap and water for 20 seconds	3.55	All the time
Avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands	3.35	All the time
Practice good respiratory etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes	3.80	All the time
Recognized personal risk factors, Personnel with an underlying condition such as heart or lung disease or diabetes are at risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19	3.38	All the time
Sick personnel is aware to leave the workplace as soon as possible	3.43	All the time
Mindful to stay at home if sick	3.50	All the time
Seek medical care when necessary	3.40	All the time
Total	3.50	All the time
Environmental Cleaning/disinfecting		
Practice routine cleaning or frequently touched surfaces such as tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, sinks, etc.	3.40	All the time
Cleaning with soap and water (reduces the number of germs, dirt, and impurities on the surface)	3.60	All the time

High-touch surfaces made of plastic or metal, such as grab bars and railings are cleaned routinely.	3.13	Most of the time
Total	3.38	All the time
Access to Public Health Communication		
Have access to RESU (Regional epidemiology surveillance Unit) for networking	2.20	Sometimes
Collaborate with DOH (Department of Health) localities for communicating COVID-19 information	2.43	Sometimes
Have access to COVID-19 website updates	2.98	Most of the time
Total	2.53	Most of the time

Legend:

All the time: 3.26 – 4.00 Sometimes 1.76 – 2.50
 Most of the time 2.51 – 3.25 Never 1.00 – 1.75

With regards to hazard recognition, employees are aware all the time of measures to control and prevent COVID-19 exposure (x=3.68). They understand all the time the level of occupational risks which may change their workload to protect them from exposure obtaining a mean of 3.53 while their cognizance about COVID-19 community transmission got the least mean of 3.43. According to cdc.gov, wearing PPEs like masks can protect us from respiratory droplets that might contain a virus. Wearing a mask is also important when physical distancing is difficult to maintain.

Among safe work practices, the practice of good respiratory etiquette including covering the mouth when coughing or sneezing registered the highest mean of 3.80, followed by the use of personal protective materials such as wearing face masks and face shields. Unfortunately, avoidance of touching the eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands got the lowest mean of 3.35 which means that despite

practicing good etiquette in coughing and sneezing and the use of protective materials, there's still the possibility of contracting the disease by touching the eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.

Among these safe work practices that obtained low means are as follows: mindful to stay home if sick (x=3.00), sick personnel is aware to leave the workplace as much as possible (x=3.43); seek medical care when necessary (x=3.40) and recognizing personal risk factors (x=3.38). The above results are indicative of the employee's willingness to work despite the risk involved when they are in the workplace.

In terms of environmental cleaning and disinfecting, cleaning with soap and water to reduce the number of germs, dirt, and impurities on the surface is the most frequently done (x=3.60) while cleaning routinely high-touch surfaces made of plastic or metal such as grab bars and railing registered the lowest mean of 3.13. Again, the respondents seem unaware that viruses and other microbial organisms have a higher population in most frequently touch objects/surfaces, thus, it appears that frequent cleaning/disinfecting prevent faster transmission of the carrier of the disease.

Accessing COVID-19 website updates had been the highest response in terms of access to public communication. This means that the social media platform is preferred rather than collaborating with the DOH in the locality or accessing the Regional Epidemiological Surveillance Unit with means of 2.43 and 2.20, respectively.

Table 2 presents the health protocols followed by the BS Nursing students. Submitting the rapid COVID-19 test is practiced only sometimes (x=2.0) while staying at home and going out only for urgent emergency responses and exercise is practiced most of the time with a mean of 3.25 and 3.17, respectively.

Table 2. Health protocols followed by BS Nursing Students

Items	Mean (\bar{x})	Verbal Description
Health Protocols		
Continue practicing physical distancing. Maintaining a distance of at least three feet from other people. Avoiding going to some social gatherings or in crowded places.	4	All the time
Maintain good personal hygiene. Avoid touching the eyes, nose, and mouth, and constantly wash your hands with soap and water. In case these are not available, hand sanitizer with at least 70% alcohol is used.	4	All the time
Clean and disinfect. Using a household disinfectant, clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily. Cleaning of visibility dirty surfaces followed by disinfection is a best practice measure for the prevention of COVID-19.	3.83	All the time
Wear Personal Protective Equipment. Wear face masks that cover the mouth and nose when going out, or when with other people, and never share the used face mask or face shield with other people.	3.92	All the time
Proper Disposal of used protective equipment.	3.67	All the time
Observe and advise stricter precautions for individuals at higher risk. Observe or advise	3.92	All the time

individuals most vulnerable to be infected with COVID-19 or at risk of developing severe symptoms are advised to stay home as much as possible, and practice stricter precautions as iterated above.		
Staying at home and going out only for urgent emergency purposes	3.25	Most of the time
Keeping the self-healthy by having a healthy lifestyle through: A well-balanced diet food,	3.42	All the time
Good rest/sleep	3.58	All the time
Exercise	3.17	Most of the time
Supplementary foods/vitamins	3.58	All the time
Submitting for rapid COVID-19 test	2	Sometimes
Other health protocols, please indicate.	-	
Over-all Mean	3.52 (sd = 0.55)	All the time

Legend:

All the time: 3.26 – 4.00 Sometimes 1.76 – 2.50
Most of the time 2.51 – 3.25 Never 1.00 – 1.75

Challenges experienced during the health protocol preparation

The challenges encountered by the employees and students of MVGFCI are limited social activities and a limited supply of PPEs. A limited supply of PPEs was experienced because all people want to have these to protect themselves against the virus. Another factor is that there is also an issue with the capability and accessibility of buying these PPEs. The second challenge that they encountered is the difficulty to maintain

physical distancing because they habitually socialize with other people. The third challenge that they have encountered is the feeling of anxiety. Because of fear of the COVID-19, our mental health is also affected. Anxiety was also experienced because of losing a job, especially those employees that involve in no work no pay scheme. Fourth is the difficulty of wearing PPEs, most people are not used to wearing PPEs. Others have experienced allergies because of wearing the said PPEs.

Strategies Done to Address the Challenges

The strategies done to address the challenges faced by the employees and students of MVGFCI are proper hygiene and disinfecting because of limited resources (PPEs). Another strategy is to avoid crowded places. The third strategy is about removing or eliminating anxiety by engaging themselves in some physical activities to become physically healthy which can also positively affect their mental health. In the situation of losing their job because of no work no pay, they strategize to create a part-time job for extra income to sustain their family needs. Another strategy is to get used to wearing PPEs even if it is difficult. Wearing PPEs is mainly our way of preventing the said spread of the virus.

Recommendations of the Employees and BS Nursing

The following are the recommendations of the employees and BS Nursing students to their peers for the preparations for returning to school.

Healthy Lifestyle. This includes exercising, sleeping for the right amount of time, taking vitamins, and eating healthy and nutritious foods.

Stay at home. Staying at home, especially for those who do not have urgent matters to attend to.

Wearing PPEs and Proper Hygiene. This includes masks, face shields, and

frequent handwashing using soap, alcohol, or disinfectant.

Practice Physical Distancing. Avoid going to crowded places or attending mass gatherings.

Self-improvement. It is also recommended that this time is the time to get to know more about oneself and discover new skills and talents. This pandemic crisis brought fear and negativity to people, however, there are also good things that it caused. One of those is a chance to improve oneself.

Table 3 shows the readiness of the employees and BS Nursing students in returning to school and work. Based on the result, there is a difference between the readiness of employees and students. The readiness of employees fell under "a bit ready" while the readiness of BS Nursing students fell under "Ready". The difference between the two sets of respondents is probably because the students are eager to learn after being under lockdown. Whereas, employees took the lockdown as one way of resting from their respective duties and responsibilities.

Table 3. Readiness of Employees and Students in Returning to Work and School

Participants	Mean (\bar{x})	Verbal Description
MVGFCI Employees	1.88	A bit ready
BS Nursing Students	3.08	Ready

Legend:

Very ready: 3.26 – 4.00 A bit ready: 1.76 – 2.50
 Ready 2.51 – 3.25 Not ready: 1.00 – 1.75

Conclusion

Healthcare preparation is vital in returning to school and work especially during this time. The following has been concluded based on the results obtained:

1. Both the employees and students are observing health protocols in preparation for their return to school or work;

2. For the preparation for returning to school, the health protocols observed by the employees and students of MVGFCI are to wear face masks and face shields and use alcohol as a disinfectant to avoid and minimize the spread of the virus. Boosting the immune system is a way to fight any diseases by eating healthy foods, and taking vitamins and minerals as supplements. Minimize social gatherings and practice physical distancing to avoid the spread of the virus.

3. Both the employees and students addressed the challenges they experienced during their preparation for returning to work. These are limited social activities and PPEs, difficulty to maintain social distancing, feeling of anxiety both for the threat of virus and possible loss of job, and difficulty in wearing PPEs.

4. Despite the challenges they have experienced, they made some strategies. These are proper hygiene and disinfecting more often, not going to a crowded place, doing exercise, adding a part-time job, getting used to wearing PPEs, and accepting the new normal environment.

5. In terms of the level of preparedness, employees are a little bit ready in returning to work, while students are ready in returning to school.

6. The employees and students wanted to recommend to their peers to have a healthy lifestyle, always wear PPEs, practice physical distancing, stay at home, and while at home, find time to get to know themselves.

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Stress and Coping Strategies during the Height of COVID-19 Crisis: The Case of the Nursing Students of Manuel V. Gallego Foundation Colleges, Inc.

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Abstract

This study is aimed at finding out the academic-related stress experienced by the nursing students of MVGFCI at height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the effects of stress on their school life, and their coping strategies. All 22 nursing students across all year levels during the second semester, of the school year 2021-2022 were surveyed using a structured questionnaire, and the results were the following: the participants experienced stress because of their inability to comply with school requirements due to limited internet access, limited learning resources, and difficulty communicating with mentors and classmates. These stressful feelings affected their class standing, ability to focus on priorities, and their attitude toward life. For academic and life survival, they adopted some coping strategies such as sharing problems with a support group, engaging in relaxing activities, finding health information to understand COVID-19 better, and setting learning goals. It would be of much help if teachers would assist their students in fulfilling their learning goals especially when physical presence in school is impossible.

Keywords: *COVID-19 pandemic, academic-related stress, effects of stress, coping strategies*

Introduction

Severe stress may lead to the development of a possible psychological disorder when not properly addressed. Although the human body has a built-in mechanism to automatically activates the fight or flight responses, referred to as the physical and psychological responses, to any threat or stress that help fight a threat or flee from it, these responses may not always keep people safe they may make things worse (Gunnar, 1998). It is therefore important for persons under stress to use appropriate remedies or strategies to arrest stress at its early stage.

During the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, most people were under stress. It brought too many fears people because the risk or danger of COVID-19 is real; it is not imagined. It may affect everyone if it is taken for granted. COVID-19 caused chaos, especially among the front liners – from doctors to housekeeping personnel who provided medical assistance to the COVID-19 patients. As the number of COVID-19 cases continued to rise, bed spaces in the

hospitals had been fully occupied leading to difficulties in admitting and providing medical assistance to patients. Aside from the difficulty in providing medical assistance to patients, the continuous increase in mental health problems needs to be addressed as well (Mesnikoff, 2020). Mesnikoff cited the WHO's prediction that the third wave of COVID-19 is mental health problems characterized by the inability to cope with the normal stresses of life, to work productively, and to make contributions to the family and community. In a survey conducted by the Social Weather Stations (SWS) from May 5 to 16, 2020 to measure the effects of the pandemic and community quarantine on the 450 workers in the Philippines, the results showed that the level of stress, anxiety, and depression were quite alarming. The millennials and generation Z employees were the ones most affected. Those in the work-from-home setup were reported to have a higher level of anxiety and depression compared to those who worked on-site (onenews.ph, June 1, 2020). In another survey conducted by the SWS

(newsinfo.inquirer.net) last July 3 to 6, 2020, 86% of the Filipinos surveyed said that COVID-19 brought them too much stress, with junior high school graduates experiencing greater stress compared to the other participants. Another study cited the WHO's report that the Philippines was one of the Southeast Asian countries having the highest rates of depression, affecting more than three million Filipinos. The Philippine Daily Inquirer (July 26, 2020) cited that 84% of Pinoys were stressed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Contributory to depression and suicide were such factors as worrying too much, overthinking, anxiety, panic attacks, and financial stressors like having no work, getting fired from work, deduction due to a skeletal workforce, and so forth (Gorecho, 2020; businessmirror.com.ph).

To overcome mental health problems brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, WHO listed some coping mechanisms. These are talking to trusted people, contacting families and friends, staying at home, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, avoiding smoking, alcohol, or dangerous drugs, dealing with emotions, limiting worries and agitations, and seeking professional or religious help (Hiremath, Kowshik, Manjunath & Shettar, 2020).

It is a given fact that students are not exempted from the effects or impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and yet earlier studies seemed to overlook this reality; hence, this study gave particular focus on the stresses experienced by the nursing students of MVGFCI, the effects of such stress on them and their coping mechanisms. With the advent of some major changes in the educational system like online learning, blended learning, and so forth, there is more reason for MVGFCI or the Institute of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences (INAHS) to determine the nursing students who were under stress, how these stresses affected them

and what coping strategies were adopted to lessen their impact on them. This could be of help to the Institute in coming out with improved remedies to students' actual or potential stresses or stressors.

Objectives of the Study

This study is aimed at determining the stresses experienced by the student participants during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the effects of these stresses on their academic standing and attitude toward life, and the stress-coping strategies adopted to lessen the impact of these stresses. The researchers hope to offer more workable recommendations that are more beneficial not only to students but to teachers as well, especially in times when physical presence in school is impossible.

Significance of the Study

The level of stress experienced by the nursing students of MVGFCI during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, its adverse effects on said students, and their stress-coping strategies would provide the researchers with some basic information that would serve as bases for instituting appropriate measures to alleviate the effects of the COVID-19 crisis. Likewise, the School Management through its Student Services and Medical Services Departments could use the results of this study in formulating policies that can cushion the impact of the pandemic on the lives of the students. Furthermore, the faculty members could be properly coached in the development of their teaching materials and strategies to promote effective but stress-free learning among students amidst the pandemic.

Methodology

This section provides details on the research design, and the participants of the

study. the data-gathering instrument and procedure and the method of analysis.

Research Design

The investigators employed the descriptive method of research using the surveyed data on the participant students' stresses or stressors during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, their effects on students' academic standing and attitude toward school life, and their coping strategies. The research results are intended to guide the researchers and other school authorities concerned in coming up with more workable recommendations for students and teachers (Pls. refer to the Research Design, Figure 1).



Figure 1. Research Design

Participants of the Study

All 22 nursing students across all year levels who were during the first semester of the SY 2021-2022 were chosen as participants of this action research. They were given priority in this study because first of all, they are the would-be frontliners soon to be emersed in challenging situations in hospitals or in the community, and secondly, they were the ones most visible and most active in school activities since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. It would be of big help to the faculty members of the Nursing Department to determine their students' capabilities to handle problems caused by stress or the stress itself so that they could be provided with assistance as early as in their student days.

Data Gathering Instrument and Procedure

A structured survey questionnaire developed by the team of researchers from the INAHS, in collaboration with other researchers of the MVGFCI, was utilized to meet the objectives of this study. Said questionnaire was drafted by the Dean of the INAHS, then presented to other members of the research team for comments and approval. After approval of the same, it was sent via Google form to all the student-participants with instructions to send back to the office of their Dean the accomplished questionnaire within two weeks upon receipt.

The questionnaire was composed of three major parts. The first part was made up of five statements to enumerate and describe the numerous sources of stress experienced by the participant students during the height of the pandemic. Each statement was rated by the participants using the 4-point Likert Scale where:

- 1.0 -1.75 – disagree
- 1.76-2.50 – moderately agree
- 2.51-3.25 – agree
- 3.26=4.0 – strongly agree

The second part, with six items, identified the effects of stress on the participants' academic standing in particular in their lives, and the last part consisted of 13 statements that enumerated the coping strategies employed by the participant students to alleviate their stress during the lockdown period. These last two parts also made use of the 4-point scale.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) using SPSS.

Results and Discussions

The results are presented in tabular form with corresponding explanations or interpretations, and in accordance with the following sequence: stresses experienced by

the participants during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, their effects on the participants, and their coping strategies.

Academic-related Stress Experienced by the Participant Students during the Height of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Table 1 shows the participants’ stressful experiences during the quarantine period in the early part of the COVID-19 pandemic. The participant students *agreed* that during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in the province of Nueva Ecija, they experienced stress because of the following: “inability to comply with requirements in school due to limited access to the Internet” (\bar{x} =3.07) and “limited resources such as journals, books, and e-materials to complete their academic requirements” (\bar{x} =3.00). They also experienced *moderate stress* in having “difficulty connecting or communicating with their mentors during the pandemic” (\bar{x} =1.80) and in “connecting with their classmates” (\bar{x} =1.85). They were stressed because they thought that their class standing would be adversely affected like getting low grades because of none compliance with the requirements of their instructors. The importance of social interaction, whether online or physical, could not be underestimated. This is in agreement with a recent study conducted by Elmer et al. (2020) that social relationships are conduits of social support. Physical proximity and opportunities for interaction are important in developing and fostering social ties. As face-to-face interactions and random encounters are minimized due to the social distancing measures enforced by the government, individuals likely focus on those relationships that are spatially close, most meaningful, or most established.

Although in general, they experienced *moderate* stress or difficulties in their academics, it is worthy to note that they

“had no conflict with themselves due to their inability to address personal issues”, with the lowest weighted mean of 1.50.

Table 1. Academic-related Stress Experienced during the Height of the COVID-19 Pandemic

During the peak of the pandemic in the province of Nueva Ecija, I experienced the following:			
#	Item Statement	Mean (\bar{x})	Verbal Interpretation
1	Having difficulty communicating with my mentors;	1.80	moderately agree
2	Inability to comply with requirements in school due to limited access to WIFI connections;	3.07	Agree
3	Connection with my classmates is challenging	1.85	moderately agree
4	Resources (journals, books, and e-materials) to complete my requirements for all the courses are limited; and	3.00	agree
5	Having a conflict with oneself due to inability to address personal issues.	1.50	disagree
General Weighted Mean:		2.24	moderately agree

Effects of Academic-related Stress on the Participants

The effects of academic-related stress on the participants were gauged based on their responses to the six items presented or enumerated in Table 2. As reflected in the said Table, the participants *agreed* that the academic-related stress being experienced at the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic affected their “class standing due to limited resources at home” (\bar{x} =3.20), “ability to focus on priorities”, “attitude towards life”, and their “perceptions on everything around them”, with the same weighted mean of 3.13. These

anxious feelings could be considered normal feelings just like how other people felt during the same period. In the midst of uncertainty, no one could afford to stay complacent, especially in the case of students who spend a big amount of money on their private education. At the peak of the pandemic when people did not know what to do, most if not all people around the world were in panic mode. Supportive of this finding is the result of the survey conducted by the SWS (newsinfo.inquirer.net) last July 3 to 6, 2020 that 86% of the Filipinos surveyed said COVID-19 brought them too much stress, with junior high school graduates experiencing greater stress compared to the other participants. The SWS cited WHO's report that the Philippines was one of the Southeast Asian countries having the highest rates of depression, affecting more than three million Filipinos.

Good thing nothing worst happened to the participant-students. This would show how well their coping strategies were.

On the contrary, they *disagreed* that their “relationship with their parents, friends, classmates, and other significant people” and their “spiritual connection with God” were affected by the pandemic ($\bar{x}=1.50$). This *disagreement* is in congruence with the study of Elmer et al., as cited above, that social relationships are conduits of social support, and that in times of crisis, social support is important. The same participants further believed that the pandemic should not affect their spiritual connection with God. This is the time for them to strengthen their connection with the Lord.

Table 2. Effects of Academic-related Stress on the Participants

The stress that I experienced affected my:			
#	Item Statement	Mean (\bar{x})	Verbal Interpretation
1	Ability to focus on my priorities;	3.13	Agree

2	Class standing due to the limited resources at home;	3.20	Agree
3	Relationship with my parents, friends, classmates, and significant others;	1.50	Disagree
4	Spiritual connection with God;	1.50	Disagree
5	Attitude towards life	3.13	Agree
6	Perceptions of everything around me	3.13	Agree
General Weight Mean		2.60	Agree

Stress Coping Strategies of the Participant Students

Thirteen stress-coping strategies are presented in Table 3. The participants' extent of agreement with each of the 13 items signals their extent of actual adoption or use of these coping strategies during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic. It could be gleaned from the Table that 10 out of the 13 stress-coping strategies that were listed were rated *strongly agreed* with weighted means ranging from 3.27 to 3.67. These strategies were: “talk about the problems with a support group (e.g. parents, friends, and loved ones)”; “engage in different relaxing activities (e.g. meditation, calming techniques, listening to soft music)”; “identify the problems and then put into action some potential solutions”; “choose natural and healthy forms of stress relief (e.g. running, yoga, swimming, walking, dancing, etc.)”; “have fun and find humor in everything”; “practice relaxation techniques when hearing news about COVID-19”; “seek out emotional support from others every time there is news about new cases of COVID-19”; “find the health information needed to understand COVID-19 better”; “engage in different relaxing activities (meditation, calming techniques, listening to soft music)”; and “set goals to help studies during the pandemic.

Table 3. Stress Coping Strategies of the Participant Students

To cope with stress that I am experiencing, I do the following:			
#	Item Statement	Mean (\bar{x})	Verbal Interpretation
1	Talk about the problems with a support group (parents, friends, and loved ones);	3.40	strongly agree
2	Engage in different relaxing activities (meditation, calming techniques, listening to soft music);	3.30	strongly agree
3	Identify the problems and then put into action some potential solutions;	3.27	strongly agree
4	Choose natural and healthy forms of stress relief (running, yoga, swimming, walking, dancing, etc.);	3.30	strongly agree
5	Having fun and finding humor in everything;	3.33	strongly agree
6	Practice relaxation techniques when hearing news about COVID- 19	3.40	strongly agree
7	Seek out emotional support from others every time there is news about new cases of COVID-19	3.40	strongly agree
8	Find the health information needed to understand COVID-19 better	3.47	strongly agree
9	Try to stay calm and think of a healthy coping strategy when overwhelmed with COVID-19 updates	2.25	moderate ly agree
10	Find someone to confide in about the anxiety relating to COVID-19	2.30	moderate ly agree
11	Engage in different relaxing activities (meditation, calming techniques, listening to soft music);	3.60	strongly agree
12	Keep thinking that there's not much to do to help yourself and family	3.10	agree
13	Set goals to help studies during the pandemic	3.67	strongly agree
General weighted mean:		3.21	Agree

They *moderately agreed* that they need to “stay calm and think of a healthy coping strategy when overwhelmed with COVID-19 updates” and “find someone to confide in about the anxiety relating to COVID-19”

The above findings are in agreement with what Elmer et al. expressed that social relationships are conduits of social support and that in times of crisis, social support is very important. Most of the coping strategies adopted by the participant students were also in congruence with what the WHO listed (Hiremath, Kowshik, Manjunath & Shettar, 2020) such as talking to trusted people, contacting families and friends, staying at home, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, avoiding smoking, alcohol, or dangerous drugs, dealing with emotions, limiting worries and agitations, and seeking professional or religious help.

Summary of Findings, Conclusion, and Recommendations

Summary of Findings

The student-participants experienced stress because of their “inability to comply with requirements in school due to limited internet access” and “limited resources such as journals, books, and e-materials”. They also experienced *moderate* stress in having “difficulty communicating with their mentors and classmates”. These stressful feelings affected their “class standing”, “ability to focus on priorities”, “attitude towards life”, and their "perceptions of everything around them".

Their high hopes for academic survival motivated them to adopt some coping strategies, the top among which was talking about the problems with a support group, engaging in relaxing activities, finding health information to understand COVID-19 better, and setting goals for studies.

Conclusions

It is concluded that:

1. When students are physically detached from school, a strong internet connection is the key to fulfilling their academic requirements and maintaining open communication with mentors and classmates;
2. Stressful or anxious feelings do not only emanate from students' inability to maintain their class standing and to focus on their priorities. Said feelings also affect their attitude toward life and their perceptions of everything around them; and
3. The pandemic does not cause them any harm or serious problems; this could be due to their knowledge of several stress-coping strategies.

Recommendations

To maintain students' sound mental health and cope well with their academic requirements even in the midst of crisis, the following are recommended:

1. Students should continue using the stress-coping strategies that best work for them;
2. Teachers should:
 - find time to regularly connect with their students online when physical contact is not possible;
 - adopt flexible deadlines on the students' activities and assignments to minimize stress;
 - provide choices for assignments for students to have control over the environment;
 - post the daily class schedules and activities, including reminders, so that students know what is expected of them;
 - regularly monitor students' progress in a way that is not stressful;
 - provide slow pacing or more time for slow students to catch up;

- encourage social interaction online through small-group activities; and
- find out with parents if their children experience academic pressure.

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Needs Assessment of Freshmen and Transferees of MVGFCI: Basis for Guidance Services Improvement

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Abstract

The researchers aim to identify the needs of freshmen and transferees of Manuel V. Gallego Foundation Colleges, Inc. (MVGFCI) that are of help to the Guidance Office of the School in determining the most appropriate activities (e.g. seminars, workshops, etc.) so that said students and the succeeding ones will be able to adjust easily with the school environment at the earlier stage possible. A total of 86 student participants were surveyed during the school year 2017-2018 using a structured questionnaire, and the data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings revealed that both freshmen and transferees garnered the highest means on the needs representing test-taking skills, making good decisions in life, sexual identity, spirituality, becoming financially independent, and having a strong sense of MVGFCI spirit. Furthermore, the transferees showed higher needs in sexuality/self-identity, spirituality, and personal and career/goals compared to the freshmen. Based on these findings, it is recommended that the guidance and counseling services of MVGFCI be strengthened to address the above-mentioned needs.

Keywords: *Guidance and counseling services/activities, freshmen and transferees, students' needs*

. Introduction

The Guidance Office provides academic-related services and programs for the welfare of the students of MVGFCI or the Gallegans. To be able to determine the most appropriate services and programs, particularly for new students, the freshmen and the transferees' assessment of their needs is necessary.

Student needs assessment is of great help not only to the guidance counselor but also to the faculty members and school administrators. The results of the needs assessment are vital in the development of needs-based programs or services that are products of concerted or collaborative efforts of all school personnel concerned.

A study from Kitzrow (2003) stated that students' needs sometimes take a complex form including the many problems in their lives. In this case, the pooling of school resources and bright ideas is highly needed to be able to plan the strategies to address the student's needs more effectively. The more comprehensive study conducted by

Gallagher, Gollin, and Kelleher (1992) pointed out that anxiety, fear, shyness, loneliness, sexuality, somatic complaints, social inadequacy, lack of purpose, problems with faculty, and the need for career and learning skills courses were the basic personal needs where college students needed professional support. On a narrower note, the freshmen were having more concerns about test anxiety and adjustment to university life (Aktas, 1997 & Kapikiran, 2002) and support from sexuality-specific campus groups was what college students needed especially when they are in the midst of sexual identity confusion where support from friends and significant others is needed (Brandon-Friedman, 2016).

According to Egbochuku and Akpan (2008), educational needs are connected with learning and study habits that affect academic performance, concentration, passing examinations, and time management. and as Kandi (2014) said, once the students become more motivated in achieving academic success. they develop the self-discipline to

pass all their subjects, improve decision-making, overcome shyness, increase self-confidence, improve their communication skills, then graduate in their chosen field.

It is on this premise that the pooling of bright minds and resources of MVGFCI is necessary for successful student integration into the Institution by creating conditions for positive study experiences. This is particularly needed in a situation where only a few college students seek the help of a counselor like in the case of MVGFCI.

Objectives of the Study

The researchers aim to achieve the following objectives: describe the socio-demographic characteristics of the student participants in terms of course and year level, sex, religion, student type, and the high school graduated from (whether private or public); identify their needs, and find out if freshmen and transferees differ in their needs. The results of all these efforts are seminars, workshops, and other activities that are most appropriate for the successful integration of new college students into the college environment.

Methodology

Described in this section are the research design, the participants, the data-gathering procedure, and the analysis.

Research Design

This is a descriptive study that started with a survey of the student participants' socio-demographic characteristics and an assessment of their needs. Figure 1 shows the presumed differences between the needs of freshmen and transferees and the resultant needs-based actions in the form of seminars, workshops, and other activities designed for the successful integration of new students into the college environment.

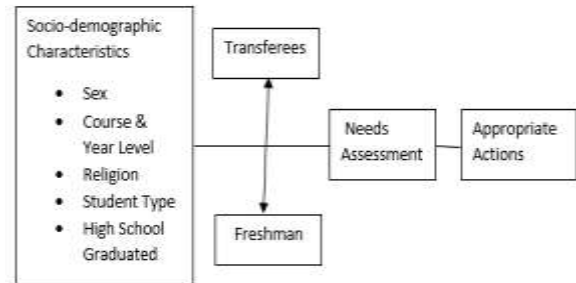


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Participants

The participants of this study were 86 freshmen and transferees enrolled in the various Institutes of MVGFCI in the school year 2017-2018 such as Criminal Justice Education, Nursing and Allied Health Services, Teacher-Education, Business and Accountancy, and Computer Science. In the Institute of Criminal Justice Education, the biggest Institute in terms of the student population, an adequate sample size was chosen by convenience sampling technique, while for the smaller Institutes, a complete enumeration technique was employed.

Data Gathering Instrument and Procedure

The needs assessment questionnaire developed by the Student Affairs Office was used in data-gathering, but before its administration, it was presented to the Academic Council consisting of the Deans of the different Institutes for review and comments. After this, the tool was improved or finalized integrating therein the recommendations of the Council.

In the data-gathering process, the researchers used the updated master list from the Registrar's Office during the first and second semesters of the School Year 2017-2018 in identifying the student participants. After identifying them, the researchers roamed around the college campus of MVGFCI to ask permission from the subject teachers to allow students to answer the questionnaire which consisted of 30 items.

Data Analysis

The data were tabulated and analyzed using descriptive statistical tools such as frequency and percentage distribution to determine the participants' socio-demographic characteristics and *t*-test for the presumed differences between the transferees and the freshmen in terms of their needs. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to aid the researchers in data analysis.

Results and Discussions

The results or findings of this study are presented in accordance with the objectives presented earlier in this study such as to describe the participants' demographic characteristics, identify their needs, find out if freshmen and transferees differ in their needs and if there is a significant relationship between their demographic characteristics and their needs.

Socio-Demographic Profile of the Participants

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic profile of the participants.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of the Participants

ITE	Freq	%
ICJE	66	77
ITE	11	13
IAB	8	9
IICT	1	1
Sex		
Male	62	72
Female	24	28
Religion		
Catholic	62	72
Iglesia ni Cristo	12	14
Protestant	11	13
Islam	1	1
Student Type		
Transferees	65	76
Freshmen	21	24
High School Graduated		

Public	69	80
Private	17	20
Total	86	100

A total of 86 students from different Institutes participated in the research. The table shows that most of the participants were criminology students (66 or 77%), while the least number were from the Institute of Computer Science (1%). Based on the student directory of the Registrar's Office, the bulk of students of MVGFCI were criminology students, and the least populated Institute was Computer Science. The results also show that most of the participants were male (72%) and 28% were female.

The participants belonged to four religious' groups, the most dominant of which was Catholicism with a total of 62 (72%), followed by Iglesia ni Cristo with 12 (14%). Since MVGFCI is a non-sectarian school, different religions of the participants were observed.

Table 1 also shows that 65 (76%) of the participants were transferees coming from different schools in Cabanatuan City such as Araullo University, Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology, Good Samaritan Colleges, and Datamax Colleges. There are 21 freshmen from Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, and Aurora.

In terms of the type of high school graduated, 80% of the participants graduated from public schools while 20% graduated from private schools, one of which was the MVGFCI. The students chose MVGFCI in their college because they believed that they could afford to enroll and finance their schooling in this School.

Needs Assessment Results

The results of the needs assessment are presented in Table 1. The study revealed that most of the categorized needs related to study/school, career and goals, financial, interpersonal, personal, environmental, recreational, spiritual, time-management,

family, and relationship were needed by the new students of MVGFCI, except for sexuality/self-identity.

The highest mean among the categorized needs with a mean of 3.20 were those of study and school. Under this category, the item "to improve my study skills and test-taking skills" garnered the highest mean (\bar{X} =3.23 or *needed*). In support of this are the studies of Aktas (1997) and Kapikiran (2002) which reported that freshmen were more concerned about test anxiety and adjustment to university life. This result shows that they need to improve their study skills as part of their adjustment to school life. This was followed by a strong sense of MVGFCI spirit, adhering to its mission, and vision (\bar{X} = 3.17 or *needed*). This result suggests that there is a need to develop a strong MVGFCI spirit among the freshmen and transferees. They have the feeling that as students they should understand the philosophy, vision and mission, core values of the Institution to which they belong. For this to happen, an appropriate activity or program shall be designed by the Guidance Office of the MVGFCI, in collaboration with other concerned school authorities. According to Egbochuku and Akpan (2008), educational needs are connected with learning and study habits that affect academic performance, concentration, passing examinations, and time management.

Table 2. Needs Assessment of Freshmen and Transferees
As a student, I need...

Study/School	\bar{X}	SD
to improve my study skills and test-taking skills	3.23	.80
to have a strong sense of MVGFC spirit, adhering to its mission, vision	3.17	.80
Overall mean:	3.20	.69
Career and Goals		
to establish my own life goals and carry them out	3.06	.84
to explore career goals and plans	3.12	.88

to be more motivated in achieving academic success	3.02	.83
to establish my life's meaning and direction	3.03	.87
Overall mean:	3.06	.73
Financial		
to earn money and become financially independent	3.03	.83
Environment		
a place where I feel a sense of belongingness	2.56	.94
a stable environment and people to love and accept me	2.71	.87
Overall mean:	2.63	.82
Interpersonal		
to meet people who do not take advantage of me physically, emotionally, or sexually	2.72	.92
a support group that understands my emotions and accepts me for who I am and who I want to become	2.90	.90
a strong sense of commitment and loyalty	2.97	.88
to cope with pressures from school, home, friends, and oneself	2.76	.95
to join established organizations/groups outside the school	2.49	.97
Overall mean	2.77	.67
Personal		
to discover my identity, my strengths, and my weaknesses, and to see who I am and how I relate to and affect the world.	2.98	.79
to solve problems and make good decisions	3.06	.84
to manage conflict, stress, and anxiety well	2.95	.71
to express myself in an acceptable and assertive manner	2.77	.87
to shun the nervousness and fears of others	2.58	.98
to be more comfortable about speaking up in class or group of people	2.95	.77
to establish a positive self-concept	2.93	.85
to develop critical thinking and community awareness	2.93	.88
to strengthen the will and develop self-discipline/control	2.90	.82

to improve my social graces, good manners, and etiquette	2.98	.83
Overall mean:	2.64	.54
Recreational		
to have more time for relaxation and enjoy life	2.87	.90
Spiritual		
to internalize and live out my spirituality	2.76	.86
Time management	n	
to manage and use my time wisely and properly	2.97	.75
Family		
N	2.87	.83
Relationship		
to form a more intimate and reciprocal adult-type relationship	2.73	.84
Sexuality/Self-identity		
an established sexual identity/sexual orientation/ sexual preference.	2.40	1.0

Legend:

- 1.00-1.75 - No Need
- 1.76-2.50 - Little Need
- 2.56-3.25 - Needed
- 3.26-4.00 - Extremely Needed

The other needs category that garnered a high mean of 3.06 (or *needed*) pertained to career and goals. This consisted of many items such as “exploring career goals and plans” (\bar{X} =3.12), “establishing own life goals and carrying them out” (\bar{X} =3.06), “establishing life's meaning and direction” (\bar{X} =3.03) and “to be more motivated in achieving academic success” (\bar{X} =3.02). The data suggest that new students have to be provided with activities or programs related to career exploration. These findings are in agreement with those of Egbochuku and Akpan, et. al. (2008) who stated that students are faced with a variety of career options as they strive to achieve their academic goals. Some of these career needs are problems in the choice of careers, fear of failing examinations which leads to anxiety, and worries about getting a job related to one's career choice.

The financial need category garnered a mean of 3.03 (or *needed*) which tells that financial matter is an important consideration once a person decides to enroll in college. This is supported by Distajo (2013) who reported that students with no definite sponsors or students whose sponsors could not fully support them throughout the school year due to unexpected circumstances, express worries about their financial status. They have the kind of fear that they may no longer be accepted in the coming year, or will not graduate if their outstanding balance is not settled. Students had many concerns related to academic, career, personal and financial issues (Bostanchi, et al., 2005; Gizir, 2005; Guneri, et al., 2003).

The environmental needs (overall \bar{X} =2.63, SD =.82) consisting of "a place to feel a sense of belongingness" and "people who love and accept each other" are not as high as those earlier cited although they have the same verbal interpretation. The data suggest that the freshmen and transferee students felt that they belonged to MVGFCI since their previous classmates, friends, and relatives also transferred to the same school. This result differed from the study of Distajo (2013) which stated that the greatest number of counselees was in the first year because of their adjustments to their environment in dealing with peer groups and individuals.

The recreational need garnered a mean of 2.87 (SD =.90). The participant students felt that recreation is not extremely needed because the MVGFCI already provides activities that enable the students to enjoy their college days while studying. The curricular and extra-curricular activities of the students are balanced. The data also pointed out that the relationship needs (\bar{X} =2.73, SD =.84) are not of extreme priority. They would rather focus more on their academic work than on relationships with the opposite sex. In terms of spiritual needs (\bar{X} =2.76, SD =.85), the students showed a high

level of spiritual engagement and commitment to their respective religions, and the MVGFCI being a non-sectarian School, allows them to integrate spirituality into their lives. Spirituality in Higher Education (2003) stressed that learners gain spiritual strength by trusting in the Highest Power, praying for Him, and discussing religion and spirituality with friends.

The student participants also considered the following as their needs: interpersonal ($\bar{X}=2.77$), family ($\bar{X}=2.87$), and time management needs ($\bar{X}=2.97$). These results suggest that students need to interact and mingle with others, relate with their family members, and manage their time wisely. However, the students expressed that there is *little need* for them to “join established organizations/groups outside the school” ($\bar{X}=2.49$, $SD=.97$). It is not their priority to join outside organizations/groups since MVGFCI already provides college-based student organizations and different student activities.

On the area of personal need (overall $\bar{X}=2.64$, $SD=.54$), it is apparent that the student-participants need guidance in solving problems and in making good decisions ($\bar{X}=3.06$, $SD=.84$). They are likewise in need of guidance on how “to discover their identity, strengths, and weaknesses, and how to relate to and affect the world” and how to “improve social graces, good manners and etiquette” both with a mean of 2.98.

The only area where students need a little help is in “sexuality/self-identity” ($\bar{X}=2.40$, $SD=1$). They are capable of expressing their own identity and even sexuality in school. However, the SD is quite big suggesting that their responses are more variable.

Comparison of Needs of Freshmen and Transferees using *t*-test

In learning institutions like the MVGFCI, diversity is expected because

students have different backgrounds and inclusivity. Inclusion of their culture, sexual orientation, religion, and background can give the students a sense of belongingness. It is important therefore for MVGFCI to know its students' needs and how these needs differ in freshmen and transferees so that appropriate action could be planned and implemented.

Independent *t*-test was used to determine the difference between the needs of freshmen and transferees (Pls. refer to Table 2). The results show that transferees had greater needs on sexuality ($t=2.106$, $p<.05$), spiritual ($t=2.989$, $p<.01$), personal ($t=1.721$, $p<.05$), and career and goals ($t=2.11$, $p<.05$). As shown in the Table, there is a significant difference in terms of self-identity/sexuality between freshmen ($\bar{X}=2.0$) and transferees ($\bar{X}=2.52$). This means that transferees had higher needs for self-identity/sexuality compared to the freshmen. These students need people who do not take advantage of their physical, emotional, or sexuality. They also need a support group that will help them understand their emotions and accept them for who they are, regardless of their self-identity. A study made by Brandon-Friedman (2016) shows that support from sexuality-specific campus groups is what college students needed especially when they are in the midst of sexual identity confusion and not supported by friends and significant others. On this note, the role of HEIs as regards this matter is essential.

Furthermore, there is a highly significant difference in the need for spirituality with a mean of 2.28 for freshmen and 2.90 for transferees which means that the latter has a higher need for spirituality. Under a new environment, transferees know no one. In the midst of uncertainty and uneasiness, they resort to the Supreme Being, seek help, and confide in their problems. According to Spirituality in Higher Education, (2003)

God/Highest Being is essential to the life of an individual. He is the source of joy. He provides support, strength, and guidance, and gives meaning and purpose in life.

A significant difference was also noted in personal needs ($t=1.721, p<.05$). Their faith in their religion will give students a high level of self-efficacy. A correlational study by Abar, Carter, and Winsler (2009) revealed that highly religious students tend to perform well academically, study better, and engage in fewer risk behaviors than youth less committed to religion. Therefore, if the Institution can give students support in line with their religion, academic performance will follow and their behavior will become more pleasant.

Table 3. Comparison of Needs of Freshmen and Transferees using *t*-test

Difference in Student type in terms of Student Needs	Freshmen \bar{X}	Transferees \bar{X}	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>
Environment	2.50	2.68	-.862	.391
Interpersonal	2.57	2.83	-1.537	.128
Sexuality/ Self-identity	2.00	2.52	-2.106	.038*
Recreational	2.76	2.91	-.640	.524
Spiritual	2.29	2.91	-2.989	.004*
Time management	2.76	3.03	-1.421	.159
Personal	2.47	2.70	-1.721	.026*
Family	2.71	2.92	-.993	.323
Study/School	3.12	3.23	-.645	.521
Career and Goals	2.77	3.15	-2.114	.037*
Financial aspect	2.81	3.10	-1.436	.155
Relationship	2.48	2.81	-1.612	.111

Legend: * - Significant

- 1.00-1.75 - No Need
- 1.76-2.50 - Little Need
- 2.56-3.25 - Needed
- 3.26-4.00 - Extremely Needed

The freshmen got a mean of 2.47 while the transferees got 2.70, which means that the transferees have higher personal needs compared to the freshmen. These are the students who have difficulty expressing themselves in front of many people. They might have experienced discomfort and

nervousness in their previous schools which are carried over to their new environment. According to Kandi (2014), students improve decision-making, overcome shyness and increase their self-confidence once these needs are met; communication skills will be increased to a great extent. In a study made by Gallagher, Gollin, and Kelleher (1992), anxiety, fear, shyness, loneliness, sexuality, somatic complaints, social inadequacy, lack of purpose, problems with faculty, and the need for career and learning skills courses were the basic personal needs that college students need support from the professionals in the institution.

Lastly, a significant difference was observed in career and goals with a mean of 2.77 for freshmen and 3.15 for transferees. This suggests that the transferees attach a higher value to their careers and goals compared to the freshmen. It seems natural to expect transferees, particularly those who are already in the higher curriculum year level to become more motivated in achieving academic success and to graduate in their chosen field. At the end of the day, the reason why students move to another school is to find comfort in their studies to achieve their dream careers. In this case, the development of student support services at higher education institutions is important to enable successful student integration into a higher education institution, create conditions for a positive study experience, and ensure a smooth transition from the higher education institution into the labor market (The Bologna Process Implementation Report, 2012).

Conclusion

This section includes the summary of the findings, the conclusions made on the findings, and the recommendations.

Summary of Findings

A summary is hereby provided for easy recall of the results or findings of the

study which are lengthily presented in the preceding Chapter.

In terms of socio-demographic characteristics, the participants were predominantly male (72%), belonging to Criminology Program (76.74%), Roman Catholic (72%), and transferees from private colleges and state universities in Cabanatuan City (75.58%). Most of them graduated from public high schools located in Cabanatuan City and the province of Nueva Ecija (80.23%).

Both transferees and freshmen garnered the highest mean on the following needs: test-taking skills (\bar{X} =3.23), problem-solving and good decision-making (\bar{X} =3.06), exploring career goals and plans (\bar{X} =3.12), earning money and become financially independent (\bar{X} =3.03) and a strong sense of MVGFCI spirit, adhering to its mission and vision (\bar{X} =3.17).

The transferees had higher needs compared to the freshmen on sexuality/self-identity, spirituality, personal, and career/goals, but in terms of sex, course, and religion, no significant difference could be noted.

Conclusions

Based on the findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. The transferees and freshmen students, irrespective of their socio-demographic characteristics, need some help in:

- improving their test-taking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills,
- exploring career goals and plans,
- earning money to become financially independent, and
- developing a strong sense of MVGFCI spirit, adhering to its mission and vision;

2. The transferees need more help in the following areas compared to the freshmen:

- sexuality/self-identity,
- spirituality,
- personal and career/goals.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions above, the following are recommended:

1. To address the identified needs of transferees and freshmen, the Guidance Office of the MVGFCI shall:

- conduct seminars that will improve their test-taking and problem-solving skills,
- conduct group guidance activities on how to make good decisions in life,
- establish tie-ups with MVGFC agricultural projects and let the students sell products as a means of financial support,
- strengthen the sense of identity as Gallegans by collaborating with school authorities concerned in providing students the Identification Cards (IDs) as early as two weeks after they enroll, conducting a flag-raising ceremony every Monday for them to sing the MVGFC Hymn, and integrating the vision and mission of the school in every course syllabus of faculty members.

2. To help meet the challenges of the transferee's concerning sexuality/self-identity, spirituality, personal and career and goals, the Guidance Office shall:

- conduct seminars on gender differences and invite LGBTQ advocates as speakers,
- conduct psycho-spiritual counseling,
- conduct pre-employment seminar that includes activities that will focus on establishing the right attitude and right frame of mind before employment, and

- encourage students to maximize the counseling services of MVGFCL.

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Performance of Graduates from Manuel V. Gallego Foundation Colleges, Inc. in the Licensure Examinations for Teachers: An Analysis

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Abstract

The mean performances of the 119 teacher-education graduates of MVGFCI in the licensure examinations for teachers (LET) from 2016 to 2018 were analyzed in relation to their profile consisting of gender, degree course, student classification, and grade point average (GPA). The institutional passing rates were further analyzed taking into account the National Passing Rates (NPRs) and the 75% minimum passing score required for the LET as quality indicators. Here are the findings: both the Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEd) and the Bachelor in Secondary Education (BSEd) Programs of MVGFCI were female-dominated; there were more BSEd enrollees or graduates and more LET takers and retakers compared to the BEEd, but the BEEd had quite higher college GPA compared to the BSEd. The BEEd performances in the LET which ranged from 33% to 80% during the three years were consistently higher than the NPR which ranged from 26.33% to 29.95% in the same period. In contrast, the LET performances of the BSEd during the same period which ranged from 21% to 29% were correspondingly lower than the NPRs which ranged from 36.60% to 46.37%. With the exception of the 80% LET result for the BEEd in 2016, there are apparent educational quality problems in several teacher-education institutions of the country including the MVGFCI. More improvement is needed in the pre-service trainings and the conduct of in-house review classes.

Keywords: *BEEd/BSEd Programs, LET performance, GPA, NPR*

Introduction

One of the most significant educational reforms instituted in teacher-education is the administration of the Licensure Examinations for Teachers (LET) under the Professional Regulations Commission (PRC). This was implemented based on Republic Act 7836 known as the Professionalization Act for Teachers (PAT) of 1994 to raise the standard of the teaching profession and put it at par with other professions. The PAT requires teachers to be licensed. The first LET was administered on August 26, 1996. From then on, the LET has been conducted in major cities of the country (<https://grdspublishing.org/index.php/people/article/view/675>).

Performance in the LET has been considered an indicator of the quality of education offered by a teacher-education institution. This is the reason why the

percentage of passing rate in LET has been used by most accrediting agencies such as the Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation (PACUCOA) in determining the quality of private teacher-education institutions in the country and in determining centers of excellence (COE) or centers of development (COD) by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) in the Philippines.

Pursuant to these, some teacher-education institutions in the country had voluntarily made their attempts to determine the quality of their teacher-education programs using the LET results as quality indicators. One of these institutions was the Carlos Hidalgo Memorial State College with lead researchers Esmeralda and Espinosa (2015). Their study revealed that the BEEd students or graduates showed greater confidence in academics, indicating the need

to enhance the level of academic preparations of the BSEd graduates in general education and the major courses during pre-service years. In contradiction, Guanson and Marpa (2013) of the Philippine Normal University asserted that the graduates in secondary education performed better in the LET compared to the BEEd though the BSEd LET takers found difficulty in the areas of professional education and major courses.

Meanwhile, Pachejo and Allaga (2013), in their study regarding academic predictors of LET performance of education graduates at Rizal Technological University, found that there is a linear relationship between the overall LET ratings and the three academic courses such as general education, professional education courses, and specialization. Their findings were in congruence with those of Rabanal (2016) from the University of Northern Philippines which revealed that academic achievements in general education, professional education, and major courses were significantly related to the different test components in the board examinations. The findings, however, slightly deviated from that of Garcia (2013) who found a weak positive correlation in professional education courses.

Although similar studies had already been conducted in the past, their findings could not be used by MVGFCI to serve its unique purpose which is to determine the correlates of the graduates' LET performances in the two teacher-education programs, the BSEd and the BEEd, and if such LET performances are at par with the national pass rates (NPRs) which are used by the Philippine government as quality indicators. The findings of this study are of great help to the BSEd and BEEd Program Dean, Program Coordinator, Top School Management, and other concerned personnel in their efforts to further improve the curriculum and instruction, especially in areas where the LET takers found difficulty.

Statement of the Problem

The researchers' main task is to go over and analyze the LET takers' profile in relation to their LET performances in the last three years, from 2016 to 2018, to come-up with answers to the following questions:

1. How may the LET takers in the last three years be described in terms of:
 - a. gender;
 - b. degree course finished;
 - c. classification (first taker, repeater);
 - d. year LET was taken; and
 - e. college grade point average (GPA)?
2. How may the LET performances of the said takers in the last three years be described based on the following components:
 - a. general education;
 - b. professional education;
 - c. major/specialization; and
 - d. overall LET performance?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the LET takers' profile and their LET ratings in the last three years?
4. Are college GPAs predictors of LET performance?

Methodology

This section provides detailed descriptions of the following: research design, sources of data, data-gathering procedure, and data analysis.

Research Design

The quantitative approach to research was employed using primarily the correlational method. Information about the LET takers' profile as to gender, degree course finished (whether BEEd or BSEd), classification (whether first LET taker or repeater), and college GPA were gathered from appropriate sources like the Office of the Dean of the Institute of Teacher-Education (ITE) and Office of the College Registrar, then analyzed in relation to their

LET performances or ratings. The research design is depicted in Figure 1 wherein the LET takers' profiles served as the independent variables or predictors and LET performances or ratings as the dependent variables.

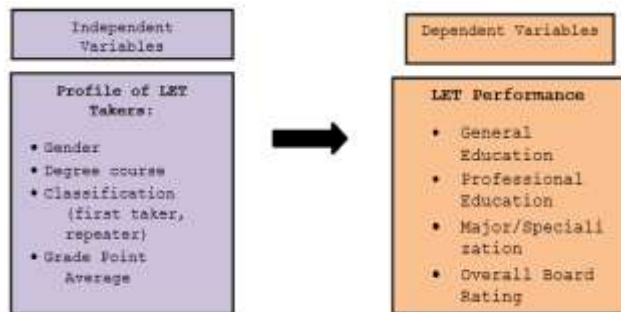


Figure 1. Research Framework

Sources of Data

This study involved 119 teacher-education graduates from MVGFCI (25 BEd & 94 BSEd) who took the LET examinations from 2016 to 2018 either as first-takers or repeaters. Teacher-education graduates were prioritized in this study firstly because the researchers belonged to the ITE and secondly, because the BEd and the BSEd programs, along with the other academic programs of MVGFCI, are periodically subjected to higher accreditation levels in order to ensure that certain quality standards are maintained. Since the total number of graduates or LET takers for the target period was small and very manageable, a complete enumeration technique was employed.

Data Gathering Procedure

A researcher-made checklist was used to guide the researchers in gathering and coding the needed data in an orderly and systematic manner and to analyze them in relation to the LET results. The checklist was composed of two sections; the first part covered the profile of the graduates or LET takers consisting of six items which included their names, gender, degree courses finished, year LET was taken (2016, 2017, 2018),

classification (whether first LET takers or repeaters), and college GPAs. The second part pertained to their performances or ratings in the LET in general education, professional education, and major courses classified as passed or failed, and their overall LET ratings.

When the checklist was ready, the researchers prepared two request letters, one addressed to the College Registrar of MVGFCI noted by the Dean of the ITE requesting records about the students' GPAs, and another letter addressed to the ITE Dean requesting copies of the graduates' LET results in 2016 to 2018 which were earlier obtained from the Philippine Regulations Commission (PRC) upon request of the school. Contained in these letters were the researchers' strong commitments to confidentiality and privacy in data handling and use to safeguard the LET takers' honor and dignity.

The records or documents obtained from both the Registrar and the Dean contained all the necessary information about the LET takers' names, gender, degree courses are taken, college GPAs, and the graduates' LET ratings or performances which were kept in the Office of the ITE Dean upon arrival from the PRC.

Results and Discussions

The results of the study are hereby presented in accordance with the research questions or problems earlier stated in this paper starting with the LET takers' profile, their LET performances or ratings in the last three years, the relationship between the LET takers' profile and their LET ratings, and relationship between their college GPAs and their LET ratings.

Profile of LET Takers

Tables 1.1 and 1.2 present the profile of MVGFCI graduates which includes gender, degree course, classification whether

first LET takers or repeaters and year LET was taken.

Table 1. Profile of the LET Takers

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	26	21.84%
Female	93	78.16%
Course		
BEEd	25	21%
BSEd	94	79%
Total	119	100
Classification		
First Takers	48	40.33%
Repeaters	71	59.66%
Total	119	100
Year exams taken		
2016	33	27.73%
2017	26	21.84%
2018	60	50.42%
Total	119	100

Gender. Looking at Table 1, females 93 (78.16%), while the males were (21.84%). This indicates that teacher-education programs are female-dominated.

Degree course. During the three-year period, the BSEd LET takers were 94 (79%), while BEEd, 25 (21%). This big discrepancy in the number of graduates of LET takers was due to the fact that there were more BSEd graduates or enrollees during the covered period compared to the BEEd.

Classification. There were 71 (59.66%) of the LET takers who were repeaters, while, the first takers were 48 (40.33%). This could be due to the accumulation of the number of failed LET examinees year after year. It is not surprising to note that the biggest number of LET takers was in the year 2018. This was because those who failed in the previous year or years would join again in the succeeding year.

Upon thorough analysis, it appears that the repeaters had more chances of passing the LET the second time around compared to the first-timers. This could be due to their prior exposure to the type of test questions or familiarity with factors related to

test-taking. Contrary to this was the study of Figuerres (2013) where she asserted that the fresh graduates of the teacher-education programs of the University of Northern Philippines performed higher in the LET than those who took the LET at a later examination schedule. This is supported in the studies of Catura (2007 as cited by Corpuz, et al., 2014) and Antiojo (2017) who expounded that age is inversely related to the performance in the LET, that younger examinees or first-time LET takers have better chances of passing the LET than older ones.

Year exam was taken. The biggest number of LET takers, including retakers, was 60 (50.42%) in the year 2018. There were 26 (21.84%) in the year 2017 and 33 (27.33%) in 2016. The biggest number of LET takers in the year 2018 does not necessarily reflect the highest or biggest enrolment or graduates in the said year. This is primarily due to the LET flunkers in 2016 and 2017 who joined the fresh graduates in 2018 LET. Let it be known that taking the LET has no limit, meaning, failed examinees can retake the LET again and again.

College GPA of LET takers. Table 2 shows the overall college GPA or grade point average of the LET takers by degree program. As reflected in the Table, there were 15 (80%) BEEd and 48 (51%) BSEd graduates with GPAs ranging from 2.24 to 1.50 or from *average* to *above average* performance, while a few of them (5 or 20% BEEd) and (44 or 47% BSEd) were with *low* to *below average* college performance.

The highest and the lowest GPAs were garnered by the BSEd: GPA of 1.25-1.49 (*Superior*) obtained by two (2.12%) graduates, and GPA of 2.50-2.74 (*Below Average*) obtained by eight (8.51%) of the graduates.

It seems that the BEEd graduates were a little bit academically equipped compared to the BSEd. This conforms with

the data shown in Table 2 in which their LET performances were consistently higher than the NPR during the three-year period covered in this study.

Table 2. College GPA of LET Takers

(GPA)	BEEd (f)	P (%)	BSEd (f)	P (%)	TOT AL
1.00-1.24	0	0	0	0	0
1.25-1.49			2	2.12	2(1.6 8%)
1.50-1.74	5	20	6	6.38	11(9. 24%)
1.75-1.99	12	48	26	27.6	38(31 .93%)
2.00-2.24	3	12	16	17	19(16 %)
2.25-2.49	5	20	36	38.2 9	41(34 .45%)
2.50-2.74	0	0	8	8.51	8(6.7 2%)
2.75-2.99	0	0	0	0	0
3.00-3.12	0	0	0	0	0
Total	25	100	94	100	119(1 00%)

GPA Legend:

1.00-Excellent 2.00-Average 2.75-Fair
 1.25-Superior 2.25-Low Average 3.00-Passed
 1.50-Above Average 2.50-Below Average 4.00-Failed
 1.75-High Average

Source: Registrar's Office of MVGFCI

Performance/Rating by Degree Course and Components in the LET

Table 3 presents the average LET performance of the graduates of MVGFCI according to their degree courses and the different components in the LET such as General Education, Professional Education, and Major Courses. Note that in the Philippines, BEEd graduates are generalists, meaning they do not have major courses, unlike the BSEd.

Table 3. LET Performance/Rating by Degree Course and Components in the LET

Course	Mean Performance/Rating			
	Gen Ed	Prof Ed	Major	Overall Rating
BEEd	66.60	69.72	-	68.16
BSEd	73.88	68.02	64.61	68.84

Average Rating	70.24	68.87	64.61	68.50
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In general education, the BSEd graduates got a mean of 73.88, higher than the mean performance of the BEEd graduates which was 66.60. This means that BSEd performed better in general education courses than the BEEd graduates, but when it comes to professional education, the BEEd and the BSEd graduates were almost of the same caliber, with a mean performance of 69.72 68.02, respectively. The lowest mean score of 64.61 was obtained in major courses or areas of specialization for the BSEd program. Here are the contradicting ideas or findings regarding the matter. Guanson and Marpa (2013) asserted that the graduates in secondary education performed better in the LET compared to the BEEd, while Esmeralda and Espinosa (2015) revealed that the BEEd students or graduates showed greater confidence in academics, indicating the need to enhance the level of academic preparations of the BSEd graduates in general education and the major courses during pre-service years. Whatever the previous findings are, the truth of the matter is if students of both programs are well-chosen and exposed to the best pre-service training and facilities, both will end up highly triumphant in the LET.

The same table shows the overall mean score in the different areas of the LET, as well as the average LET rating of the BSEd and the BEEd graduates which was 68.50%, lower than the required minimum passing score of 75% for the LET set by the Philippine government. The data suggest that in general, the graduates of the BSEd and the BEEd programs need further honing in the three components of the LET such as general education, professional education, and major courses.

In Table 4, the yearly mean ratings or performances of the BEEd and BSEd graduates of MVGFCI in the year 2016, 2017, and 2018 are presented in comparison

with the yearly national passing rate (NPR) in the same period to determine if MVGFCI is at par with the NPR as far as its Teacher-Education Programs are concerned. In the Philippines, an NPR is an indicator of the quality of an educational program with board examination requirements, which means that the higher the NPR of an educational program, the higher the quality of education of an academic institution, and vice-versa.

Table 4. Percentage of LET Passers with NPRs in the Year 2016-2018

Course	2016			2017			2018		
	<i>f</i>	Pa sse d	Fai led	<i>f</i>	Pass ed	Fai led	<i>F</i>	Pass ed	Failed
BEEd	5	4 (80 %)	1 (20 %)	9	3 (33 %)	6 (67 %)	11	4 (36%)	7 (64%)
NPR	29.28%			26.33%			21.95%		
BSEd	28	6 (21 %)	22 (79 %)	17	5 (29 %)	12 (71 %)	49	14 (29%)	35 (71%)
NPR	36.60%			46.37%			38.97		
Total	33	10 (30 %)	23 (70 %)	26	8 (31 %)	18 (69 %)	60	18 (30%)	42 (70%)

NPR – National Passing Rate
f - frequency

As shown in the Table, throughout the three-year period, the passing rate of the BEEd program was consistently higher than the NPR: BEEd 80% in 2016; 33% in 2017, and 36% in 2018 versus an NPR of 29.28% in 2016; 26.33% in 2017 and 21.95% in 2018. It is clear that the mean performances of the BEEd LET takers in the covered period were at par with the NPRs, but these do not deserve a celebration considering the fact that the NPRs are very low, much lower than 75%-the required minimum pass rate for the LET. A worse scenario is portrayed in the BSEd program in which the LET ratings were consistently lower than the NPRs during the same period: 21% pass rate in 2016, 29.40% in 2017, and 28.60% in 2018 compared to the NPR of 36.60 in 2016, 46.37% in 2017, and 38.97% in 2018.

Overall, the passing rate of the BEEd and BSEd Programs of MVGFCI for the

three-year period was 30% (Pls. refer to Table 5). This is a clear indication that there

Table 5. Overall Percentage of Passers by Degree Programs or Courses (2016-2018)

	Result	Frequency	Percentage
BEEED	Failed	14	56%
	Passed	11	44%
BSEED	Failed	69	73.40%
	Passed	25	26.60%
Total	Failed	83	69.75%
	Passed	36	30.25%

is still much more to do to reverse the situation not only in MVGFCI but in the entire country as far as the Teacher-Education Programs are concerned. This is in view of the fact that the LET pass rates and the NPRs are generally way below the required minimum passing score of 75%.

Relationship of the Profile Variables and LET Ratings of BSEd and BEEd Graduates

The relationship of the profile variables with the LET ratings is reported in Table 6. As reflected in the Table, student classification ($r=.411$, $p<.01$) and GPA ($r=.557$, $p<.01$) were significantly related to LET ratings, which means LET repeaters or retakers and those with higher GPAs have greater chances of passing the LET compared to the first takers and students with low GPAs. This correlation between GPAs or academic achievement and LET performance was also proven in the study of Rabanal (2016) from the University of Northern Philippines which revealed that academic achievements in general education, professional education, and major courses were significantly related to the different test components in the board examinations.

Table 6. Correlation of Profile Variables and LET Ratings (2016-2018)

Degree Courses	.022
Gender	.059
Classification (whether 1 st takers or repeaters)	.411**
GPA	.557**

The significant correlation between GPAs and LET performance is confirmed in the study of Refugio (2017) that the cognitive aspects of LET takers were significant predictors of LET performance.

Summary of Findings, Conclusion, and Recommendation

This section provides a summary of the findings, conclusions generated from the findings, and the corresponding recommendations.

Summary of Findings

The findings are summarized as follows:

1. The Teacher-Education Programs of MVGFCI were female-dominated; had more BSEd enrollees, more LET takers, and retakers compared to the BEEd; and higher GPAs for the BEEd compared to the BSEd.

2. The LET performances of the BEEd graduates in the years 2016-2018 were 80%, 33%, and 36%, respectively, higher than the NPR's 29.28%, 26.33%, and 29.95% in the same period. In contrast, the BSEd had 21%, 29% and 29% mean LET ratings with corresponding NPRs of 36.60%, 46.37%, and 38.97% during the same period. The above figures, except the 80% LET result for the BEEd in 2016, are far below the 75% minimum passing score required by the government for the LET.

3. College GPAs and graduates' classifications (whether 1st takers or repeaters) are significant predictors of LET performance, meaning, graduates with higher college GPAs. Furthermore, those who failed in the exam the first time have a chance to pass the LET the next time they take the LET.

Conclusions

The following conclusions are drawn based on the above findings:

1. LET retakers or repeaters could be reduced to a minimum number with improved or higher students' GPAs.

2. The quality problem in teacher education is apparent not only in MVGFCI but in several teacher-education institutions in the country. There is much more to do to reach the required minimum passing score of 75% in the LET and to be consistently at par with the NPR.

2. Since college GPAs are significant predictors of LET performance, more improvement in instruction and/or teaching-learning resources is necessary to raise students' academic performance and have a better chance of passing the LET.

Recommendations

Based on the above findings and conclusions, the following are recommended:

- Help teacher-education students improve their GPAs through:
 - regular and more intensified instructional supervision of teachers and students;
 - use of improved instructional modalities and teaching-learning resources; and
 - remedial classes for students with low GPAs.
- Conduct LET review classes during the second semester of the senior year as part of the curriculum that should be handled by a team of qualified professors.

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**Performance of First-Year College Students of Manuel V. Gallego
Foundation Colleges, Inc. in the English Ability Test**

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Abstract

This is a correlational study that is based on the results of the 100-item non-standardized English Ability Test (EAT) administered to the 339 first-year college students from the five Institutes of MVGFCI during the first semester of the school year 2020-2021. The main objective of the study was to assess the English proficiency of the said students in order to determine if there is a need for additional English courses and if enhancement of English teaching-learning strategies and resources is needed. The EAT was adopted from the standardized Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) of 2008 and the Basic Education Exit Assessment (BEEA) of 2019 which measured three important English skills - vocabulary, sentence completion, and reading comprehension skills. The EAT results were compared by Institutes, by sex, and by components and the findings are as follows: male and female sexes were almost equally represented in the population (males, 52% & females, 48%); majority belonged to the Institute of Criminal Justice Education (ICJE) with 52% while the smallest number was from the Institute of Information and Communication Technology (IICT) with 01%. In the overall EAT performance or mean scores and across its three components, a significant difference was observed among the Institutes. Students from the ICJE and IICT scored significantly lower (mean scores ranging from 21 to 21.83 out of 100 items) than those from the Institute of Teacher-Education (ITE), Institute of Nursing and Allied Health Services (INAHS), and Institute of Accountancy and Business (IAB) with score ranges from 26.59-28.27 in favor of the ITE. The EAT performances of these three Institutes were not significantly different from each other. Female students obtained significantly higher scores than the males in the overall EAT and across all its three components, but generally, the participants had low English proficiency, with barely 25% of the total 100-item test answered correctly.

Keywords: *freshmen students, English ability test, English proficiency, vocabulary, reading comprehension, sentence completion*

Introduction

The Guidance and Testing Center of the Manuel V. Foundation Colleges, Inc. (MVGFCI) administers different kinds of tests annually, one of which is the English Ability Test (EAT) which is administered to freshmen as requisite to the attainment of one of MVGFCI's core values – to produce graduates who are “effective communicators”. These are the graduates who can write and speak sensibly, concisely, and coherently in the English language for them to be competitive in the global arena, The MVGFCI believes that a graduate with English proficiency has a higher chance of passing nationally recognized examinations

that are written in English, and a better chance of getting employed in the right job.

To be of help, the Guidance and Testing Center of the MVGFCI formulated an EAT that primarily aims to determine whether the first-year college students of MVGFCI need additional English course or courses in their respective curricula or any assistance that may help them improve their English communication skills. It is a 100-item non-standardized test adopted from the standardized Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT, 2008) and Basic Education Exit Assessment (BEEA, 2019) which measured the students' three important English skills—vocabulary

skills, sentence completion, and reading comprehension.

Through the EAT results, the Guidance and Testing Center may be able to help the different Institutes in coming out with different activities or programs that will enhance students' language competencies. The test results will point out to the Guidance and Testing Officer, the Deans of the different Institutes, the students, and other persons in authority the learning areas where students need assistance.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to assess the English proficiency of the first-year college students in the different Institutes of MVGFCI such as the ICJE, ITE, INAHS, IAB, and the IICT in order to determine if there is a need for additional English course or courses in their respective curricula and if enhancement of English teaching-learning strategies and resources is needed.

Specifically, the objectives were as follows:

- determine the sex profile of the participant students according to Institutes;
- analyze the EAT performances by Institutes and by components;
- determine the EAT performances by sex and by components;
- compare the EAT performances by components and by sex; and
- compare the Institutes' performances in the EAT using one-way ANOVA.

Significance of the Study

This study is of big help to the following:
Top School Management. Top management's approval is necessary whenever major changes are introduced into the school system like requiring students to take additional English course or courses in the curricular programs. These curricular

changes also require the approval of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED).

Academic administrators or deans of the different Institutes. The findings of this study are beneficial to these administrators because they are at the forefront whenever changes are needed in their respective curricula or the English teaching-learning strategies and resources.

English faculty members. They are the implementors of whatever changes are necessary for their respective departments or Institutes. Whatever insights they gain from the findings would serve as eye-openers to them, and whatever changes are being introduced in their Institutes, they need to implement them by heart.

College students. The ultimate beneficiaries are the students. Changes for the better will boil down to improvement, which will make them more communicative and more competitive.

Methodology

Presented in this section are the research method or design, the participants of the study, the data-gathering tool, and the procedure and data analysis.

Research Method/Design

This study started with the test results of the different Institutes in the three

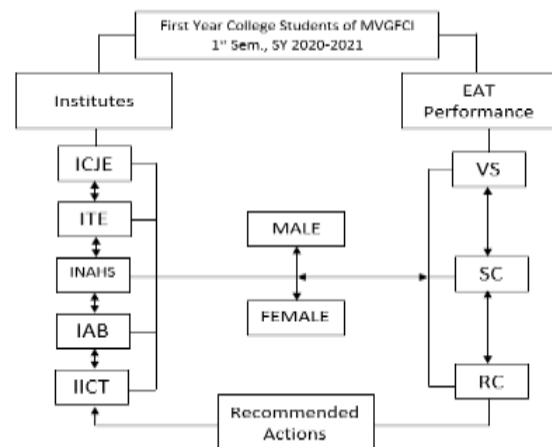


Figure 1. Research Design

components of the EAT such as vocabulary, sentence completion, and reading comprehension, then the EAT results were compared by Institutes, by sex, and by components. The research design (Figure 1) was therefore highly correlational.

Participants

The participants of this study were 339 first-year college students who were enrolled during the first semester of the school year 2020-2021. They were distributed by Institutes and by sex as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Research Participants

Institutes	Sex		
	Female	Male	Total
ICJE	34	141	175
ITE	48	3	51
INAHS	18	8	26
IAB	63	19	82
IICT	0	5	5
Total	163	176	339

Since the total number of enrolments was so manageable, a complete enumeration technique was employed.

Data-gathering Tool and Procedure

The data-gathering tool used for this study was the English Ability Test (EAT) which was modified by authorized personnel of MVGFCI to suit the purpose of this study,

The EAT was a 100-item non-standardized tool adopted from the standardized Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) of 2008 (24th edition) and Basic Education Exit Assessment (BEEA) of 2019 which measured three important English skills, namely: vocabulary, sentence completion, and reading comprehension skills. This was originally a 200-item standardized test broadly used in the United States for college admissions. The items were reviewed by the MVGFCI High School Principal, some English teachers in the college and high

school department, the Student Affairs Director, and the Vice President for Research, Extension, and Linkages. After a series of deliberations, the test was reduced to 100 items, 35 items for vocabulary skills, 30 items for sentence completion, and another 35 items for reading comprehension.

After finalizing the test, the researchers secured approval from the Academic Council to administer the EAT to the target student population. The safety health protocols were secured and observed and only 10 students took the test at a time.

Before the administration, the testing coordinator already prepared the booklets and answer sheets for the students. The testing areas were cleaned and disinfected to ensure a safe place for the test takers. When the students got to the testing area, they were asked to fill up the attendance sheet, the testing coordinator then gave them their answer sheets and test booklets, and explained the purpose of the test, reminders, and general directions. When there were no questions asked, they were given two hours to take the EAT. After the students finished the test, answer sheets were collected first, followed by the test booklets.

Data Analysis

The results of the EAT were analyzed with the aid of the following statistical tools:

- frequency and percentage of the participants' sex profile by Institutes;
- mean and standard deviation for the overall EAT performance by Institutes and by components and performance by sex and by components;
- *t*-test for comparison of overall EAT performance by components and by sex;
- one-way ANOVA for comparison of Institutes' performances; and
- Scheffe for the follow-up test to find out which Institutes were

significantly different in their mean scores or mean performance.

Results and Discussions

The findings and discussions are presented in accordance with the specific objectives of the study.

Sex Profile of Test-takers by Institutes or Departments

Presented in Table 2 is the sex profile of the 339 first-year students (163 females and 176 males) from the different departments or Institutes of MVGFCI during the academic year 2020-2021 who took the EAT. The biggest number of test-takers (175 or 52%) came from the ICJE. For a long time, this Institute had been the biggest in terms of student population and had been male-dominated. Opposite to this department, the smallest of them all was the IICT with five first-year students who were all males.

There were 82 (24%) test-takers from the IAB (63 females & 19 males), 51 (15%) from the ITE (48 females & 3 males), and 26 (8%) from the INAHS (18 females & 8 males). On the contrary, these Institutes have been female-dominated for the longest time in the history of MVGFCI.

Table 2. Sex Profile of EAT Test-takers by Institutes or Departments

EAT Test-Takers by Institutes and Sex						
	ICJE	IAB	ITE	INAHS	IICT	TOT.
FE MA LE	34	63	48	18	0	163
MA LE	141	19	3	8	5	176
TOT AL	175 (52%)	82 (24%)	51 (15%)	26 (8%)	5 (1%)	339 (100%)

Legend:

- ICJE – Institute of Criminal Justice Education
- IAB – Institute of Accountancy and Business
- ITE – Institute of Teacher-Education
- INAHS – Institute of Nursing and Allied Health Services
- IICT – Institute of Information and Communication Tech.

Performances of the Test-takers in the EAT

The EAT performances of the test-takers were gauged based on the four categories, namely:

- overall EAT performances by Institutes and by components;
- overall EAT performances by sex and by components;
- comparison of the overall EAT performances by components and by sex using *t*-test; and
- comparison of the Institutes' performances in the EAT using one-way ANOVA.

Overall performances in the EAT by Institutes and by components.

Table 3 shows that the overall average score of the test-takers was 24.46($SD=7.94$), barely one-fourth of the total test items. Out of 35 items in reading comprehension, the test-takers got an average score of 9.57 ($SD=3.81$). This was followed by vocabulary skills composed of another 35 items where the students obtained an average score of 8.00 ($SD=3.71$), and an average score of 6.87 ($SD=2.96$) in sentence completion which was composed of 30 items. Among the three components of the EAT that were tested, the test takers' highest score was on reading comprehension and their lowest score was on sentence completion. The results suggest that overall, the EAT is difficult since the students barely answered only 25% of the 100 items as indicated in the average score of 24.46. The trend is similar across all three components of the test where students' mean score per EAT component was far below 50%. The students obtained the highest mean score in reading comprehension while sentence completion which covered grammar and correct usage were the lowest and the most difficult. The standard deviations obtained suggest the variable performance of students in the three areas of the test. This apparent difficulty could be attributed mainly to two factors:

first, the test was non-standardized so most of the test items may be really difficult for non-native English speakers like the Filipino students, and second, the test-takers English preparations in their previous years might be too inadequate,

Table 3 also shows the mean performance of the test-takers by Institutes. As shown in the Table, students from the ITE obtained the highest overall mean score of 28.27 ($SD=9.43$). In reading comprehension, they obtained an average score of 11.10, the highest among all the Institutes. Their average scores of 9.75 in vocabulary skills and 7.59 in sentence completion were the second-highest scores among all the Institutes; but, all these scores were far below the mean scores.

The INAHS followed where the students got an overall mean score of 28.23 ($SD=12.10$). Nursing students also scored highest in vocabulary skills where they obtained an average score of 10.46 ($SD=6.09$).

The students from the IAB obtained an overall mean score of 26.59 ($SD=7.31$). They scored highest in sentence completion with an average score of 8.07 ($SD=3.06$).

Table 3. Overall Performances in the EAT by Institutes and by Components

INSTITUTE	EAT COMPONENTS			Total
	VS	SC	RC	
ITE				
\bar{x}	9.75	7.59	11.10	28.27
SD	4.26	2.96	4.38	9.43
INAHS				
\bar{x}	10.46	7.50	10.15	28.23
SD	6.09	3.51	4.23	12.10
IAB				
\bar{x}	8.16	8.07	10.35	26.59
SD	3.13	3.06	3.87	7.31
ICJE				
\bar{x}	7.07	6.02	8.74	21.83
SD	2.98	2.56	3.33	5.75
IICT				
\bar{x}	7.40	6.20	7.40	21.00
SD	2.07	3.27	3.36	8.12

OVERALL				
\bar{x}	8.00	6.87	9.57	24.46
SD	3.71	2.96	3.81	7.94

Legend:

\bar{x} -Mean Score or Performance

SD -Standard Deviation

VS -Vocabulary Skills

SC -Sentence Completion

RC -Reading Comprehension

They also scored second in reading comprehension with an average score of 10.35 ($SD=3.87$).

The ICJE students got an average score of 21.83 ($SD=5.75$) on the total test. They obtained an average score of 7.07 ($SD=2.98$) in vocabulary skills and an average score of 6.02 ($SD=2.56$) in sentence completion skills.

Lastly, the students from the IICT got the lowest average score of 21.00 among the five Institutes. There were very few test-takers from this Institute which is also a reflection of its small enrolment.

Overall performances in the EAT by sex and by components. The performance of the female and male test-takers is presented in Table 3.1. The obtained mean score of females was 26.65 ($SD=7.90$), while males got a mean score of 22.43 ($SD=7.43$). Both sexes obtained the highest scores in reading comprehension and the lowest in sentence completion skills. In all three areas of the test—vocabulary skills, sentence completion, and reading comprehension, female students had a higher score than male students.

Table 3.1. Overall Performances in the EAT by Sex and by Components

SEX	EAT COMPONENTS			TOTAL
	VS	SC	RC	
Female				
\bar{x}	8.50	7.60	10.52	26.65
SD	3.89	3.05	3.77	7.90
Male				
\bar{x}	7.54	6.19	8.69	22.43
SD	3.49	2.72	3.65	7.43

OVERALL				
\bar{x}	8.00	6.87	9.57	24.46
SD	3.71	2.96	3.81	7.94

The data show that females scored higher ($\bar{x}=26.65$, $SD=7.90$) than male test-takers ($\bar{x}=22.43$, $SD=7.43$). The overall results indicate that the first year college students have low English language proficiency which strongly suggests that they need to improve their vocabulary, reading comprehension, grammar, and correct usage through exposure to more listening, reading, writing and other activities that will enhance students' ability in the English language.

Comparison of the overall EAT performances by components and by sex using *t*-test.

The independent sample *t*-test was used to examine if there is a significant difference between the females and males in their overall EAT results and the three EAT components. As shown by the *t*-value presented in Table 3.2, there is a highly significant difference between the two sexes in the overall EAT scores and the three

Table 3.2. Comparison of the Overall EAT Performances by Components and by Sex

	Sex	\bar{x}	<i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value
Vocabulary Skills	Female	8.50	2.404	.017
	Male	7.54		
Sentence Completion	Female	7.60	4.470	.000
	Male	6.19		
Reading Comprehension	Female	10.52	4.537	.000
	Male	8.69		
Overall	Female	26.65	5.073	.000
	Male	22.43		

components being at $p=.01$ level of significance. Female students scored significantly higher than male students across the three components and in the overall test.

Comparison of the Institutes' performances in the EAT using one-way ANOVA.

The comparison of the mean performances of students by Institutes was subjected to one-way ANOVA (*f*-test) and the results are shown in Table 3.3. The results show that the differences by Institutes were statistically significant in the total test and the three components.

A follow-up test using Scheffe was conducted to find out which means were significantly different. For vocabulary skills, the scores of the ICJE and IICT were significantly lower than the scores of the INAHS. However, the mean scores of the INAHS, ITE, and IAB were not significantly different from each other.

It was also found that the ICJE and the IICT scored significantly lower than the IAB in the sentence completion component of the EAT. However, the IAB, INAHS, and ITE scored significantly different from each other.

Additionally, the IICT and the ICJE significantly scored lower than the ITE in the reading comprehension component; however, the scores of the ITE, INAHS, and IAB were not significantly different from each other.

IICT and ICJE were significantly lower than the ITE in the overall EAT; however, the scores of the ITE, INAHS, and IAB were not significantly different from each other.

Table 3.3. Comparison of the Institutes' Performances in the EAT using One-Way ANOVA

Components of Test	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i> -value
Vocabulary Skills	338	9.295	.000
Sentence Completion	338	8.855	.000
Reading Comprehension	338	5.880	.000
Overall Total	338	12.816	.000

Summary of Findings, Conclusion, and Recommendations

This concluding portion presents the summary of the findings, the conclusions drawn from the findings, and the corresponding recommendations.

Summary of Findings

For convenience, the findings are summarized below:

1. Both sexes were almost equally represented in the population of test-takers where males comprised 176 (52%) while the females comprised 163 (48%) and majority of the test-takers belonged to the ICJE (175 or 52%) while the smallest number was from the IICT (5 or 01%);

2. In the overall EAT performance and across the three components, a significant difference could be observed among the Institutes. Students from IICT and ICJE performed significantly lower than the students from the ITE, INAHS, and IAB which were not significantly different from each other;

3. Female students obtained significantly higher scores in the overall EAT and across all three components than the males; and

4. Generally, the participant students' mean score was barely 25% of the 100 total EAT score which is way below the acceptable proficiency level of 50%

Conclusions

Based on the findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. It is a good practice to give both male and female students equal opportunities to show or prove their English language capabilities;

2. The significantly lower EAT performances of the participants from the IICT and ICJE which are male-dominated Institutes compared to those from the ITE, INAHS, and IAB which are female-dominated departments confirms the findings

of earlier studies that women are better than men in terms of English language proficiency; and

3. The freshmen students' English proficiency problem could be attributed to two main factors: inadequate English language exposure in their previous academic years and the level of difficulty of the EAT which is a non-standardized test adopted from an American tool.

Recommendations

The following are recommended:

1. MVGFCI should continue giving equal learning opportunities to both male and female students;

2. English classes should be improved by giving students more listening, reading, writing and other activities that will optimize their learning potential;

3. Additional English course or courses shall be offered by the school to succeeding freshman students during Summer Term which may be optional for students who badly need them;

4. Subject the EAT to a validation procedure by determining its difficulty and discrimination indices before it is administered to succeeding freshmen and compare results with this study. The results of the reduced EAT may be correlated with grades in OLSAT, High School average, or other concurrent measures of academic performance.

References

- Standardized Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT, (2008).
Basic Education Exit Assessment (BEEA, (2019).

Online Teaching Experiences of College Instructors of MVGFCI: Capability, Platform Preferences, Challenges, and Coping Strategies

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Abstract

The study was conducted in MVGFCI in the school year 2020-2021 utilizing a survey questionnaire for the 21 full-time college instructors' demographic profile, capability to teach online, difficulties encountered in online teaching, coping strategies, and support needed. This was correlational research with the profile variables as predictors of online teaching capabilities. The results revealed that the instructors had their gadgets for online teaching such as laptops and smartphones; accessed the internet in school and at home; utilized multiple platforms such as zoom and FB messenger in their teaching; had difficulties in checking their students' outputs and assignments and in producing their teaching modules and materials; and were confronted with weak internet connection which affected their online teaching effectiveness. The results also showed that younger and single instructors have a higher level of digital skills than older and married ones. More than their efforts of exploring and learning on their own to cope with the challenges, they wanted school support such as the provision of a strong internet connection and a strong encouragement for emotional, mental, and physical health. They also needed some support from their colleagues in the form of knowledge sharing, cooperation, and understanding.

Keywords: *Instructors, online teaching, capability, connectivity, digital skills, challenges, coping strategies, support.*

Introduction

COVID-19 is one of the greatest challenges that education systems have experienced around the world. Many governments have ordered institutions to cease face-to-face instruction for most of their students, requiring them to switch, almost overnight, to online teaching and virtual education (Daniel, 2020). Efforts to contain COVID-19 prompted the unscheduled closure of schools in more than 100 countries worldwide (Onyema, et al., 2020).

Many traditional tenure-track faculty are new to online teaching and lack formal education on how to successfully teach online (Gülbahar & Adnan, 2020) but they are being asked to transition, create, and implement online teaching. There are some faculty who feel well prepared to teach online and enjoy it or come to enjoy it. However, attention must be given to those faculty who are asked or mandated to teach online,

temporarily or permanently, and who may not feel ready or are not enthusiastic to do so (Cutri & Mena, 2020).

The Philippines was not exempted from this alarming scenario. Covid-19 also posed a huge challenge to the Philippine educational system. Students and faculty members were unprepared for the sudden change in the educational process. To sustain school operations, precautionary measures were imposed by the Philippine government through the officials of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the Department of Education (DepEd). These government agencies came out with emergency plans to be implemented by all schools throughout the country. With all positivity, the officials of MVGFCI welcomed the challenge and adopted flexible learning following the guidelines issued by CHED in its Memorandum Order Series No. 04 of 2020. The CHED instructed all schools in the country to immediately shift to remote

teaching to ensure continuous delivery of education to students. The primordial concern of the government at this point was to avoid or limit the risk of infection in the academic community. With the implementation of community quarantines, the conduct of face-to-face classes had to be immediately suspended. The herculean challenge then was how to continue teaching and learning beyond the usual face-to-face instruction given the limited facilities, limited teaching personnel who were knowledgeable in online teaching, and students with limited or without internet connectivity.

As initial steps, the MVGFCI provided orientations and trainings on the preparation of modules and materials for flexible learning, online teaching using different platforms, and so forth. The big question now: What are their experiences about the gadgets that are needed, connectivity, digital skills, platform preferences, challenges, and coping strategies?

Statement of the Problem

The researchers focused on the online teaching experiences of college instructors of MVGFCI with regards to their capability, the challenges being encountered, and their coping strategies. Specifically, the researchers sought answers to the following questions:

1. How may the profile of the instructors of MVGFCI be described in terms of:
 - 1.1 age;
 - 1.2 gender;
 - 1.3 civil status, and;
 - 1.4 Institutes or departments where they teach?
2. How may the participants describe their capability to teach online in terms of;
 - 2.1 gadgets owned;
 - 2.2 connectivity, and;
 - 2.3 digital skills, specifically:

- 2.3.1 making PowerPoint presentation;
- 2.3.2 posting;
- 2.3.3 uploading, and;
- 2.3.4 using other teaching applications (Zoom App, Google Meet, etc.)?

3. What platforms are preferred by the participants in online teaching?
4. What are the difficulties encountered by the participants in online teaching?
5. How do they cope with the difficulties being encountered?
6. Is there a relationship between the participants' socio-demographic profile and their:

- 6.1 online teaching capability;
- 6.2 challenges in online teaching, and;
- 6.3 coping strategies?

In addition to the above is an open-ended question: What support do you want from the school and your colleagues for your online teaching?

Significance of the Study

The result of the study will provide meaningful benefits or will bring significant contributions to the following: *college students* because if their instructors' technological knowledge is at par with their students, both will understand each other easily and they will both enjoy; *college instructors* since this research will serve as their training guide when they embrace the new normal way of teaching, and *MVGFCI* because digitally trained instructors and students will make the school more competitive and effective in the global or local markets.

Methodology

Described in this section are the research design, participants of the study, data-gathering instrument and procedure, and statistical analysis.

Research Design

The researchers utilized the descriptive correlational design which started with a survey of the participants' demographic profile, capability to teach online, difficulties encountered in online teaching, and coping strategies and support needed for online teaching.

Figure 1 is the design of the study which shows the interplay of the independent variables (e.g., age, gender, civil status, and Institutes where the instructors belong) and with the dependent variables (e.g. online teaching capability, difficulties encountered in online teaching, and coping strategies).



Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Participants of the Study

The researchers employed the complete enumeration technique wherein all the 21 full-time college faculty members of the MVGFCI who were teaching during the second semester of the school year 2020-2021 were the participants of the study.

Data-gathering Instrument and Procedure

The main instrument used in this study was a self-made questionnaire that contained three parts. The first part contained questions on the socio-demographic profile of the participants which included age, gender, civil status, and Institutes or departments where they belonged. The second part dealt with connectivity, gadgets own, self-assessment of digital skills,

difficulties encountered, and coping strategies. The participants' self-assessment in these areas was guided by the four-point Likert scale which had the corresponding range values and verbal descriptions as shown below.

Scale	Range Value	Verbal Description
1	1.00-1.75	I cannot perform
2	1.76-2.49	I partly can
3	2.50-3.24	I can
4	3.25-4.00	I can do very well

Difficulties and Coping Strategies Scale

Scale	Range Value	Verbal Description
1	1.00-1.75	Strongly Disagree
2	1.76 -2.49	Disagree
3	2.50-3.24	Agree
4	3.25 -4.00	Strongly Agree

For validation purposes, the instrument was tested using three non-participant college instructors. The questions that they raised during the test administration provided the investigators with a big opportunity for tool enhancement. When the instrument was finalized, the researchers prepared a letter of request asking for the participation of all the college faculty members in this study through their respective Deans. Said letter was noted by the Vice President for Academic Affairs, a copy has been furnished to the Deans of the different Institutes of MVGFCI. Stressed in the said letter were the strong commitment to confidentiality and data privacy and an appeal for everyone's full participation because this was a survey of their needs and problems in online teaching. This was designed to determine who among the instructors needed technological assistance so that they could perform their teaching tasks well.

The accomplishment of the tool was done in two ways: face-to-face for those who came to school quite frequently and online

for those who seldom reported to the school. Data collection took about two weeks.

Statistical Analysis

The statistical tools used for processing and interpreting the data were frequency counts, percentages, weighted mean, and Pearson Product Moment Correlation to test the relationship between the socio-demographic profile of the participants and their online teaching difficulties and coping strategies.

All analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.

The responses to the open-ended question were presented in a narrative form.

Results and Discussions

Data presentation and discussions which are in textual and tabular forms are in accordance with the questions specified under the statement of the problem. The last part presented the responses to the open-ended question intended to gather the participants' opinions and suggestions about the support they needed in their online teaching.

Socio-Demographic Profile of the Participants

The socio-demographic profile of the participants included age, gender, civil status, and Institutes or departments where the participant instructors belonged.

Table 1. Socio-demographic Profile of the Participants

Age	Frequency	Percent
Below 30	7	33.3
30-39	3	14.3
40-49	3	14.3
50-59	2	9.5
Above 60	6	28.6
Total	21	100
Gender		
Male	9	42.9
Female	12	57.1

TOTAL	21	100.0
Institute		
IAB	1	4.8
ICJE	5	23.8
IICT	1	4.8
INAHS	5	23.8
ITE	9	42.9
TOTAL	21	100.0
Civil Status		
Married	10	47.6
Single	10	47.6
Widowed	1	4.8
TOTAL	21	100.0

Age. As presented in Table 1, faculty members with ages below 30 years old were the biggest group comprising seven (33.13%) of the population. Those of age 60 years and above were six (28.6%), the second biggest group. It seems that the age of the instructors is mostly on the extreme, the young, and the older groups. These older participants consisted of retirees from other agencies or schools who opted to join MVGFCEI.

Gender. Out of 21 participants, 12 (57.1%) were female and nine (42.9%) were male. The data show that there is an almost equal number of male and female participants.

Civil status. Incidentally, there was an equal number of single and married participants with 10 (47.6%) each. Only one (4.8%) was widowed.

Institutes or departments where the participants belonged. A total of nine (42.9%) of the participants came from the ITE. Both the IAB and the IICT had the smallest representation of one (4.8%) each.

Participants' Capability to Teach Online

This part shows the multiple responses of the participants to the different items on gadgets owned, internet connectivity, and digital skills, specifically making PowerPoint presentations, posting, uploading, and using other teaching applications (e.g. Zoom App, Google Meet, etc.).

Gadget owned. Table 2.1 shows that all 21 participants (100%) used laptops in their online teaching. Aside from the laptops, 15 (71%) reported that they also owned smartphones. Everyone owns a laptop that is handier and more accessible compared to the personal computers owned by other participants. Laptops and Smartphones are devices often used in conducting online classes.

Table 2.1. Gadgets Owned

Gadget	Frequency	Rank
Personal Computer	3	3
Laptop	21	1
Smartphone	15	2
iPod/Tablet	2	4
Others (Vectbook)	1	5

*multiple responses

Connectivity. This provides pieces of information on the places of internet access and types of internet connectivity.

Places of internet access. Table 2.2 shows that 17 (80.1%) of the participants accessed the internet at home and also in school. One participant accessed his/her internet through friends and relatives while two were reported to have internet access in different places. The data suggest that majority have their internet connection at home and if they are in school, they make use of the school's internet facility.

Table 2.2. Places of Internet Access

	Frequency	Percent
Home	17	80.1
Internet Café	0	0
School	17	80.1
Friends	1	4.7
Relatives	1	4.7
Neighbors	0	0
Others (Personal Access, Office)	2	9.5
Total	21	

Types of internet connectivity. Table 2.3 shows that WIFI was used by 19 (90%) of the participants, followed by Mobile Data being used by nine (43%) of the participant instructors. Only two (9.52) used loadable pocket WIFI.

Table 2.3. Types of Internet Connectivity

	Frequency	Percent
WIFI	19	90.48
Mobile Data	9	42.85
Loadable/Pocket WIFI	2	9.52
Total	21	100

*multiple responses

Digital skills. This portion presents the participants' self-assessment of their digital skills and the specific skills that they could execute such as making PowerPoint presentations, posting, uploading, and using other teaching applications (e.g. Zoom App, Google Meet, etc.).

Participants' self-assessment of their digital skills. Table 2.4 shows that nine (42.9%) of the participants rated themselves as high in digital skills and six (28.6%) rated themselves with very high-level knowledge and another six (28.6%) rated themselves with an average level of knowledge in digital skills. Nobody rated himself or herself low. This positive finding is a surprise because some of the participant instructors were already around 60 years old and attuned to traditional face-to-face instruction. In the statements of Gülbahar and Adnan (2020), many traditional tenure-track faculty were new to online teaching and lacked formal education on how to successfully teach online but they were being asked to transition, create, and implement online teaching. Some faculty members who felt well prepared to teach online enjoyed it; however, attention must be given to those faculty who are not ready or are not enthusiastic to do so (Cutri & Mena, 2020).

Table 2.4. Participants' Self-Assessment of their Digital Skills

	Frequency	Percent
Very High	6	28.6
High	9	42.9
Average	6	28.6
Low	0	0
Total	21	100.0

Specific digital skills that the participants can execute. Most of the participants rated "I can do very well" which means that they could execute the specific digital skills or applications commonly used in online teaching and learning with a general weighted mean of 3.44. The highest-rated item with a mean of 3.62 was sharing documents by attaching them through email, followed by organizing information and files

Table 2.5. Specific Digital Skills the Participants Can Execute

Statements	X	Verbal Interpretation
1. I can look for information online using a search engine.	3.43	I can do very well
2. I can save and retrieve file/s once deleted.	3.24	I can
3. I can post in media platforms used in my online teaching.	3.48	I can do very well
4. I can share documents with my students by attaching them in an email.	3.62	I can do very well
5. I can store work files safely online.	3.48	I can do very well
6. I can organize my information and content using files and folders on my device.	3.57	I can do very well
7. I can upload files on social media platforms like messenger and google classroom.	3.43	I can do very well
8. I can implement the use of video conferencing applications like Zoom,	3.43	I can do very well

Google Meet, or other applications.		
9. I can log in remotely to my email and other work-related communication tools.	3.29	I can do very well
	3.44	I can do very well

Legend: 1=1.00-1.75 / 2=1.76-2.50 / 3=2.51-3.25 / 4=3.26- 4.00

using folders with a mean of 3.57. Both are essential skills in online teaching. Only one participant out of 21 could not save and retrieve files once deleted.

Platform preferences. Platform preferences. As shown in Table 3, 100% of the participant instructors used Zoom as their platform for online teaching. In addition to this Zoom platform, some used Google Meet (6 or 28.57%), Messenger (8 or 38.01%), Google Classroom (9 or 42.86%), and Front learner (6 or 28.57%).

Table 3. Platform Preferences

	Frequency	Percent
Zoom	21	100.00
Google Meet	6	28.57
Messenger	8	38.01
Google Classroom	9	42.86
Front learner	6	28.57
Others (GL)	1	4.76

*multiple responses

Difficulties Encountered in Online Teaching

Table 4 shows the difficulties or problems encountered by the faculty members in online teaching. Most of the participants disagreed with the nine (75%) out of 12 difficulty statements presented to them which means that they did not encounter so many difficulties in their online teaching. Their only problems were in the three areas: production of teaching-learning modules, weak internet connection, and checking of outputs and assignments online

which was their greatest problem with the highest weighted mean of 2.90.

Table 4. Difficulties Encountered in Online Teaching

Statement	\bar{x}	V.I.
1. I find it difficult to adjust to this type of learning modality	2.48	Disagree
2. I have a problem managing some digital tools on my own during my online class.	2.48	Disagree
3. I have a hard time producing modules and teaching materials	2.71	Agree
4. I do not have the time to learn new digital skills.	2.05	Disagree
5. I do not have any problems with my online teaching.	2.29	Disagree
6. We have a weak internet signal in our area.	2.71	Agree
7. Checking outputs and assignments is a challenge in online teaching.	2.90	Agree
8. I do not have an internet connection	1.48	Strongly Disagree
9. We have a weak internet signal in our area.	2.33	Disagree
10 I do not have the gadgets that I need to teach online.	1.52	Strongly Disagree
11 I rely on mobile data for my online session.	1.67	Strongly Disagree
12. I do not know how to use the computer	1.33	Strongly Disagree
Overall Mean	2.16	Disagree

Legend: 1=1.00-1.75 / 2=1.76-2.50 / 3=2.51-3.25 / 4=3.26-4.00

Overall, it appears that the college instructors have already adjusted to the new way of teaching. This could be due to a lot of factors: the training being provided by the school, their open-mindedness for a change, their willingness to explore and learn new things, and their desire to remain in the teaching post.

Coping Strategies of the Participants

The general weighted mean shown in Table 5 is 3.10 which indicates that the participant instructors coped well with their

online teaching job because they were using appropriate coping strategies such as "trying to explore on their own the digital tools that are asked of them to use" (\bar{x} =3.43), "asking for assistance if they do not understand the digital application" (\bar{x} =3.38), and "finding time to learn the digital tools that are supposed to be used in online teaching" (\bar{x} =3.33). Seldom used as a coping strategy was "hiring an assistant to help with the computer work" (\bar{x} =2.19). Hiring an assistant is an impractical thing to do, so it is good to note that most of the participants tried their very best to learn the technology.

Table 5. Coping Strategies of the Participants

Statement	\bar{x}	V.I.
1. I find time to learn the digital tools that I am supposed to use in my online teaching.	3.33	Strongly Agree
2. I ask for assistance if there is something I do not understand in the digital tools I am using.	3.38	Strongly Agree
3. Our school provides training to help us implement online teaching.	3.19	Agree
4. I hire an assistant to help me with my computer work.	2.19	Disagree
5. I try to explore on my own the digital tools that we are asked to use in teaching online.	3.43	Strongly Agree
Overall Mean	3.10	Agree

Correlation of Socio-Demographic Profile with Difficulties Encountered and Coping Strategies

The results of the correlation analysis are presented in Table 6. Age (r =.601, p =.01) and civil status (r =.505, p =.05) were both significantly and positively correlated with the level of knowledge which implies that older and married faculty members rated themselves high in terms of the level of knowledge. On the other hand, age (r =-.599) and civil status (r =-.523) are significantly but negatively correlated with digital skills

performance which suggests that younger and single faculty members rated themselves higher. Similarly, the difficulties encountered in online teaching were significantly and positively correlated with civil status ($r=.523$, $p=.013$), while age was near the significance level ($r=.423$, $p=.056$). These suggest that married and older faculty members experienced more difficulties in online teaching compared to the younger ones.

Coping strategies, on the other hand, were not significantly correlated with the socio-demographic profile. This means that faculty members employ similar coping strategies regardless of their demographic profile.

Table 6. Relationship of Socio-Demographic Profile with Difficulties Encountered and Coping Strategies

Demographic Profile	Level of Knowledge		Digital Skills		Difficulties		Coping Strategies	
	r	p-value	r	p-value	r	p-value	r	p-value
Age	.601	.004	-.599	.004	.423	.056	.120	.605
Gender	.000	1.00	-.180	.434	-.009	.970	.215	.349
Civil Status	.505	.020	-.523	.015	.523	.013	.174	.526

Support Expected from the School and Colleagues

The open-ended question being asked was: What support do you want from the school and your colleagues for your online teaching? Responses to this question are narrated or enumerated below without any attempt to cluster them or come up with a thematic presentation. The kinds of support they wanted from the school were: patience; training; avoiding salary deductions; high-speed internet; and emotional, mental, and physical support.

Training. Education is continuous learning for everyone. Every day is an innovation of skills and materials. In times of online teaching, all instructors used online materials, frankly speaking, not everyone could go with the flow of the new trend. Most instructors wanted training and education to

support their online teaching - training and education on making videos to upload on youtube and in preparing a well-designed implementation plan for online and modular classes that would help both the instructors and the students to be active and engaging.

Avoid salary deductions. One instructor answered, "avoid deductions in salaries in this time of pandemic that can add to the financial difficulties of employees since some participants used mobile data or loadable pocket WIFI.

High-speed internet. Internet connection is the most significant element in online teaching. Having a turtle-speed internet connection and no connection at all have no difference. A high-speed connection is a must since researchers found out that the instructors used multiple platforms in their online teaching.

Emotional, mental, and physical support. The instructors wanted emotional, mental, and physical support, especially in times of pandemic and while dealing with the new trend in the educational system. Motivation enables everyone to be on track. One instructor commented, "Skills in technology and pedagogy are not an issue on my part because I can learn things as long as I am motivated. The only support that I want is emotional, mental, and physical support." Encouraging them could lead them to a happy teaching environment and have a healthy mental, emotional and physical status. These can also let them contribute to positive outcomes and recommendations for the improvement and development of the school system. "Some words of encouragement and not discouragement" are necessary to develop positive thinking and outlook in life.

The support that they need from their colleagues is knowledge sharing, assistance, cooperation, and understanding.

Knowledge sharing. This is important in all kinds of professional spheres. Sharing knowledge with colleagues about the

digital tools that are most practical for online teaching could foster deep understanding and knowledge about the tool. This is a big help in coping with the new mode of teaching and learning.

Assistance. Any time changes happen in the workplace, individual contributors have to step up to help colleagues, especially those who are not well-versed with digital tools. These knowledgeable colleagues should be identified by school authorities and be made available to offer their assistance in times of need. This is extra service on their part, so they have to be acknowledged and rewarded.

Cooperation and understanding. Individuals are different in terms of skills and knowledge. The only thing that less knowledgeable instructors ask of their colleagues is an understanding of the inadequacies in the use of some digital tools. Cooperation in the form of “one-on-one mentoring” in the use of digital tools that are most appropriate for online learning is the kind of support that some instructors wanted from their colleagues.

Summary of Findings

Below are the salient parts of the findings of the study:

1. The participant instructors were mostly below 30 and above 60 years old, female, and were of equal number of single and married individuals.

2. Generally, the instructors were capable of teaching online based on the gadgets they owned, internet connectivity, and their digital skills specifically in making PowerPoint presentations, posting, uploading, and using different online applications such as Zoom, Google meet, and Facebook messenger. They availed of internet connections at home and in school, but a few used mobile data as an alternative.

3. Their platform preferences were Zoom App, Google Meet, and Facebook messenger.

4. The instructors experienced difficulties in checking outputs and assignments online and in producing teaching-learning modules and materials.

5. They coped with their difficulties by trying to explore on their own the digital tools that they had to use and by asking for assistance from knowledgeable colleagues in the use of unfamiliar digital tools.

6. Older and married instructors experienced more difficulties, but regardless of age, gender, civil status, and the Institutes they belonged to, they employed similar coping strategies.

7. The supports they wanted from the school were: training; avoiding salary deductions; high-speed internet; emotional, mental, and physical support; and knowledge sharing, assistance, cooperation, and understanding from their colleagues.

Conclusions

Based on the findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. The use of modern technology in teaching is not discriminative in terms of age, gender, civil status, academic departments, and degree course. Proper training and willingness to adapt to changes are keys to survival in teaching.

2. There is a clear realization that in this era of modernization, there is a need to be equipped with own gadgets, internet connectivity, and digital skills.

3. It is an advantage to know different digital platforms to have choices.

4. Some difficulties in online teaching are normal experiences, especially for new users of modern technology. What is important is the willingness to explore and learn new things.

5. The desire to survive in the online teaching world is strong which pushes faculty

members to adopt some practical means to learn the technology.

6. Teachers are happier in their new teaching world if support is abundant from the school and their colleagues.

Recommendations

The following are recommended:

1. Schools must continue to assess the training needs of faculty members and conduct proper trainings, with or without the pandemic.
2. School management must continue inculcating in the heart and mind of every faculty member that in this modern era, digital equipment and skills are vital, including willingness to adapt to change.
3. For any change and anything new, academic personnel should expect some difficulties or problems, but nurture the personnel's willingness to explore and learn new things;
4. Faculty members can stay happy during difficulties if there is overflowing support from the school and colleagues not only in terms of high-speed internet connection but also strong emotional, mental, and physical support.

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Alumni Tracer Study of the Institute of Business Administration Batches 2015-2018

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Abstract

The researchers employed a quantitative survey method of research to 16 alumni of the MVGFCI's Bachelor of Science in Business Administration or BA Program covering batches 2015-2018. The findings are: a big majority of the participant alumni were young (21-24 years old), female and single. Their reasons or influencers in taking up the BA degree program in college were their parents or relatives and the possibility of immediate employment after graduation. After graduation, majority found their jobs in 1-6 months through a walk-in application, and at the time of this study, they worked as regular or permanent employees with clerical support and service sales designations and monthly salaries ranging from Php10,000 to 20,000. They said that the college-acquired skills that were most useful in their jobs were communication, human relations, entrepreneurial, and information technology skills. These were their reasons for recommending more emphasis on said skills in college, plus interpersonal skills. In general, the BA curriculum was found relevant to their jobs.

Keywords: *BA Program, employment background, useful college-acquired skills, curriculum alignment.*

Introduction

Manuel V. Gallego Foundation Colleges, Incorporated (MVGFCI) envisions being known for its accredited academic programs, high ratings in nationally recognized examinations, and high employment rate of its graduates. One academic program offered by the Institution is the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (or BA Program) with a major in Marketing Management which aims at producing graduates with good entrepreneurial, managerial, and marketing skills. The BA Program is one of the most versatile degree programs because it covers a wide range of topics which include accounting for managers, marketing, technology and operations management, business ethics, organizational behavior, human resource management, strategy, corporate finance, and valuation. Possible business careers include accounting, imports, international business relations, technology support, investment banking, market research, product management, retail, real

estate, advertising management, and many more. It is also one of the most practical academic programs because selling activities may be included in courses like retail management and professional salesmanship enabling learners to generate income while learning. Graduates of this Program are very business-oriented or are business opportunity-takers since it hones the students' entrepreneurial and risk management skills. However, unlike other degree programs such as criminology, nursing, accountancy, and education programs that the Institution offers, the BA Program does not have a licensure examination; hence, the Institution's main indicator of the quality of graduates is through tracer studies on the graduates' employability using such indicators as job search methods, job search length, number and percentage employed, employment status, job level position, monthly salaries, and companies' major line of business. Their impressions on the college-acquired skills or

competencies considered very useful to their jobs and the relevance of the BA curriculum is also used as quality indicators in this study.

It should also be kept in mind that a tracer study is not only focused on determining the Institution's direction for development; it also determines if the school is properly catering to the needs of those who enroll in the program. It is also concerned with ensuring that the graduates have landed in appropriate jobs that will improve their economic status because college education is not simply an option; it is a requirement for good employment. Yorke and Knight (2004) considered employability as being influenced by students' self-efficacy, self-theories, and personal qualities. Bhola and Dhanawade (2013) contended that the development of employability skills is based on the joint effects of industry and educational institutes. Education is the main contributor to the acquired skills of graduates as well as their employability potential. This study was conducted to gather feedback on how MVGFCI contributed to the next stage of graduates' careers which is employment.

Statement of the Problem

This research aimed at assessing the employability of graduates of the BA Program of MVGFCI batches 2015-2018 and the different factors contributing to their employment. Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the BA alumni in terms of:
 - 1.1 civil status;
 - 1.2 sex; and
 - 1.3 age?
2. What are their reasons or influencers for taking up the BA Program?
3. How may the employment background of the participant alumni be described using such indicators as:
 - 3.1 job search methods,
 - 3.2 job search length or waiting time,

3.3 number and percentage employed,

3.4 employment status (i.e, regular/permanent; temporary/casual/contractual)

3.5 job level position,

3.6 monthly salaries, and

3.7 companies' major line of business?

4. What college-acquired skills/competencies are considered very useful to the job?

5. How may the relevance of the BA curriculum be described in relation to the jobs of the graduates?

Significance of the Study

This study is intended to provide information about the employability of the BA graduates of MVGFCI from 2015-2018 and the relevance of the BA Program to job market; hence, this is significant to the following: **CHED** being the key leader in transforming college students into highly competent and productive professionals; **faculty members** in the BA department in upgrading the standards of teaching by continuously inculcating in the minds of the students competitiveness and excellence in their field; **MVGFCI** in initiating and implementing development plans for its BA program since this study will provide information about the BA graduates' employability; **parents** by encouraging and motivating their children to be serious in their studies, and look up at their children's long-term educational career with great affirmation that they will end up having a good job after the 4-year course; **BA students** as this study provides them with information that will guide them in preparing for future employment; and **future researchers** since the results of the study will serve as their reference for similar studies in the future.

Methodology

Research Design

The researchers employed the quantitative survey method of research using 16 BA alumni of batches 2015-2018. This research method was considered most appropriate in determining the participants' demographic profile, their reasons or influencers in taking up the BA degree program, their employment situations including their job search methods, the college-acquired skills or competencies considered very useful to their jobs, and their impressions on the relevance of the BA curriculum to their jobs.

Participants, Data-gathering Instrument and Procedure

The participants were 16 graduates of the BA Program, batches 2015-2018. A complete enumeration technique was employed since the total number of graduates during this period was only 20, but only 16 (80%) responded. Please refer to Table 1.

Table 1. Participants of the Study

Batch/ Year Graduated	Population		Retrieval	
	<i>f</i>		<i>f</i>	Rate (%)
2014-2015	3		1	33.33%
2015-2016	4		3	75%
2016-2017	5		4	80%
2017-2018	8		8	100%
Total	20		16	80%

As shown in Table 1, batch 2014-2015 was the smallest, with one (33.33%) participant, in contrast to the graduates of 2017-2018 which had the biggest percentage. They were the most responsive to the online survey. Although the target number was not met, the retrieval rate was acceptable given the fact that each batch was represented.

The research tool used in this study was a close-ended questionnaire intended to gather information on the participants' demographic characteristics, employment background, college-acquired skills and competencies, and their impressions on the

relevance of the BA curriculum to their jobs. Data collection was through online administration using Google Forms like Facebook and Google Mail. Those who were not able to use the available platforms were visited in their respective homes and workplaces.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used in describing the data being obtained. These include the frequency and percentage distribution and ranking.

Results and Discussions

The findings of the study are presented in textual and tabular forms in accordance with the participants' demographic profile, reasons or influencers in taking up the BA degree program, employment background, college-acquired skills or competencies considered useful in their jobs, and their impressions on the relevance of the BA curriculum to their jobs.

Participants' Demographic Profile

Table 2 presents the participants' demographic profile in terms of civil status, sex, and age. As shown in the Table, a big majority of the graduates were single (15 or 93.75%), female (14 or 87.5%), and 21 to 24 years old (15 or 93.75%). These data suggest being mostly female and future managers of their own families, they feel the need of establishing their careers first for their security and eventually for the security of their future families. Fortune 500 (2017) reported that there were more female career executive officers (CEOs) than males, showing that there are more promising career opportunities for female BA graduates.

Table 2. Demographic Profile of the Participants

Civil Status	2014-2015		2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018		Overall		
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	
Single	1	100	3	100	4	100	7	87.5	15	93.8	
Married	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	12.5	1	6.2	
Total									16	100	
Sex	2014-2015		2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018		Overall		

	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Male	0	0	0	100	1	25	1	12.5	2	12.5	
Female	1	100	3	100	3	75	7	87.5	14	87.5	
Total							16	100			
Age	2014-2015		2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018		Overall		
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
21-22 y.o.	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	87.5	7	43.8	
23-24 y.o.	0	0	3	100	4	100	1	12.5	8	50.0	
25-26 y.o.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
27-28 y.o.	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	6.22	
Total							16	100			

Reasons or Influencers in Taking up BA Degree Program

The data in Table 3 show that the most common reasons or influencers for taking up the BA degree were the parents or relatives according to seven (25.92%) of the participants, followed by the prospect of immediate employment after graduation having a score of six (22.22%), then followed by the affordability of the BA Program to the family with four (14.81%) responses. One (3.7%) of the graduates responded he or she had no particular choice or idea about which degree program to take. Generally, parents are big influencers, particularly in their children's career choices. This is because education requires a big investment on their part not only financially but also in terms of time, effort, and emotional investment. Their goal for their children is immediate employment after graduation and stable work thereafter to support themselves and eventually their families. These are the primary reasons why parents go for a big investment in their children's private education. Kazi (2017) states that families do not contribute to career decisions but expresses their reservations and concerns when choosing a program for their children's careers.

Table 3. Reasons or Influencers in Taking up BA Degree Program

Reason for taking the degree program	2014-2015		2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018		Overall	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Prospect for immediate employment	1	50	2	33.3	0	0	3	20	6	22.2

Influence of parents or relatives	1	50	1	16.7	3	60	2	13.3	7	26	
Strong passion for the profession	0	0	1	16.7	1	20	0	0	2	7.4	
Affordable for the family	0	0	1	16.7	0	0	3	20	4	14.9	
Peer influence	0	0	0	0	1	20	1	6.7	2	7.4	
Inspired by a role model	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	13.3	2	7.4	
Availability of course offerings in chosen institution	0	0	1	16.7	0	0	2	13.3	3	11	
No particular choice or no better idea	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	13.3	1	3.7	
Total										27	100

Employment Background of the Participant Alumni

Described in this portion is the employment background of the alumni using such indicators as job search methods, job search length or waiting time, number and percentage employed, employment status (i.e, regular/permanent; temporary/casual/contractual), job level position, monthly salaries and companies' major line of business.

Job search methods. It is normal for graduates of any degree program to seek jobs after graduation. As job seekers, they normally employ several strategies, the most common of which are presented in Table 4. As reflected in the Table, the most common job search method was through walk-in applications with seven (43.75%) responses, and the less common ones were through job fairs, friends, and online applications with two (12.5%) responses each. Endorsement from MVGFCI or employing its graduates was the least popular job search strategy, with one (6.25%) response each. The traditional walk-in method of job seeking remains very popular in the provinces like Nueva Ecija or Cabanatuan City unlike in metropolitan areas where the trend is through online application. The study of Roschin et al. (2017) could prove this. They reported that the usage of the internet as an application tool increased the efficiency of the job application and hiring process for both the

applicant and the employer. **Table 4. Job Search Methods**

Job Search Method	2014-2015		2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018		Overall	
	f	%	F	%	F	%	f	%	f	%
Job Fair	0	0	1	33.33	1	25	0	0	2	12.5
Friend	0	0	1	33.33	1	25	0	0	2	12.5
Online Application	0	0	0	0	1	25	1	12.5	2	12.5
Walk-in	1	0	0	0	1	25	5	62.5	7	43.75
Family Business	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	12.5	1	6.25
Endorsed by MVGFCI	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	12.5	1	6.25
Absorbed by MVGFCI as a full-time employee from being a working student	0	0	1	33.33	0	0	0	0	1	6.25
Total									16	100

There is also apparent neglect on the part of MVGFCI's placement services which are supposed to be among the services provided by its Guidance or Placement Office.

Job search length or waiting time.

As shown in Table 4.1, the biggest percentage (13 or 81.25%) of the BA graduates were employed in 1-6 months after graduation. The longest waiting time of more than a year happened to only one (6%) of the graduates. It is good that even without school support, the graduates can manage themselves toward getting employment in quite a short period. This shows that the BA graduates are employable and that the BA program is one of the degree programs that are in demand, given the fact that businesses of any sort mushroom anywhere in Nueva Ecija or the Philippines. This finding aligns with what Hossain et al. (2020) expressed that business graduates are highly employable especially if supported by their soft and technical skills.

Table 4.1. Job Search Length or Waiting Time

Job Search Length or Waiting Time	2014-2015		2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018		Overall	
	f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Contractual	0	0	0	0	1	25	0	0	1	6.3
Regular/Permanent	0	0	3	100	3	75	8	100	15	93.7

1-6 months	1	100	2	66.67	3	75	7	87.5	13	81.25
7-12 months	0	0	1	33.33	0	0	1	12.5	2	12.5
more than a year to less than 2 years	0	0	0	0	1	25	0	0	1	6.25
Total									16	100

Number and percentage employed.

It could be seen in Table 4.2 that 14 (87.5%) were employed. The other two (12.5%) participants were unemployed. This is incongruent with the data in the preceding Table which reflects that all the graduates were employed. This is because the two of them labeled in Table 4.2 as *unemployed* were on leave due to family concerns and the other one was on a vacation. Skiba et al. (2017) also noted that millennials are employable and that most of the millennial applicants often find jobs together with their batchmates since they are socially driven and consider the possibility of a fun and social workplace.

Table 4.2. Number and Percentage Employed

Number and Percentage Employed	2014-2015		2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018		Overall	
	F	%	F	%	f	%	f	%	F	%
Unemployed	1	100	1	33.3	0	0	0	0	2	12.5
Employed	0	100	2	66.7	4	100	8	100	14	87.5
Total									16	100

Employment status.

Table 4.3 shows the employment status of BA graduates where only one graduate (6.25%) was a contractual employee as support staff for project-based work, while 15 (93.75%) were regular employees and were enjoying the benefits of such status. A study by Cervantes et al. (2015) pointed out that most BA graduates are employed in the private sector with full-time employment status.

Table 4.3. Employment Status

Number and Percentage Employed	2014-2015		2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018		Overall	
	f	%	f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%
Contractual	0	0	0	0	1	25	0	0	1	6.3
Regular/Permanent	0	0	3	100	3	75	8	100	15	93.7

Total	16	100
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Job level position. As reflected in Table 4.4, clerical support workers and service sales workers were both the biggest in number and percentage with six (42.86%) responses for each, while account staff and marketing professionals were the smallest with one (7.14%) each. Although the jobs are strongly related to the BA course of the graduates, such are entry-level jobs. This is understandable because they are new graduates and still new to the service.

Table 4.4. Job Level Position

Job Level Position	2014-2015		2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018		Overall	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	F	%
Clerical Support Workers	0	0	1	50	2	50	3	37.5	6	42.86
Service and Sales Workers	0	0	0	0	1	25	5	62.5	6	42.86
Account Staff	0	0	1	50	0	0	0	0	1	7.14
Marketing Professionals	0	0	0	0	1	25	0	0	1	7.14
Total									14	100

Monthly salaries. All of the participant alumni received monthly salaries ranging from Php10,000 to 20,000 as shown in Table 4.5. This is within the minimum wage level and is related to the job-level position of most of the participant alumni. The studies of Pangilinan et al. (2019) and Alvarez (2020) both show that this salary range is the usual range for new business graduates, particularly in the provincial areas.

Table 4.5. Monthly Salaries

Monthly Salary	2014-2015		2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018		Overall	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Php 10,000 – 20,000	0	0	2	100	4	100	8	100	14	100
Total									14	100

Companies' major line of business. Ten (71.44) of the BA graduates who participated in this study were employed in companies whose major line of business is selling and marketing. This is another proof of the alignment of the jobs with the BA degree at its entry-level position, the position

deserving of new graduates in the Program. This is a reflection of the focus of the BA degree program of MVGFCI, not so much of an entrepreneurial venture.

Table 4.6. Companies' Major Line of Business

Companies' Major Line of Business	2014-2015		2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018		Overall	
	f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Selling and Marketing	0	0	1	50	2	50	7	62.5	10	71.44
Manpower and Placement Services	0	0	1	50	0	0	0	37.5	1	7.14
Mall	0	0	0	0	1	25	0	0	1	7.14
Educational Institution	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	7.14
Government Agency	0	0	0	0	1	25	0	0	1	7.14
Total									14	100

College-Acquired Skills/Competencies Considered Very Useful to the Job

This part allowed multiple responses; hence, the frequencies and percentages presented in Table 5 do not coincide with the number of participants in this research undertaking. To determine which of the college-acquired skills and competencies were considered most useful to their jobs, the overall responses were ranked according to the total number of frequencies for a particular skill or competency. It is shown in Table 5 that the skills considered very useful to the participants' jobs were communication skills (Rank 1), followed by human relations skills (Rank 2), then by entrepreneurial and information technology skills with the same rank of 3.5. The least useful was critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Rank 5.5). Due to the nature of the work of the alumni, it can be understood that communication plays a key role to be able to successfully understanding the tasks and delivering satisfactory services. This goes to show that at an entry-level position, employees do not need critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Table 5. College-acquired Skills/Competencies Considered Very Useful to the Jobs

Acquired Competencies Very Useful to the Job	2014-2015		2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018		Overall	
	<i>F</i>	%	<i>F</i>	%	<i>F</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	Rank
Communication Skills	1	50	3	43	4	44	8	27	16	1
Human Relation Skills	1	50	1	14	2	22	8	27	12	2
Entrepreneurial Skills	0	0	2	29	2	22	2	7	6	3.5
Information Technology Skills	0	0	1	14	1	11	4	13	6	3.5
Critical-Thinking Skills	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	13	4	5.5
Problem-Solving Skills	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	13	4	5.5
Total									14	100

Relevance of the BA Curriculum to the Jobs

Table 6 shows that eight (57.15%) of the graduates considered the BA curriculum very relevant to their jobs and five (35.71%) rated it relevant. These findings suggest that MVGFCI has equipped its BA graduates with the necessary knowledge and skills to perform their respective jobs after their graduation. According to a study by Orejana and Resurrecion (2010), business graduates considered the curriculum relevant to work when the topics discussed in the classrooms provide the necessary knowledge for the field of specialization and when the BA program provides the needed foundation for work.

Table 6. Relevance of the BA Curriculum to the Jobs

Acquired Competencies Very Useful to the Job	2014-2015		2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018		Overall	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>F</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Fairly Relevant	0	0	0	0	1	25	0	0	1	7.14
Relevant	0	0	1	50	1	25	3	37.5	5	35.71
Very Relevant	0	0	1	50	2	50	5	62.5	8	57.15
Total									14	100

Summary of Findings

A big majority of the participant alumni were young (21-24 years old), female and single. Their reasons or influencers in taking up the BA degree in college were their parents or relatives and the possibility of

immediate employment after graduation. After graduation, majority found their jobs in 1-6 months through walk-in applications, and at the time of this study, they worked as regular or permanent employees with clerical support and service sales designations and monthly salaries ranging from Php10,000 to 20,000. They said that the college-acquired skills and competencies that were most useful in their jobs were communication, human relations, entrepreneurial, and information technology skills. These were their reasons for recommending more emphasis on said skills in college, plus interpersonal skills. In general, the BA curriculum was found relevant to their jobs.

Conclusions

Based on the findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Young, female, and single BA professionals have bright job prospects in entry-level positions;
2. As the saying goes “Parents know best”. This is the reason why parents play a big influence on their children’s career choices;
3. Walk-in applications still work well in the provinces, so graduates must be prepared for this reality;
4. It is gratifying to note BA graduates are employable;
5. It is normal for new graduates to start at entry-level positions as clerical support and service sales workers with basic monthly salaries ranging from Php10,000 to 20,000; and
6. There is job-degree alignment shown in the graduates’ job designations and the companies’ major lines of business.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and the conclusions drawn from the study, the following are recommended:

1. Guidance or placement officer of MVGFCI should continue inculcating in the young graduates or graduating students that

there is nothing wrong in starting with entry-level positions in their jobs so long as these jobs are relevant to the course that they finish;

2. Since parents are big influencers on children's career choices, it is an advantage to include them in the School's Career Guidance Program for them to know the pros and the cons of their decisions;

3. Since walk-in applications is still the trend in the provinces, School's guidance or placement officer should provide graduating students with relevant trainings to make them more competitive during their job search;

4. BA graduates can be made more employable if the BA Dean will spend more serious time enhancing the following:

- Students' skills in communication, human relations, entrepreneurship, information technology, and interpersonal skills; and
- BA Program making it perfectly aligned with the needs of the business industries.

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Working Conditions of Staff Nurses in Selected Government Hospitals in Nueva Ecija; Implications to Quality Nursing Service Administration

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Abstract

Descriptive inferential research method was used with 81 regular staff nurses as participants. Based on the findings of the study, staff nurses varied in terms of demographic data. Majority were female, married and BSN degree holders earning ₱20,000.00 and above monthly income with nine years and below of experience in the field. Findings also revealed that salaries and fringe benefits fairly meet expectations while hospital facilities and equipment meet expectations. Interpersonal relationships with colleagues, patients, and medical personnel were fully met as well as the hospital staff's expectations and work status. Civil status is significantly correlated with interpersonal relationships with colleagues and patients, physical conditions, and job security. Single staff nurses rated these items lower than married ones. A significant difference was also obtained in the two hospitals in terms of interpersonal relations with colleagues and patients and job security. Staff nurses from San Jose City General Hospital have significantly higher ratings than nurses from ELJ Memorial Hospital. The staff nurses in both hospitals agreed that the working conditions in their workplace meet their expectations. Hospital administrators and supervisors should look into the needs of staff nurses to improve their working and living conditions, to promote and improve their social and economic well-being as well as the terms of employment. Furthermore, an assessment should be made of the national policy on skilled workers' exportation to focus on how these workers are encouraged to remain in the country where their service is needed and to support the full implementation of RA No. 9173 on the Philippine Nursing Act.

Keywords: *Working conditions, expectations, interpersonal relationship, job security, employment, staff nurses, RA No. 9173*

Nurses are considered the frontline workers of a functional healthcare system, yet today's nurses face a variety of highly stressful working conditions while meeting the physical and psychological needs of patients (Grebener et. al, 2005). As such, hospitals and other health care providers must ensure that they are placed under conducive working conditions. Bhaga (2002) defined the working condition as a condition that is shaped by the interaction of nurses with their organizational climate and it includes psychological as well as physical working conditions. These working conditions can be physical conditions, which include the physical settings in the workplace as regards ventilation, restoration, and lighting facilities. James (2010) added that working condition as the condition under

which a job is performed, and is different from completely good and easy, to very bad and dangerous to the staff nurses' life and health.

Nurses are exposed to different working conditions in the workplace that may affect their performance and sense of well-being, which is essential not only to them but also to the people around them. Good working condition is productive, rewarding, enjoyable, and healthy for managers, staff nurses, and patients. It causes satisfaction in real life in general, which is necessary for contentment and improves attendance (Warren et.al, 2007). There were also studies indicating that good working condition is not only beneficial for nurses but also increases the efficiency and productivity

of the organization as a whole (Lieber et. al, 2009).

On the other hand, a bad working condition is a place where staff nurses are unhappy resulting in unrest, tardiness, and inability to provide quality care for their patients. It affects every aspect of their lives and ultimately it affects their ability to do well, and their jobs because staff nurses have difficulty meeting the needs of their patients if their own needs are not met (Johnstone, 2002). There are also cases when nurses leave the profession due to high levels of job dissatisfaction arising from current working conditions characterized by heavy workloads, limited participation in decision-making, and lack of development opportunities (Canadian Health Services Research Foundation [CHSRF], 2006).

To gain organizational support for workplace improvements and thereby improve nursing retention, evidence is needed to demonstrate the impact of the work environment on patient care. The purpose of this study is to determine the working conditions of staff nurses in selected government hospitals in Nueva Ecija. The quality and risk outcomes for both empowering work environments for nurses were hypothesized to impact group processes and thereby work effectiveness as reflected in patient outcomes (patient satisfaction, therapeutic self-care, falls, and nurse-assessed risks). Empowering workplaces were also hypothesized to enhance the nurse's psychological empowerment and, in turn, engagement in empowering behaviors that lead to quality care and job satisfaction.

This study will help improve not only the performance and personality of the staff nurses but also their relationship with the people around them. In this study, the implication of work conditions in giving quality nursing care is also investigated.

Nurses are the largest group of healthcare professionals providing direct

patient care in hospitals, cited to Hasmler and Cosine (2006). There are inadequate strategies that support nurses' health in healthcare institutions. Therefore, it is important to study nurses' experiences with work-related health because good experience is fundamental to the nurses' performance in healthcare (Oyama & Fukahori, 2013). There is also no known research on the impact of nurses' experiences on work-related health in the Philippines. As, such, it is important to find out how the nurses' work-related experiences within public and private healthcare institutions. Hence, there is a need to conduct this study to elevate the standards of care and be fruitful in the researcher's chosen career, which is nursing.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study utilized the independent and dependent variables model as shown in Figure 1.

The independent variable box consisted of the personal profile of the staff nurse participants in terms of age, sex, civil status, highest educational attainment, monthly salary, and the number of years in service. The dependent variable box consisted of the working conditions of the staff nurses such as salaries and fringe benefits, job security, interpersonal relationship, and other hygiene factors

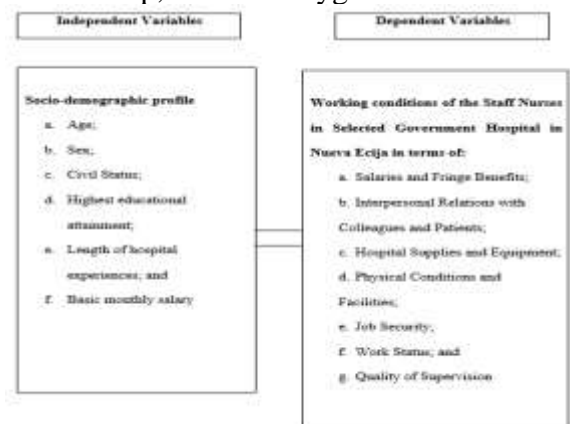


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study.

Statement of the Problem

In general, this study attempted to answer the queries on the working conditions of staff nurses in selected government hospitals in Nueva Ecija. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. How may the socio-demographic characteristics of the staff nurses of San Jose City General Hospital and Eduardo L. Joso Memorial Hospital be described in terms of:
 - a. age;
 - b. sex;
 - c. civil status;
 - d. highest educational attainment;
 - e. length of hospital experience; and
 - f. basic monthly salary?
2. How may the working conditions of the respondents be described in terms of:
 - a. salaries and fringe benefits;
 - b. interpersonal relations with colleagues and patients;
 - c. hospital supplies and equipment;
 - d. physical conditions and facilities;
 - e. job security
 - f. company policies and administration;
 - g. work status; and
 - h. quality supervision.
3. Is there a significant relationship between the socio-demographic profile of the research participants and the ratings of their working conditions?
4. What are the implications of this study for nursing service administration?

Scope and Limitation of the Study

This descriptive study focused on the working conditions of the staff nurses in two selected government hospitals in Nueva Ecija, namely, San Jose City General Hospital and Eduardo L. Joso Memorial Hospital, and the implications for nursing service administration. Eighty-one (81) staff nurses participated in the study, which was conducted during School Year 2019-2020.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will be beneficial to the nursing service administrators, medical chiefs of hospitals, nurse supervisors, head nurses, and staff nurses as well. This study will also benefit the nursing academe because it can serve as their guide to perform well in their studies and continue reaching their dreams and goals in life.

Definition of Terms

To help the readers of this study to arrive at a clear understanding of what is discussed herein, the following terms are operationally defined;

Extrinsic Motivators. This refers to behaviors that are driven by external rewards such as money, fame, and others.

Intrinsic Motivators. These are behaviors that are driven by internal rewards.

Fringe Benefits. There are equivalent payments over and about the basic wage paid by the employer, e.g., paid holiday, pension contribution, and meal voucher.

Interpersonal Relations. Referring to a dynamic system that changes continuously during existence, relationships have a beginning a lifespan, and an end. They tend to grow and improve gradually as people get to know one another.

Physical Conditions. This refers to the physical set-up location, building structure, and ventilation of the work area.

Physiological Conditions. These refer to the needs for survival like food, shelter, clothing, etc. arising from the working conditions of the staff nurses.

Professional nurses. All those graduate nurses who are licensed by the Professional Regulation Commission.

Psychosocial Conditions. This refers to the emotional interrelationship with co-workers of the staff nurse in the workplace.

Quality nursing service. It is the effective and satisfactory nursing care rendered by the nurses.

Social conditions. This refers to the relationship of staff nurses with co-workers and with the patients they serve.

Working status. The conditions under which employees have to work such as salaries and fringe benefits, interpersonal relations with colleagues and patients, hospital supplies and equipment, physical conditions and facilities, job security, work status, and quality of supervision.

Methodology

Research Design

This study used the descriptive correlational research design. Using this method, the researcher described the socio-demographic profile and the working conditions of the staff nurses in selected government hospitals in Nueva Ecija. The socio-demographic profile included age, sex, civil status, highest educational attainment, length of hospital experiences, and basic monthly salary.

Locale of the Study

This study covered two government hospitals in Nueva Ecija namely, San Jose City General Hospital and Eduardo L. Josen Memorial Hospital from which the working conditions of staff nurses were assessed.

The Respondents

The participants of the study were registered nurses who were employed as regular staff nurses in plantilla positions who perform direct patient care. The total number or complete enumeration of registered staff nurses who work in the General Wards, Pedia, Surgical, Medical, OB, Emergency/OPD, and DR/OR was obtained. Only the full-time staff nurses were included in the study due to different job descriptions, responsibilities, salaries, and benefits

compared to part-time or casual nurses. These two selected government hospitals had a total of 81 respondents, 31 from San Jose City General Hospital and 50 from Eduardo L. Josen Memorial Hospital.

Table 1 presents the respondents of the study. The respondents from San Jose City General Hospital and Eduardo L. Josen Memorial Hospital were arranged according to their respective areas of assignment.

Table 1. Distribution of Research Participants by their Clinical Work Area

Area of Assignment	Staff Nurse	Percentage
Medical	18	22.2 %
Surgical	5	6.2 %
Pediatric	3	3.7 %
Obstetrical	7	8.6 %
ER	10	12.3 %
OR	9	11.1 %
Others	29	35.8 %
TOTAL	81	100.00%

Instrumentation

The researcher used a self-made questionnaire. To ensure that it will measure what is intended to be measured or is supposed to be assessed, the research adviser and the statistician made a thorough analysis of the instrument before its administration.

The questionnaire is composed of two parts. Part I contains questions that are aimed at determining the socio-demographic profile of the respondents. Part II contains the hygiene factors that affect the working conditions of the staff nurses. Data and information were based on the demographic profile and perceptual assessment of the respondents regarding the conditions in their workplace. The items in the first part and second parts were rated by the respondents using the four Likert scales where:

4 = Fully meets my expectation.

3 = Meets my expectation.

2 = Fairly meets my expectation.

1 = Does not meet my expectation.

Administration of Questionnaire

The researcher sought the permission of the chiefs of the hospitals thru the chief nurses. Upon their approval, the researcher distributed the questionnaires to the participants through the head nurses of the wards and special areas of assignment. The nurses were informed that their active participation is voluntary and their answers would be completely confidential. The researcher requested the same head nurses to collect the accomplished questionnaires.

Statistical Treatment and Analysis of Data

The following statistical tools were utilized in this study:

1. To describe the profile of the segments, frequencies and percentages were used.
2. To assess the working conditions, weighted means were used.
3. To measure the relationship between the profile of the participants and working conditions, Pearson Correlation was conducted.

All analyses were done using Excel and the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Results

Socio-Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 2 shows the socio-demographics of staff nurses.

Age. The age of the respondents ranges from 20 to 63 years old with an overall mean of 36.9. The age bracket of 30-39 is the highest with 31 (34.5%) respondents. This is followed by the age bracket of 20-29 (29.5%) respondents. The least is 60-69 with 3 (3.7%) respondents.

Table 2. Socio-demographic profile of the respondents

Profile of the Respondents	Freq	%
Age		
20-29	24	29.5
30-39	31	34.5
40-49	13	16.4
50-59	10	12.7
60-69	3	3.7
Sex		
Male	25	30.9
Female	56	69.1
Civil Status		
Single	37	45.7
Married	44	54.3
Highest Educational Attainment		
Bachelor of Science in Nursing	63	77.8
Masters of Arts in Nursing	18	22.2
Clinical Work Area		
Medical	18	22.2
Surgical	5	6.2
Pediatric	3	3.7
Obstetrical	7	8.6
Emergency Room	10	12.1
Operating Room	9	11.1
Others	29	35.8
Monthly Salary		
10,000-19,999	16	19.7
20,000-29,999	43	53.2
30,000-39,999	22	27.1
Number of Years in Service		
1-9	50	61.5
10-19	24	29.5
20-29	4	4.9
30-39	3	4

Sex. The data shows that majority of respondents were female (56 or 69.1%) while male consists of 25 or 30.9%. The data indicate that nursing is a female-dominated area.

Civil Status. The civil status of the respondents shows that out of the 81 respondents, 37 or 45.7% of the respondents are single while 44 or 54.3% are married. It showed that there are more married respondents than single respondents and that these participants were in the beginning stages of their practice which further implies the prioritization and stability of the career.

Educational Attainment. In terms of educational attainment, 63 or 77.8% hold a Bachelor's degree in Nursing; while 18 or 22.2% of the respondents have earned their master's degree. It only shows that most of

the respondents possessed the minimum requirement for a staff nurse.

Clinical Work Area. With regards to area assignment of the respondents, the majority, or 29 (35.8%) were considered "all-around staff nurses" who are assigned to other clinical work areas. This further means that these 29 respondents were assigned or rotated in different areas for a certain period. Hence, they are not permanently assigned to a designated work area.

Monthly Salary. Out of the 81 respondents, 43 or 53 % were receiving a monthly salary of ₱20,000-₱29,999 while 22, or 27.1% were receiving a monthly salary of ₱30, 000-₱39, 999. The monthly salary of the staff nurses may be accounted for by their position, the number of years in the service, and educational attainment.

Numbers of Years in Service. As shown in Table 2, the majority of the respondents (50 or 61.5%) have been in the service for 1-9 years. This was followed by 24 (29.5%) of the year respondents who have 10-19 years of experience; 4 (4.9%) have been in the service for 20-29 years, and 3 (4%) have been in the service for more than 30 years.

Factors that Affect the Working Conditions of Staff Nurses

Salaries and Fringe Benefits. Table 3 shows the mean score of the factors that affect the working conditions of the staff nurses, one of which is salaries and fringe benefits, and health insurance. The item "it is commensurate to my workload" earned the highest mean rating of 2.64 which is verbally interpreted as "Meets my expectation." This was followed by health insurance with a rating of 2.63 verbally interpreted as "Meets my expectation." Overall, the mean score of working conditions of staff nurses on salaries and fringe benefits obtained a mean of 2.42 with a verbal description of "fairly meets my expectation."

Table 3. Mean Scores of Working Conditions of Staff Nurses on Salaries and Fringe Benefits

Item statements	Mean	Description
1. Opportunity to earn extra money or pay after my duty hours	2.40	Fairly meets my expectation
2. Fringe benefits such as medicare	2.50	Fairly meets my expectation
3. Overtime pay	2.26	Fairly meets my expectation
4. Hazard pay	2.37	Fairly meets my expectation
5. Night differential pay	2.24	Fairly meets my expectation
6. Health insurance	2.63	Meets my expectation
7. Salary is commensurate with my workload	2.64	Meets my expectation
8. Salary is given on time	2.35	Fairly meets my expectation
Overall Mean	2.42	Fairly meets my expectation

The results implied that the respondents expected that they will be given overtime pay when they work beyond office hours. They also expected the salary that they were receiving depends on the work that was assigned to them. The salaries, as well as some fringe benefits, were not given on time. These need improvement because these were the causes of dissatisfaction. The nursing staff is essential to provide the best care to patients.

Interpersonal Relations with Colleagues and Patients. Interpersonal relations with colleagues and patients have an overall mean of 3.34 which is equivalent to fully meeting their expectations. All items were rated high by the nurses. Rated highest is the item concerning the relationship with fellow nurses with a mean of 3.41 followed by the relationship of medical personnel with a mean of 3.38. Meaning, superiors, and subordinates are friendly with each other as well as with the patients. All items under interpersonal relationships with colleagues and patients were rated "fully meets my expectations" which may be an indication of their satisfaction

Table 4. Interpersonal Relations with Colleagues and Patients

Item statements	Mean	Description
1. Relationship with my fellow nurses	3.41	Fully meets my expectation
2. Collegiality and friendliness between superiors and subordinates	3.27	Fully Meets my expectation
3. Relationship with medical personnel	3.38	Fully meets my expectation
4. Respect and recognition of the opinion of others	3.38	Fully meets my expectation
5. Patients are cooperative during medication	3.26	Fully meets my expectation
Overall Mean	3.34	Fully meets my expectation

Hospital Supplies and Equipment.

With regards to hospital supplies and equipment, all of the items under this factor were described as "Meets my expectation" With an overall mean of 2.69.

Table 5. Interpersonal Relations with Colleagues and Patients

Item statements	Mean	Description
1. Availability of hospital supplies	2.68	Meets my expectation
2. Well-functioning equipment	2.73	Meets my expectation
3. Ease in requisitioning supplies and materials	2.65	Meets my expectation
4. Availability and use of modern facilities and equipment	2.65	Meets my expectation
5. Adequate supplies and equipment	2.72	Meets my expectation
Overall Mean	2.69	Meets my expectation

This means that the hospital supplies needed are available anytime and the equipment is fully functional.

Physical Conditions and Facilities.

For physical conditions and facilities in the hospital where they work, all items were described as "meets my expectation" except for clean restrooms which were described as "Fairly meets my expectation". Respondents were satisfied with the physical conditions and facilities in the hospital except that some restrooms were not maintained well.

Table 6. Mean Scores of Physical Conditions and Facilities

Item statements	Mean	Description
1. Place of work is conducive	2.84	Meets my expectation
2. Hospital is accessible	3.02	Meets my expectation
3. Proper lighting facilities	2.85	Meets my expectation
4. Pleasant and quiet surroundings	2.79	Meets my expectation
5. Clean restrooms	2.45	Fairly meets my expectation
Overall Mean	2.79	Meets my expectation

Job Security. As for job security, most of the respondents described the items as "Meets my expectation" with an average of 2.67. The highest average is government policies about retirement benefits with an average of 2.84. Only the item, chances for promotion exist was described by the respondents as "Fairly meets my expectations" with a mean of 2.49. Job security affects the worker's performance and their sense of well-being which is essential to individuals and the people around them.

Table 7. Mean Scores of Job Security

Item statements	Mean	Description
1. Security of tenure	2.69	Meets my expectation
2. Health insurance is given by the Hospital	2.62	Meets my expectation
3. Government policies regarding the retirement benefits	2.84	Meets my expectation
4. Mandated benefits as a staff nurse are given	2.72	Meets my expectation
5. Chances for promotion exist	2.49	Fairly meets my expectation
Overall Mean	2.67	Meets my expectation

Work Status

With regards to the work status of the respondents, all items were described as "Fully meets my expectation" with an overall mean of 3.46. It means that all items under this factor were observed and experienced by the respondents while working in the hospital. The data suggests that nurses are happy with how they do their tasks as staff nurses. They are happy if they complete their daily nursing task, particularly accessing

symptoms and reactions accurately and promptly executing physician's orders.

Overall Mean	3.21	Meets my expectation
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Table 8. Mean Scores of Work Status

Item statements	Mean	Description
1. Ability to execute promptly and accurately the physician's order	3.46	Fully meets my expectation
2. Asses alertness and symptoms and the reactions of patients	3.50	Fully meets my expectation
3. Efficiency in preparing and revising nursing care plans for individual patients	3.46	Fully meets my expectation
4. Accurate recording and reporting of essential facts coming from physicians and in-coming staff	3.44	Fully meets my expectation
5. Advocacy of involving patients and significant others in teaching proper health plan	3.42	Fully meets my expectation
Overall Mean	3.46	Fully meets my expectation

Quality of Supervision

The quality of supervision has an overall mean of 3.24 interpreted as "meets my expectation". Job function is suitable and well-defined and free to talk openly and honestly to my supervisors were described as "Fully meets my expectation" with a mean of 3.31. The respondents already knew the responsibility and work to be done upon employment in the hospital so they can directly talk to their supervisors if ever they have any inquiries regarding their work. Furthermore, their function is suitable and well-defined with a 3.27 mean also "fully meet expectations" of nurses.

Table 9. Mean Scores on Quality of Supervision

Item statements	Mean	Description
1. Activities and responsibilities of employees are supervised	3.19	Meets my expectation
2. Job function is suitable and well-defined	3.27	Fully meets my expectation
3. Supervisor takes prompt and fair corrective action	3.17	Meets my expectation
4. Provided with trainings necessary to perform my job	3.11	Meets my expectation
5. Free to talk openly and honestly to my supervisors	3.31	Fully meets my expectation

Relationship of Socio-Demographic Profile of Respondents with the Working Conditions

To determine whether there is a significant relationship between research participants' socio-demographic profile and the factors that affect their working conditions, Pearson product-moment correlation was computed. Results showed that civil status is negatively correlated to interpersonal relations with colleagues and patients ($r = -0.221, p < 0.05$), physical conditions and facilities ($r = -0.237, p < 0.05$), and job security ($r = -0.263, p < 0.05$). This implies that single-staff nurses are being affected by interpersonal relations with colleagues and patients, physical conditions of the hospitals, and job security since they rated their items lowest compared to married nurses: They may be dissatisfied so these have to be addressed. They might leave if these working conditions are not improved.

Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between research participants' socio-demographic profile and the factors that affect their working conditions is rejected. Other profiles such as age, sex, highest educational attainment, monthly salary, and length of experience are not significantly related to the different factors that affect the working conditions of staff nurses.

Table 10. Relationship of Socio-Demographic Profile and Factors Affecting Working Conditions of Staff Nurses

Socio-Demographic Profile	Salaries and Fringe Benefits (r)	Interpersonal Relations with Colleagues and Patients (r)	Hospital Supplies and Equipment (r)	Physical Conditions and Facilities (r)	Job Security (r)	Work Status (r)	Quality of Supervision (r)
Civil Status	-.177	-.221*	-.194	-.237*	-.042	-.051	
Age	-.079	-.192	-.002	.046	.032	.140	.160
Sex	-.072	.186	-.092	-.037	-.108	-.062	.027
Educational Attainment	-.059	-.022	.002	.051	-.054	.071	-.020
Monthly Salary	-.028	-.035	-.005	-.003	.133	.093	.169
Years in Service	-.051	-.146	.039	.047	.053	.140	.141

Conclusion

Based on the above findings, the researcher came up with the following conclusions:

1. The staff nurses varied in terms of age, sex, civil status, highest educational attainment, monthly salary, and number of years of experience.

2. The respondents in both hospitals agreed that their working conditions in their workplace particularly salaries and fringe benefits meet their expectations.

3. The respondents in both hospitals are satisfied with their interpersonal relations in their workplace, particularly their relationships with their colleagues and patients.

4. The respondents believe that the health supplies and equipment in their respective hospitals need to be improved.

5. Job security and opportunity for promotion are crucial for single and young staff nurses.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions, the following recommendations are hereby given to improve the working conditions of staff nurses:

1. Ensure full implementation of R.A. No. 9173 otherwise known as the Philippine

Nursing Act. 2002", particularly the provision of section 32 which raises the minimum salary grade of nurses, with a monthly base pay of Php 20,274 in public hospitals and public office.

2. Ensure full implementation of R.A. No.7305, Magna Carta of Public Health Worker, to promote and improve the social and economic well-being of the health worker, their living conditions, and terms of employment

3. Other provisions in the Magna Carta such as Overtime Work Night shift differential. Hazard Allowance, Subsistence Allowance, Laundry Allowance, and Medical Examination, should be implemented and be given on time.

4. Reclassification of positions and salaries matching their skills and corresponding salary scale should be implemented in

5. Enhance the professional growth of every staff nurse through assisted or subsidized continuing education programs such as pursuing a master's degree.

6. Assessment of the national policy on skilled workers' exportation to focus on how these workers are encouraged to remain in the country where their service is needed.

7. Requisition of adequate hospital supplies and equipment to provide quality health care to patients.

8. The provision of medical supplies and laboratory equipment should be increased.

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Confidence Level on the Expanded Program on Immunization of the DOH: Basis for Policy Information Dissemination

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Abstract

This study focused on the confidence level among parents of Grade 6 pupils in Science City of Muñoz, Nueva Ecija on the Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) of the Department of Health (DOH). The study is descriptive-correlational research that employed survey and group interviews among 53 parents from two public schools that were part of the DOH's school-based dengue vaccination campaign. Majority of the parent-respondents were female between the age of 30 and 39. They were high school graduates whose work belonged to service-oriented jobs. The most received vaccine was Bacille Calmette-Guerin (BCG) while the least received vaccines were the HPV and the controversial dengue vaccine. With the parent respondents' confidence level reaching the mean average of 4.12, the parent-respondents exhibited confidence in vaccines given to children and the benefits of the EPI despite the scare brought about by the Dengvaxia issue. The results also showed no significant relationship between the parent respondents' socio-demographic profile and their confidence level on the EPI. On the other hand, a significant relationship exists between vaccines given to the children of the parent-respondents but it is limited to the vaccines for measles, mumps, and rubella with correlational values at $r=-0.302$, $p<0.05$. The policy for information dissemination was recommended based on the result of the study.

Keywords: *descriptive-quantitative survey, Department of Health (DOH), Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI), vaccination, confidence level, dengue vaccine*

To increase the acceptance of routine childhood vaccines across the global communities, the World Health Organization (WHO) established the Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) in 1974 (Greenwood, 2014). Six vaccine-preventable diseases were initially included in the EPI namely: tuberculosis, poliomyelitis, diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, and measles. The WHO stated that aside from the six initial diseases targeted by the EPI, most countries have later added hepatitis and Haemophilus influenzae type B (Hib) to routine infant immunization schedules.

The Philippines, a Southeast Asian country, had also taken its step toward its battle on the prevention of deadly diseases.

To make sure that vaccines are stretched out even in the hard-to-reach localities in the country, the local adaptation of EPI was established by DOH in 1976. Under the EPI is the 'Reaching Every Barangay' (REB) strategy launched in 2004. DOH described REB as the Philippines' adaptation of the WHO-UNICEF Reaching Every District (RED) program. The RED program was developed and introduced by WHO-UNICEF in 2002. It recorded a relative increase in coverage of immunization in hard-to-reach localities particularly in parts of Africa, and Southeast Asia (Vandelaer, Bilous, Nshimirimana, 2008).

To further strengthen the adapted REB strategy, House Bill 8183 also known as the Republic Act No. 10152 or the "Mandatory Infants and Children Health Immunization Act of 2011" was enacted to

protect infants and children against common and vaccine-preventable diseases. This mandate on vaccines sought to address and hamper the spread of common vaccine-preventable diseases. It also paved the way for the administration of the vaccine to infants and children up to 5 years of age through government hospitals or public health centers.

Both the global and the local EPI showed a significant rise in immunization coverage. In the Philippines, DOH claimed that the immunization program of the REB showed effectiveness specifically in the sustenance of the polio-free status of the country since 2000 as well as in the elimination of measles, maternal and neonatal tetanus, and the control of hepatitis-B spread. Furthermore, the REB program under the EPI later gave birth to the introduction of new vaccines such as the Rotavirus and Pneumococcal vaccines which were included in the program in 2012. Consequently, the effectiveness of the said immunization campaign led to the Philippine government allotting an additional budget every year to the program to further increase its coverage.

With the many intertwining factors which resulted in the success of immunization coverage in the country, the EPI in the Philippines has been smooth sailing since its launch in the 1970s. The demonstrated elimination of lethal diseases for years signifies the confidence level of parents in the program. Unfortunately, the issue involving the introduction of a new vaccine called 'Dengvaxia®' shed a negative spotlight on the whole immunization program of the country. It also caught the attention not just of the Philippine media but also of other international news platforms. Nicola Smith (2018) wrote that due to the nationwide scare over the controversy, parents in the Philippines refused to immunize their children against other

established vaccines that were already used in the past like polio, chickenpox, and tetanus. She further stated that such a decline in immunization rates against preventable diseases sparked concerns about future epidemics according to authorities.

In light of the above, this study aimed to identify the parents' level of confidence toward the expanded immunization programs of the DOH three years after the Dengvaxia® incident. By understanding their confidence level and assessing their views towards immunization, the government and healthcare providers, particularly nurses who serve as front liners in administering the vaccine, can be provided with the information that they can use in tailoring a set of more effective strategic activities related to vaccine and immunization. This study could also help the nurses to further strengthen their willingness to recommend vaccines to the parents of their patients. In addition, this study also looked into the possible influence of the parents' socio-demographic background and how such variables play a role in the parents' confidence in immunization programs.

Theoretical Framework

To understand the range of possible factors that could help in understanding the parents' confidence in immunization, this study used the Health Belief Model (HBM) as its theoretical framework.

The HBM believes that people engage in an internal decision-making process weighing the pros and cons of taking a specific action, such as acceptance of vaccination. Specifically, people cognitively evaluate the severity of the health threat being confronted and the perceived benefits or harms of taking a specific action related to that health threat (Piltch-Loeb & DiClemente, 2020). The HBM has been extensively used to study vaccination beliefs and behaviors. It is also utilized in

vaccination research to identify patient perceptions of disease and vaccination (Coe, Gatewood, Moczygomba, Goode, & Beckner, 2012).

Using the HBM, this study looked into the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The independent variables of the present study included the socio-demographic profile of respondents such as sex, age, civil status, education, occupation, and monthly income. Under the dependent variable were the level of confidence of the parent-respondents in the government's Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) and the type of vaccines given to children under the EPI which could serve as a basis for policy and recommendation for the ongoing and future direction of the immunization program.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study utilized the independent and dependent variables model as shown in Figure 1

The independent variable box consisted of the personal profile of the respondents in terms of sex, age, civil, status, highest educational attainment, occupation, monthly income, and the type of vaccine given to children under the Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI). The dependent variable box consisted of the level of confidence in the EPI.

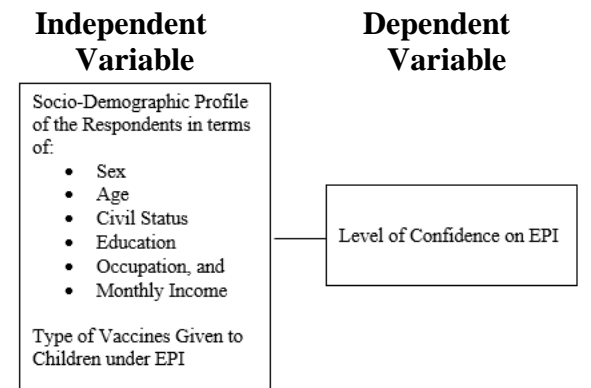


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

Statement of the Problem

This study focused on the "Confidence in the Expanded Program on Immunization of the DOH: Basis for Policy Information and Dissemination." Specifically, this study answered the following questions:

1. How may the socio-demographic profile of the parent-respondents of selected Grade VI pupils be described in terms of:
 - a. sex;
 - b. age;
 - c. civil status;
 - d. educational attainment;
 - e. occupation; and
 - f. monthly income?
2. What are the vaccines given to the children of the parent-respondents?
3. What is the level of confidence of the parent-respondents in the Department of Health's Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI)?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the parent respondents' socio-demographic profile and their level of confidence in the EPI?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the level of confidence of parent respondents and the type of vaccine included in the EPI?

Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study is limited to the confidence level of the parents of grade six pupils on the expanded program on immunization of the DOH in the Science City of Munoz, Nueva Ecija. The study was conducted from August 2019 to August 2020. Two elementary schools were chosen as sources of the 53 parent-respondents — the Elementary School of Central Luzon State University and Bagong Sikat Elementary School. These two schools were part of the school-based dengue vaccination campaign.

The survey questionnaire used in the study was limited to the socio-demographic

characteristics of the parent-respondents such as age sex, civil status, education, monthly income, and parent respondents' level of confidence in the EPI program of the Department of Health.

Significance of the Study

This study shall be beneficial to the parents since the study provided a link and created a source of support among the parent-respondents, especially when they knew that they are sharing the same sentiments.

The Department of Education will benefit from the study as well by providing further education on the immunization program of the government in their school activities.

Another institution that can benefit from the study is the Department of Health (DOH since it will help in formulating better strategies to increase adherence to immunization compliance.

Definition of Terms

These are terms that were technically used in the study to enable some readers to understand the terms are defined conceptually and operationally.

Immunity. It is protection from an infectious disease.

Vaccine. It is a product that stimulates a person's immune system to produce immunity to a specific disease, protecting the person from that disease.

Immunization. This is the process whereby a person is made immune or resistant to an infectious disease, typically by the administration of a vaccine. Vaccines stimulate the body's immune system to protect the person against subsequent infection or disease.

Vaccination. It refers to the act of introducing a vaccine into the body to produce immunity to a specific disease.

Department of Health (DOH). This is the principal health agency in the

Philippines that is made responsible for ensuring access to basic public health services for all Filipinos through the provision of quality health care and regulation of providers of health goods and services.

Dengvaxia®. This term was created by Sanofi Pasteur as the name of the first licensed dengue vaccine. Clinically known as CYD-TDV, this vaccine is a live recombinant tetravalent vaccine given as a 3-dose series for people between 9-45 years of age.

World Health Organization (WHO). It directs and coordinates international health with the United Nations System and oversees health systems, health through the life course, non-communicable and communicable diseases, preparedness, surveillance and response, and corporate services.

Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI). This was established in 1976 by the DOH to ensure that infants/children and mothers have access to routinely recommended infant/childhood vaccines.

Methodology

Research Design

This study is descriptive-correlational research since it aimed to examine the relationship between the respondents' socio-demographic profile, the types of vaccines received by the children of the parent-respondents, and their level of confidence in the Expanded Program on Immunization.

Participants

The participants of the study were 53 parents of Grade VI pupils from two (2) selected public schools namely; CLSU DepEd Elementary School and Bagong Sikat Elementary School. These two schools were selected because they are among the schools included in the school-based dengue vaccination program of the DOH.

The parent-respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, its goals, and the confidentiality of the data to be gathered by asking them to sign the Informed Consent Form before the survey and the interview was conducted

Instrumentation

The instrument used in the study is a questionnaire that consisted of four parts. The first part contained information on the socio-demographics of parent respondents. The second part was the vaccines included in the EPI received by the children of parent-respondents. Part three included researcher-made 10-item statements that contained the level of confidence where the parent-respondents could express their agreement or disagreement regarding the EPI. The Likert scale was interpreted as follows:

- 1.00 – 1.80 Strongly Disagree (SD) – Not Strongly Confident
- 1.81 – 2.60 Disagree (D) – Not Confident
- 2.61 – 3.40 Moderately Agree (MA) - Neutral
- 3.41 – 4.20 Agree (A) - Confident
- 4.21 – 5.00 Strongly Agree (SA) – Strongly Confident

The last part was the questions for the group interview part of data gathering. This included questions concerning parents' perceived effectiveness of the vaccines received by their child/children, their thoughts on the advantage and disadvantages of vaccination, and their confidence in the EPI.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher wrote a request letter to the Officer-in-Charge (OIC) of the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent of Science City of Muñoz, Nueva Ecija to seek permission to conduct the study. The Principal of the CLSU-Elementary Department allowed the researcher and notified the latter of the Parents-Teachers Association (PTA) meeting that was conducted on March 13, 2020. The researcher was advised to distribute the questionnaires to the parents after the meeting. Subsequently, the group interview with the respondents was done afterward

using a cellular phone as a recorder. Meanwhile, the researcher distributed the questionnaires to the parents of the selected pupils of Bagong Sikat Elementary School. The group interview was done after the questionnaires were answered to get a much more detailed response regarding their views on immunization. Guide questions during this part were utilized. The researcher also meticulously took down notes and observed the participants' non-verbal cues while discussing. The recorded data was played, transcribed, read for validation, and analyzed to make sure that the data were gathered correctly.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used in describing the parent's profiles and the vaccines received by the respondents' children. Their level of confidence in the government's Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) was analyzed using weighted means.

Pearson Product Moment Correlation was also used to determine the relationship between the profile of the respondents and the level of confidence in the EPI of the government. It was also used to determine if a significant relationship exists between parents' level of confidence and the type of vaccine included in the EPI.

Results

Socio-Demographic Profile of Parent-Respondents

The socio-demographic profile of the respondents is seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Parents (n=53)

Parameters	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
20-29	11	20.75
30-39	26	49.06
40-49	8	15.09
50-59	6	11.32
60 and above	2	3.77

Sex		
Male	8	15.09
Female	45	84.91
Civil Status		
Single	6	11.32
Married	47	88.68
Highest Educational Attainment		
Elementary	6	11.32
High School	35	66.04
College	12	22.64
Occupation		
Professional	10	18.86
Skilled	16	30.18
Service-Oriented	27	50.94
Monthly Income		
Below 5,000	30	56.60
5,001 – 10,000	11	20.75
10,001 – 15,000	4	7.55
15,001 – 20,000	3	5.66
20,000 and above	5	9.43

Age. The mean age was 36.75. The majority of the parent-respondents, which comprised 26 or 49.06%, were between the age bracket of 30-39 years old. This was followed by the age bracket of 20-29 with 11 (20.75%) respondents.

Sex. In terms of sex, the respondents were dominated by females. Forty-five or 84.91% of the respondents are female while only eight or 15.09% were male.

Civil Status. Forty-seven or 88.69% of the respondents were married while the remaining six or 11.32% were single. The marital status of parents could play a role in adherence to child immunization. The marital status of the mothers might influence their decision to go to the health centers to complete the immunization schedule of the child (Anokye, et al., 2018).

Highest Educational Attainment. The majority of the respondents (35 or 66.04%) were high school graduates; 12 or 22.64% were college graduates, and six, or 11.32% were elementary graduates

Occupation. Of the 53 respondents, half (27 or 50.94%) belonged to service-oriented jobs. This was followed by skilled workers (16 or 30.18%) and professionals (10 or 18.86%).

Income. In terms of income, the majority of the parent-respondents (30 or 56.50%) earned a monthly wage of P5,000 and below. This was followed by those who were earning P5,000 up to P10,000 (11 or 20.75%).

Vaccines Received by Children

The parent-respondents were asked about the vaccines that their child/children received under the EPI. As shown in Table 2, the most commonly administered vaccine was Bacille Calmette-Guerin (BCG) with a total of 52 or 98.11% responses. This was followed by the hepatitis B vaccine and Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV) where each has 50 or 94.34% responses.

Table 2. Vaccines Received by Children of the Parent -Respondents

Parameters	Freq	(%)
DOH-EPI (response)		
Bacille Calmette-Guerin (BCG)	52	98.11
Hepatitis B	50	94.34
DPT-Hepatitis B (DPT-HIB)	46	86.79
Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV)	50	94.34
Inactive Polio Vaccine (IPV)	41	77.36
Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV)	36	67.92
Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR)	46	86.79
Dengue Vaccine	8	15.09
Human Papillomavirus (HPV)	2	3.77

On the other hand, only 8 or 15.09% of the parents claimed that their child/children were vaccinated with Dengvaxia®. The vaccine with the lowest recorded response of only two or 3.77% was the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV).

Most of the vaccines received by the respondents' children in this study were those given during infancy and were included since the EPI began. On the other hand, the least

received vaccines were the HPV vaccine and the controversial dengue vaccine. The reception of these vaccines could be attributed to the foregoing issues against their use. The low number of HPV vaccination can be attributed to the fact that it was only included in the DOH immunization program in 2013. Furthermore, Maria Silva, DOH National Immunization Program Manager, also cited that the drastic drop in the HPV could be attributed to the Dengvaxia® issue, stating that 77% of the female students covered for its first dose which was given before the Dengvaxia® scare, only 8% availed of the second dose afterward.

Level of Parental Confidence on DOH-EPI

Table 3 presents the respondents' level of confidence in the government's EPI.

Rated highest is the statement “The Expanded Program on Immunization will ensure the health of my children” with a mean of 4.45 verbally interpreted as “Strongly Agree.” This indicates that the parent-respondents of this study had full trust that the EPI will do no harm to their child/children and that it will secure the health condition of the latter.

Table 3. Level of Confidence of Parents to EPI

Parameters	\bar{x}	Description
The Expanded Program for Immunization will ensure the health condition of my child/children.	4.45	SA
The DOH Expanded Program for Immunization is effective.	4.28	SA
I will submit my child/children to the DOH Expanded Program for Immunization.	4.28	SA
The DOH Expanded program for Immunization will help school children maintain their good health condition.	4.30	SA
The issue of Dengvaxia® has affected my view on the DOH Expanded Program for Immunization.	3.77	A
The DOH Expanded program for Immunization is beneficial to every child.	4.42	SA

Generally, the DOH Expanded program for Immunization ensures the lifetime immunity of children from diseases.	4.08	A
I will not allow my child/children to undergo DOH Expanded Program for Immunization.	3.23	MA
I believe that the Dengvaxia® incident will not be repeated.	4.19	A
I completely submit my child/children's health condition to the DOH Expanded Program for Immunization.	4.23	SA
Overall Mean	4.12	A

Legend:

- 1.00 – 1.80 Strongly Disagree (SD) – Not Strongly Confident
- 1.81 – 2.60 Disagree (D) – Not Confident
- 2.61 – 3.40 Moderately Agree (MA) - Neutral
- 3.41 – 4.20 Agree (A) - Confident
- 4.21 – 5.00 Strongly Agree (SA) – Strongly Confident

On the other hand, rated the lowest is the item, "I will not allow my child/children to undergo DOH Expanded Program for Immunization." with a mean rating of 3.23 verbally interpreted as "Moderately Agree."

The above results showed that parent-respondents are still confident with the Expanded Program on Immunization by the government. Despite the fear brought about by the Dengvaxia® issue, they are still open to allowing their child to be immunized through the government program.

Relationship of Socio-Demographic Profile, Types of Vaccines included in the EPI, and its Relationship to Parents’ Level of Confidence

Pearson r was used to determine if a significant relationship exists between the respondents' socio-demographic characteristics, types of vaccines in the EPI, and their level of confidence in the DOH-EPI. This is shown in Table 4.

No significant results were obtained between the parent’s level of confidence and their socio-demographic characteristics such as age, sex, civil status, monthly income, educational attainment, and occupation. It supports the findings of Migrino, Jr. et al,

2020, that no significant associations were noted between the respondents' demographics and child immunization.

Table 4. Relationship between the Socio-Demographic Profile of the Parent-Respondents, Type of Vaccine, and their Level of Confidence in the DOH-EPI

Parameters	Level of Confidence	
	R	p-value
Age	.10	.478
Sex	-.172	.217
Civil Status	.028	.841
Highest Educational Attainment	-.146	.293
Occupation	-.148	.291
Monthly Income	-.155	.267
Vaccines Received by their children		
BCG	.024	.865
Hepatitis B	.261	.059
DPT-HIB	.193	.166
OPV	-.050	.724
IPV	.081	.565
PCV	.243	.083
MMR	-.302*	.028
Dengue Vaccine	.091	.519
HPV	.091	.515

Conclusion

Given the foregoing findings, the following conclusions were derived:

1. Majority of the parent-respondents were high school graduates, meaning there is lesser opportunity to access higher-paying jobs in areas that usually require a bachelor's degree. Thus, they often engage in locally available jobs in which they qualify such as service-oriented jobs which in turn provide only a minimum or in extreme, below minimum salary wage.
2. The result of the current study showed that the parents are still confident with the EPI despite the scare brought by the Dengvaxia® issue; however, they are also in doubt and have reservations about newly-introduced vaccines.
3. The parent-respondents would still choose to have their children vaccinated regardless of their age, sex, civil status, education, occupation, and income.

4. The parent-respondents whose children were vaccinated with MMR have a higher level of confidence in the EPI.

5. The results obtained from the study can serve as a basis for the recommendation for the safety and efficacy of the EPI on the students and their parents specifically those vaccines which are newly introduced to the public.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the results of the study:

1. The Department of Health, together with its partner agencies such as the Department of Education and the local government units, should provide a promotional campaign with the use of social media that would provide further knowledge and information among the masses about the vaccines that are included in the EPI and the parents' confidence on those vaccines.
2. The Department of Health and the frontline healthcare workers should work on attainable programs that will provide information to parents specifically of lower-income and educational levels regarding the benefits of each vaccine to achieve a higher percentage coverage of immunization among infants as well as to boost adherence to the newly-introduced vaccines given to older children.
3. Despite the elicited confidence level of the parents on the EPI, health administrators should still also consider the existing fear among parents brought about by the dengue vaccine issue. This calls for a more intentional follow-up among parents to dissolve the remaining doubt and regain the parents and the public's full trust not just in immunization programs but in other health-related programs as well.
4. A more improved research design can be applied for tool validation that can be used for a proposed policy on strengthening the immunization program of the government with quantitative and qualitative methods at

the same time. Further, a wider sample can be obtained to get a broader result that will support the empirical findings of the study.

5. Future researchers with similar interests might include other demographics such as ethnicity, family type (nuclear type, single-parent type, or extended, among others), and the number of children to assess other underlying factors that the current study did not address.

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Self-esteem and Academic Performance of the Institute of Teacher Education Students of Manuel V. Gallego Foundation Colleges, Inc.

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Abstract

This study aimed to assess the level of self-esteem, socio-demographic characteristics, and academic performance of 39 Institute of Teacher Education students and to find out the relationship between these variables. To satisfy these objectives, the study used the descriptive correlational research design. The researcher used the self-esteem checklist adapted from Denis Lawrence (2006). The gathered data were treated using frequency counts, percentages, weighted mean, and Pearson r. It was found that self-esteem is average there is no significant relationship between levels of self-esteem and the socio-demographic profile and academic performance of students. However, it was found that the level of self-esteem of BEEd students was higher than BSEd students.

Keywords: self-esteem, academic performance, socio-demographic characteristics

Self-esteem is defined as a sense of worth or value that the child places on her or himself. Negative or positive can affect a child's efforts and productivity, interactions, collaborations, and decision-making. Self-esteem encompasses a person's strengths and weaknesses and dictates one's actions. Self-esteem is often used as a rationale for why we are the way we are (Patton, 1997).

Self-esteem refers to the degree to which a person values himself or herself, the summation based on conscious evaluative thoughts and feelings or global emotional placement of self. (Robin, et. al). It can be either positive (high self-esteem) which may lead to greater happiness or negative (low self-esteem), and self-doubt which potentially may lead to depression (Baumeister et al, 2003).

Self-esteem is valued, passed the verification, acceptance, and valuable feeling of people about themselves (Shamloo, 1993). When explained about self-worth, self-esteem or feelings of the individual members of the group is considered to be embodied. Feeling of inferiority is the most disturbing complex personality problem. Children, who feel incompetent and backward, have less effort leading to being less successful.

Healthy growth requires that persons not just recognize self, but rather work to understand their self. Valuable research about the relationship between self-knowledge in relation to healthy growth and personality adaptations was made and positive results were reported (Parsa, 1997, as cited in Doodman, P., et al., 2017, p.222).

One study has shown that a strong sense of self-esteem is related to higher achievement. Individuals with high self-esteem are more likely to tackle new and challenging tasks and stick with them, whereas individuals with lower self-esteem are more likely to neglect trying new things and new experiences. Hence, this study focuses on the relationship between self-esteem and academic performance.

One of the key ingredients of success is self-esteem. We know that those who are going well in life are marked out by their self-esteem, their motivation, and their ability to take responsibility for their learning. Some researchers pointed out that people who describe themselves as happy and successful have a feeling of being in control of the decisions that affect their lives. These people had also confidence in their ability to make decisions and feel good about themselves.

They have positive self-esteem and a sense of direction.

Self-esteem is one of the most important factors influencing success in school. Children with superior knowledge but low self-esteem can perform poorly in school, while children with high self-esteem and average intelligence can succeed (Pascarella, et.al., 1991).

Studies show that college students with low self-esteem tend to be unhappy, less sociable, more likely to use drugs and alcohol, and more vulnerable to depression, and were all correlated with lower academic achievement (Wiggins, 1994).

Past research has shown that self-esteem and academic achievement correlate directly to a moderate degree (Wiggins, 1994). Honor students tend to demonstrate higher academic self-esteem and competency. For them, this academic self-esteem seems to become a motivational factor (Moeller, 1994). For many college students, their self-esteem is based on or enforced by their academic success or achievements.

Objectives of the Study

The research aimed to assess the level of self-esteem of the students of the Institute of Teacher Education in MVGFCI and to know if there is a significant relationship between socio-demographic characteristics (age, gender, mother's and father's educational background and occupation, monthly family income and the number of children in the family) of the students to their self-esteem. Furthermore, it investigated if there is a significant relationship between the self-esteem of students and their academic performance.

Significance of the Study

The results of this study will bring a sense of awareness among students about their level of self-esteem.

School administrators will be guided in planning the curriculum. The effective

domain of learning would be improved and given more attention than it rightly deserves.

Teachers will get ideas on how to improve the teaching and learning process. They may integrate activities in the curriculum that will boost students' self-esteem. They may also have an intervention on how to know the weaknesses of their student in subject areas and plan how to gain confidence.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual paradigm presents the independent variable and dependent variable (see Figure 1). The independent variables (IV) are the participants' socio-demographic profile and their level of self-esteem. The dependent variable (DV) is academic performance which is measured through their Grade Point Average (GPA).

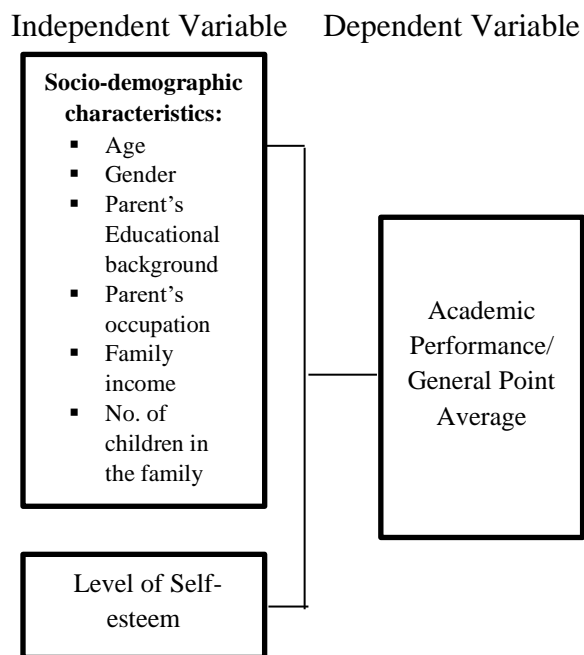


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

Methodology

Research Design

This quantitative study aims to determine the relationship among the socio-demographic characteristics, level of self-esteem, and academic performance of the students in the Institute of Teaching

Education. Hence, the researchers used the descriptive correlation research design.

Participants

The respondents of this study were the 39 students of Institute of Teacher Education students enrolled during the second semester, A.Y 2017 – 2018 who have their General Point Average in all subjects taken in the first semester of the school year 2017 – 2018.

Research Instrument

A two-part questionnaire was used for data gathering. The first part covered the respondent's socio-demographic characteristics such as age, gender, mother and father's educational background, occupation, monthly family income, number of siblings, and the high school graduated from.

The second part was the self-esteem checklist adapted from Denis Lawrence (2006). It consists of a negatively stated 48-item inventory divided into 10 sections with a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .97. The statistical range for the level of self-esteem based on their weighted means is interpreted as follows:

2.34 – 3.00	High - applies to some extent
1.67 – 2.33	Average - certainly applies
1.00 – 1.66	Low - strongly applies

Data Analysis

The data were gathered and encoded by the researchers. These were consolidated and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software, Version 20. Descriptive Statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used in describing socio-demographic characteristics and Pearson product-moment correlation was used in analyzing the relationship of the variables of the study.

Results and Discussion

Socio-demographic Profile of the Respondents

The socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents are in Table 1.

Course. As shown in Table 1, there were more BSED students sampled (56.4%) than BEED students which comprised 43.6%. The data seem to suggest that enrolment in the BSED program is higher than the BEED.

Sex. The teacher education course is female-dominated since there were 33 (84.6%) females and only 6 (15.4%) males.

Age. In terms of age, the majority of the students (74.4%) belong to the 18 – 20 age group, comprised of the rest who were older. The 21 – 23 age group (15.4%) is the regular age of college students. This data suggests that some older students must have stopped and resumed schooling later.

Year Level

Most of the respondents came from fourth-year students (41%), followed by third-year (28.2%), second-year (23.1%), and first-year (7.7%). This data shows that the first-year student enrollees were the least suggesting a declining enrolment in the program.

Parents Educational Background

With regards to mothers' highest educational attainment, high school education comprised the biggest group (46.2%) followed by college education (35.9%) and elementary level of education (17.9%) is the lowest. On the other hand, it could be observed that for respondents' father's educational background, college education comprised the biggest group (41%) followed by high school (38.5%) and elementary education (20.5%) the least.

Parents Occupation

In terms of the parent's occupation, majority of the mothers were unemployed (64.2%) while majority of the fathers were engaged in white-collar occupations.

Family's Monthly Income

With regards to the monthly family income of the family, the biggest percentage (30.8%) falls on the 10000 – 14999 brackets, followed by (28.2%) 15000 – 19999.

Number of Siblings in the Family

More than half of the respondents (58.9%) have 0 – 3 siblings followed by 4 -7

(35.9%). Only a few have 8 and above. This suggests that family sizes now have gone smaller.

In terms of the type of school attended, 82% of the respondents came from public schools and only 17.9% came from private schools.

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of the Respondents

Socio-Demographic Characteristic	TOTAL	
	Freq	%
Course		
BEED	17	43.6
BSED	22	56.4
Gender		
Male	6	15.4
Female	33	84.6
Age		
18 – 20	29	74.4
21 – 23	6	15.4
24 – 27	2	5.1
28 – 31	1	2.6
32 & above	1	2.6
Curriculum Year		
First Year	3	7.7
Second Year	9	23.1
Third Year	11	28.2
Fourth Year	16	41
Mother's Education		
Elementary	7	17.9
High School	18	46.2
Collegiate	14	35.9
Father's Education		
Elementary	8	20.5
High School	15	38.5
Collegiate	16	41
Mother's Occupation		
Blue collar	7	17.9
White collar	7	17.9
None	25	64.2
Father's Occupation		
Blue collar	4	10.3
White collar	21	53.8
None	14	35.9
Family Income		
1000 – 4999	2	5.1
2000 – 9999	3	7.7

10000 – 14999	12	30.8
15000 – 19999	11	28.2
20000 – 24999	3	7.7
25000 – 29999	1	2.6
30000 – 34999	5	12.8
35000 – 39999	1	2.6
50000 – above	1	2.6
Number of Siblings		
0 – 3	23	58.9
4 – 7	14	35.9
8 – 11	1	2.6
12 – above	1	2.6
School Attended		
Public	32	82.1
Private	7	17.9
Total	39	100

Self-esteem of ITE Students

The subscales with the highest mean might be directly related to the way how they comfort themselves. For example, in the subscale "Eating patterns disturbed", the highest-rated item is "I use food for comfort" ($\bar{x}=2.05$). The students feel relaxed if they eat their comfort food.

The students' responses in the subscale "Does not cope with failure" is also very interesting. Rated highest are the items "I get upset if I lose" ($\bar{x}=1.95$) and "It takes a long time for me to get over a mistake that I've done" ($\bar{x}=1.95$), followed by "I often say I don't know or I can't remember rather than make an error" ($\bar{x}=1.92$) and "I attribute success to good luck" which got the 1.90. Students feel that this applies to them and they often experience them through their studies.

Responses to these items that were rated highest in the inventory have to be addressed such as "I do not expect to be liked" which has a mean of 2.00. Students must be taught how to have an optimistic perception within them and build up a foundation in which it will develop their self-esteem. They must be taught how to cope with failures and get over with mistakes they have done; and how to deal with criticisms they received. Rated high is the "I got upset if I lose" with a mean of 1.95 as well as "It

takes a long time for me to get over a mistake I've done" which has a mean of 1.95.

Table 2. Self-esteem of Institute of Teacher Education Students of MVGFCI

Items	Mean	Verbal Description
Unrealistic perception of self		
I often say negative things about myself	1.87	A
I sometimes exaggerate or fabricate stories to inflate my image	1.72	A
I do not expect to be liked	2.00	A
I do not expect to succeed	1.68	A
I feel inferior to most of the people I know	1.87	A
Average	1.83	A
Weak foundation for positive self-esteem		
I have learning difficulties	1.77	A
I have social difficulties	1.79	A
I am clumsy and poor at physical skills	1.77	A
I come from a family with low-esteem	1.79	A
I think I am a worthless individual	1.77	A
Average	1.78	A
Not confident about schoolwork		
I am unwilling to try new things unless sure of success	1.72	A
I do not initiate my learning	1.64	L
I seldom take on extra or more challenging tasks	1.74	A
I do not volunteer to answer in class	1.85	A
I have less scholastic ability than my classmates	1.87	A
Average	1.76	A
Does not cope well with failure		
I often say I don't know or I can't remember rather than make an error	1.92	A
I get upset if I lose	1.95	A
I minimize successes when they do occur	1.82	A
I attribute success to good luck	1.90	A
It takes a long time for me to get over a mistake that I've done	1.95	A
Average	1.91	A
Finds it hard to accept responsibility for their actions		

I deny wrongdoing when clearly at fault	1.64	L
I am unwilling to make decisions for myself or herself	1.64	L
I give credit to others when things go well	1.97	A
I find it difficult to apologize	1.82	A
I rely on others to make decisions	1.92	A
Average	1.80	A
Negative perception from others		
I am frequently put down by my siblings	1.77	A
I am frequently put down by my peers	1.72	A
I am often put down by adults in the family	1.82	A
I am often put down by adults at school	1.67	A
I am often a victim of teasing or bullying	1.72	A
Average	1.74	A
Easily led		
I am anxious to follow peer group fads and fashions	1.74	A
I am easily led by others	1.74	A
I don't initiate activities	1.79	A
I don't voice my own opinion	1.77	A
I feel guilty about doing or saying what I want	1.74	A
Average	1.76	A
Image is very important		
I try to look tough	1.97	A
I try to maintain a cool image	1.92	A
I try to impress my peers by acting clownish in school	1.79	A
I act tough even though I am unsure of myself	1.87	A
I rely on possession to gain prestige	1.72	A
Average	1.86	A
Does not have a positive friendship		
I tend to bully younger or weaker peers	1.64	L
I associate with peers who are unpopular with others	1.97	A
I often try to buy friendships	1.64	L
I find making friends difficult	1.67	A
People consider me aloof and distant	1.77	A
Average	1.74	A
Eating patterns disturbed		

I try to improve my image by extreme dieting	1.74	A
I use food for comfort	2.05	A
I lose appetite whenever I am criticized	1.97	A
Average	1.92	A
Overall Mean	1.81	A

Legend:

2.34 – 3.00	High - applies to some extent
1.67 – 2.33	Average - certainly applies
1.00 – 1.66	Low - strongly applies

Looking at the result, the overall mean of the respondents for the whole instrument is 1.81 which is equivalent to a medium or average self-esteem level. This is true for all 10 subscales of the self-esteem checklist. The respondents' scores fall on the medium or average level, suggesting that the items certainly apply to them.

The highest mean on the subscale is “Eating patterns disturbed” (X=1.92) followed by “Does not cope with failure” (X=1.91), “Image is important” (X=1.86), and “Unrealistic perception about self” (x=1.83)

Level of Self-esteem by Course

Based on the gathered data, it is interesting to note that the level of self-esteem of BEED students is higher than BSED students as shown in Table 4 BEED has an overall mean of 1.96 which is equivalent to 'average' while BSED obtained an over mean of 1.64, which is verbally interpreted as low self-esteem.

Table 3. Level of Self- esteem by Course

Course	Self-esteem	Verbal Description
BEED	1.96	Medium self-esteem
BSED	1.64	Low self-esteem

When subjected to t-test for independent sample, the difference is statistically significant (t= 2.14, p= .039). The BEED students have a significantly higher level of self-esteem than the BSED students. Furthermore, respondents' socio-

demographic profile and general point average (GPA) were analyzed using Pearson r and this is shown in Table 4. It was found that there is no significant relationship between the socio-demographic profile of the respondents and their overall self-esteem since the p-value of every variable was greater than 0.05 level of significance. Also, there was no significant relationship between family income and overall self-esteem. This is contrary to the findings of the study of Krug et.al (2016), who reported that the higher the family income, the higher the level of self-esteem.

Table 4. Correlation of Socio-demographic Characteristics, GPA and Overall Self-esteem

Sociodemographic Profile	Level of self-esteem	
	r	p-value
Age	-.146	.375
Curriculum Year	-.061	.713
Mother's Occupation	-.135	.411
Father's Occupation	-.050	.763
Family Income	-.156	.343
Number of Siblings	-.160	.332
GPA	-.007	.967

Furthermore, in terms of the association of overall self-esteem and academic performance of the respondents, as shown in table 6, there is no relationship between GPA and level of self-esteem. It contradicts the study of Aryana, et al. (2009) that there was only a modest correlation discovered between self-esteem and academic performance. The limited sample size may also have contributed to the lack of significant results obtained in the present study.

Conclusion

1. All teacher education students of MVGFCI are dominated by females, which the majority belonging to the 18 – 20 age

group, with parents who have high school and collegiate educational backgrounds. Most fathers hold white-collar jobs while mothers were unemployed. Also, ITE Students were mostly from families with low to average income.

2. The level of self-esteem of students is average according to the results of the study. It suggested that the self-esteem of the students can still be improved. This can be done particularly in terms of teaching them how to cope with failures, accepting criticism, and motivating them.

3. The socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents are not significantly associated with the level of self-esteem.

4. The academic performance of MVGFCI Education students is not significantly associated with overall self-esteem. Neither does family income affect their level of self-esteem. Having no correlation between the variables may have been affected by the small sample size of the respondents.

5. What is interesting in the finding is that the level of self-esteem of BEED students is significantly higher than that of BSED students.

Recommendations

1. Since the level of self-esteem of the student is average, seminars should be conducted so that the students can develop their self-esteem to the fullest.

2. Researchers must conduct this study with a sufficient number of respondents to ensure the reliability of the findings.

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CORE VALUES

- ✓ INTEGRITY
- ✓ QUALITY OF WORK
- ✓ INITIATIVE
- ✓ CUSTOMER ORIENTATION AND TEAMWORK
- ✓ SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY AND MALASAKIT

VISION

MVGFC is the only professional institution in the Region committed to uphold the vision of its founder to achieve a better life by providing full opportunities where every graduate and member of the MVGFC community is transformed into competent and morally upright professionals dedicated towards the development of better society.

MISSION

In pursuit of its vision, MVGFC shall provide full opportunities and support to ensure and sustain quality instruction, research, community, extension, student affairs, and support services.

VISION, MISSION, AND GOAL OF THE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT UNIT

VISION

MVGFC shall have a dynamic research culture that permeates all academic disciplines, student services, administrative units, and extension programs.

MISSION

To achieve the vision, MVGFC shall develop and nurture an institutional research environment conducive to producing scholarly outputs geared towards improvements of curriculum and instruction, student services, administrative units, and extension programs of the College.

GOAL

To produce quality research outputs to be used in improving the curriculum, instruction, student services, administrative units, and extension program and one with practical value and benefits to the community the school serves.

PROGRAMS

HIGH SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

Junior High School
Senior High School

(ABM, HUMMS, STEM, GAS)

COLLEGE

Bachelor of Science in Nursing
Bachelor of Elementary Education
Bachelor of Secondary Education

Major in: English, Filipino, Mathematics
and General Science

Bachelor of Science in Criminology
Bachelor of Science in Information Systems
Bachelor of Science in Business Administration

Major in: Marketing Management,
Financial Management
Human Resource Management

CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

Caregiving NCII
Certificate Program for Teacher Education

GRADUATE PROGRAMS

Master of Arts in Nursing
Master of Arts in Education

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Chancellor Julio Cesar Gallego

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President Joseph L. Gallego

50% Tuition Fee Discount

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P2,000 Tuition Fee Subsidy

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Supreme Student Council President

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Reserve Officer Core Commander

50% Tuition Fee Discount

Student Publication Editor-in-Chief

50% Tuition Fee Discount

Cultural and Varsity Members

50% Tuition Fee Discount

GRANTS

Student Assistantship

100% Tuition Fee Discount

Grace L. Gallego Grant

75% Tuition Fee Discount

Children of Uniformed Personnel

PNP - 50% Tuition Fee Discount

BJMP/BFP/AFP - 30% Tuition Fee Discount

Solo Parent/Children of PWD

15% Tuition Fee Discount

DISCOUNTS

Children of Employees

20% - 100% Tuition Fee Discount

Siblings' Discount

10% - 20% Tuition Fee Discount

**Children of Alumni or Alumni in High School
or College**

25% Tuition Fee Discount

Straight Cash Incentive

10% Tuition Fee Discount