



AN IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF GRADUATES WHO FAILED THE PHILIPPINE NURSES LICENSURE EXAM (PNLE): A BASIS FOR A PROPOSED MENTORING PROGRAM

Arlene L. Galon¹, Dr. Marcelo T. Lopez², Dr. Carmen P. Villarante³, Marc Patrich R. Sanchez⁴

1. College of Nursing, University of Cebu Lapulapu and Mandaue, Philippines

2. College of Nursing, University of Cebu Lapulapu and Mandaue, Philippines

3. College of Nursing, University of Cebu Lapulapu and Mandaue, Philippines

4. College of Nursing, University of Cebu Lapulapu and Mandaue, Philippines

ABSTRACT

After graduation, prospective nurses must take the board exam to practice nursing in the Philippines. They must successfully pass the so-called Philippine Nurses Licensure Examination (PNLE). Every graduate understands that passing the PNLE is a requirement to practice, and therefore, they strongly aspire to pass it. The graduates' success rate in the Nurse Licensure Examination (NLE) is on the creation of success not only for the student but also for the nursing program. Unfortunately, some new graduates have not been able to meet the standards set by the Board of Nursing (BON) and Professional Regulations Commission (PRC), as demonstrated by failure to pass the PNLE. The main purpose of this study is to provide an in-depth analysis academic grades and board exam performance of the graduates and investigate the consequences, actions, changes, and supportive factors assisting them. It is expected that the results of this study will enhance the ability of nursing graduates through a mentoring program.

The research utilized the descriptive-correlational method with an in-depth subject analysis of the students who failed the licensure examination on different dates. Data were analyzed using statistical methods like weighted mean, standard deviation, inferential statistics (Pearson R), and multiple linear regression. The sample size came from the secondary data consisting of 7 graduates/alumni who failed the board exam in a span of 4 years. Their academic grades were taken to compare with their board exam results. As seen in the secondary data, the study discovered that there are times when academic performance will have a high influence on the success of the graduates/alumni in licensure examinations. It must be noted that the student factor, school factor, review center factor, and student factor may be worth looking into to have a thorough assessment of the graduates/alumni. Through the coaching/mentoring program, certain deficiencies, concerns, and

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:	RESEARCH ARTICLE
<p>Marc Patrich R. Sanchez College of Nursing, University of Cebu Lapulapu and Mandaue, Philippines Email: marcpatrich02@yahoo.com</p>	

problems could be detected early by the mentor or coach and initiate early intervention to help increase the chances of passing. Noting these factors, UCLM-CN and UC administration should use the findings of this study to serve as a blueprint to help the students who failed the board exam have a better chance of passing in subsequent retakes.

KEYWORDS: *PNLE; mentoring/coaching program; academic performance; nursing*

INTRODUCTION

After graduation, prospective nurses must take the board exam to practice nursing in the Philippines. They must successfully pass the so-called Philippine Nurses Licensure Examination (PNLE). Every graduate understands that passing the PNLE is a requirement to practice, and therefore, they strongly aspire to pass it. In the Philippines, the PRC Modernization Act of 2000, grants to the Professional Regulatory Board the power to prepare, adopt and issue the syllabi, and tables of specifications of the subjects for examinations, in consultation with the academe; determine and prepare the questions for the licensure examinations which shall be strictly within the scope of the syllabus or tables of specifications of the subjects for examination. Moreover, Section 9 of RA No. 9173, also known as the Philippine Nursing Act of 2002, grants to the Professional Regulatory Board of Nursing the power to conduct the licensure examination for nurses; and to prescribe, adopt, issue, and promulgate guidelines, regulations, measures, and decisions as may be necessary for the improvement of the nursing practice (Professional Regulation Commission, 2017). The current classifications of the subjects or the PNLE are as follows: (A) Nursing Practice I- Community Health Nursing- 100 items with 20% weight; (B) Nursing Practice II- Care of Healthy/At-Risk Mothers and Child - 100 items with 20% weight; (C) Nursing Practice III- Care of Clients with Physiologic and Psychosocial Alterations (Part A) - 100 items with 20% weight; (D) Nursing Practice IV- Care of Clients with Physiologic and Psychosocial Alterations (Part B)- 100 items with 20% weight; (D) Nursing Practice V- Care of Clients with Physiologic and Psychosocial Alterations (Part C)- 100 items with 20% weight (Board of Nursing, 2018; Professional Regulation Commission, 2017).

The graduates' success rate in the Nurse Licensure Examination (NLE) is on the creation of success not only for the student but also for the nursing program. Unfortunately, some new graduates have not been able to meet the standards set by the Board of Nursing (BON) and Professional Regulations Commission (PRC), as demonstrated by failure to pass the PNLE. PRC has documented significant failures nationwide among students, despite their having completed nursing programs (Professional Regulation Commission, 2017). The nursing programs that graduate students who fail may experience a loss of reputation, decreased numbers of potential applicants, and ultimately, board of nursing sanctions (Bussen, 2018).

The factors and challenges influencing licensure performance as presented by several studies include family factors, student factors, school factors, review center factors, and personal factors (Balasabas et al., 2021; Bussen, 2018). For the interest of this study, the researcher extracted the data of the University of Cebu Lapulapu and Mandaue College of Nursing (UCLM-CN) coming from PRC (Table 1):

Table 1. List of UCLM-CN board exam performance

Board Exam Date		# of Passed	# of Failed	Total	Passing %	National Passing %	Topnotcher
Jul-21	1st timers	33	1	34	97.06%	64.56%	#10
	Repeaters	2	1	3	66.67%		
	Overall	35	2	37	94.56%		
Jun-19	1st timers	15	0	15	100%	52.50%	
	Repeaters	4	1	5	80%		
	Overall	19	1	20	95		
Nov-19	1st timers	0	0	0	0	55.20%	
	Repeaters	2	1	3	66.67%		
	Overall	2	1	3	66.67%		
Jun-18	1st timers	19	0	19	100%	43.82%	
	Repeaters	2	0	2	100%		
	Overall	21	0	21	100%		
Nov-18	1st timers	1	0	1	100%	39.99%	
	Repeaters	2	3	5	40%		
	Overall	3	3	6	50%		

Generally, UCLM-CN has been consistent in their board exam performance and that is way beyond the national passing percentage. It has been one of the top-performing schools since its establishment in 2004. However, one important aspect that is often overlooked is those students who failed the board examination. As seen in table 2 students failed the July 2021 exams, 1 from June 2019, 1 from November 2019, and 3 from November 2018 with a total of 7 students. Research has pointed out the factors that contribute to the success of nursing education programs like academic performance, entrance exam scores, high school grades, etc. (Atemafac, 2014). However, there is no information available regarding the actions, changes, and supportive factors assisting these graduates who failed the PNLE to help them be successful in subsequent attempts. The main purpose of this study is to provide an in-depth analysis academic grades and board exam performance of the graduates and investigate the consequences, actions, changes, and supportive factors assisting them. It is expected that the results of this study will enhance the ability of nursing graduates through a mentoring program. The academic administrators of the nursing program can use the results of this study to better advise students, modify the curriculum, strengthen the review program, and develop new strategies to ensure a higher success rate on the PNLE.

The present study adapted a modified version of the framework of Rosales et al., (2014) on the determinants of performance in the NLE. The following research questions guided this study:

1. What is the Academic Performance in Professional Subjects and the PNLE performance of the Graduates/Alumni who failed?
2. Is there a significant relationship between PNLE performance and Academic Performance in Professional Subjects?

Hypothesis:

Ho: There is no significant relationship between Academic Performance in Professional Subjects and PNLE performance

H1: There is a significant relationship between Academic Performance in Professional Subjects and PNLE performance

METHODOLOGY

The research utilized the descriptive-correlational method with an in-depth subject analysis of the students who failed the licensure examination on the different dates presented in Table 1. Data were analyzed using statistical methods like weighted mean, standard deviation, inferential statistics (Pearson R), and multiple linear regression. The relationship between the academic performance of graduates of UCLM and their licensure examination results was established. The degree of relationship was measured by determining the coefficient of correlation between the given variables. Based on several guidelines (Bosco et al., 2015; Cohen, 1988; Gilchrist et al., 2022; Mathur & VanderWeele, 2018), the strength of association was interpreted as (A) 0.1-0.29=small/weak; (B)0.3-0.49=Medium/Moderate; and (C) 0.50-1.0=Large/Strong.

The sample size came from the secondary data consisting of 7 graduates/alumni who failed the board exam in a span of 4 years. Their academic grades were taken to compare with their board exam results. The distribution is as follows: 2 students- July 2021, 1- June 2019, 1-November 2019, and 3 -November 2018 total of 7 students (n=7). For the conduct of the study, permission was obtained from the Dean of the College of Nursing for the conduct of the study, then the University Research Office (URO) Head, and continuing to the Campus Academic Director. The list of graduates/takers is taken through the Records section with prior approval. The licensure examination ratings furnished by the PRC and given to UCLM-CN were obtained as well with approval from the dean of nursing. To better quantify the academic grades and the board exam results, a table is created to have a verbal interpretation and ease of description to whichever category their grades belong to Table 2.

Table 2. Academic grades and PNLE rating classification

Academic grades	Description	PNLE Rating	Description
90% and above	Excellent	85% and above	High
85%-89%	Very Satisfactory	80-84.9%	Average
80%-84%	Satisfactory	79.9%-75	Low
75%-79%	Fair	74.9% and below	Failed
74% and below	Poor		

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 3 presents the mean scores and standard deviation of both the academic performance and board exam scores of the graduates/alumni (n=7). It is expected that when the scores in the board exam fall under 75%, they automatically failed. In general, these students who failed have fair grades during college. Except for one student who has a mean grade of 81 (SD=2.94) which falls under satisfactory.

Table 3. Mean and standard deviation of academic performance and board exam results.

Student #	Board Exam Scores			Academic Performance		
	Mean	SD	Interpretation	Mean	SD	Interpretation
S1	74.4	10.5	Failed	77.6	1.67	Fair
S2	69.2	7.8	Failed	81	2.94	Satisfactory
S3	67.8	12.5	Failed	78.5	1.29	Fair
S4	70.4	9.3	Failed	78.2	2.22	Fair
S5	68.2	8.3	Failed	78	1.7	Fair
S6	67.2	5.9	Failed	79.2	1.3	Fair
S7	55.2	4.55	Failed	78.2	1.1	Fair

As elaborated above the r-value are interpreted based on established guidelines and described as follows: (A) 0.1-0.29=small/weak; (B)0.3-0.49=Medium/Moderate; and (C) 0.50-1.0=Large/Strong. The p-value is interpreted based on a 0.05 level of significance. Table 4 presents the correlation analysis between the academic performance of the graduates in major subjects vis-à-vis licensure examination performance. Generally, the p-value reflects that at a 0.05 level of significance the null Hypothesis is accepted since the value of the variables are much lower than the alpha level. This would mean that academic performance is not an indicator of board exam success. As seen in Table, although their grades fall under Fair and Satisfactory, these grades are not relatively in the low category. The findings of this study are in contrast to the study of Alipio, (2020); Bongalosa & Formanes, (2020), where it was stated in their study that the better the academic performance, the greater the possibility of passing the board exam. According to Binayao & Dales (2020) on the perceptions of the non-passers of licensure exams, other factors should be explored self-directed undertakings, institutional commitment, and kin-based social support.

Table 4. Correlation between the academic performances of the graduates in major subjects vis-à-vis licensure examination performance.

Major Subject	PNLE Performance	r-value	p-value	Interpretation		Decision
				r-value	p-value	
CHN	NP1	0.018	0.97	<0.1	not significant	Accept Ho
NCM 101 and 102	NP2	0.65	0.111	strong	not significant	Accept Ho
NCM 103	NP3	0.0095	0.98	<0.1	not significant	Accept Ho
NCM 104	NP4	0.503	0.249	strong	not significant	Accept Ho
NCM 105	NP5	0.06	0.9	<0.1	not significant	Accept Ho

Proposed mentoring/coaching program

As previously stated by the researchers’ study, academic performance in baccalaureate programs is one of the predictors of success in licensure examination performance. Some research also agrees with these findings that the higher the academic grade, the better chance of passing the board exam (Amanonce & Maramag, 2020; Fiscal & Roman, 2022; Oducado et al., 2019; Ong et al., 2012). However, the findings of the current research established that there is no significant relationship between the variables. Several articles and research were sought to come up with suitable strategies for helping these students to pass the PNLE. A study by Webster (2020)

An in-depth analysis of graduates who failed the Philippine nurses ...

suggested that a mentoring program is advantageous to graduates and helps them utilize additional resources that are available to them, design a meaningful timeline, and deal with stress before taking any professional exam. It has been emphasized that early remediation and appropriate intervention will ensure a higher passing rate (Balasabas et al., 2021). Evidence suggests that a tutoring/mentoring program improves the passing rate by 97% (Atemafac, 2014). A positive social change must be done that focuses on instructional strategies for effective licensure preparation and higher exam pass rates. The key concepts that must be improved are problem-solving skills and the application of critical thinking strategies to positively impact the learning of the graduates (Johnson, 2015).

As emphasized by Pregoner (2020), educators have a responsibility to identify, inform, and intervene with students who are at high risk of failing the licensure exam, and this responsibility could be executed capably. This role should be extended beyond graduation. The responsibility to help graduates transition from failure to licensure is the final step of successful undergraduate nurse education. Focused support and guidance by faculty members could help these failed students have a higher probability of passing standardized exams (Tsunekawa et al., 2020). A study by Kasprovich, (2016) on the experiences of registered nurses who were not initially successful in nursing exams and then subsequently passed found that help and support of nursing instructors and managers could change the approach and mentality of the graduates/alumni to help them pass the nursing exam. Thus a student mentoring/coaching program is suggested by this study.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

As seen in the secondary data, the study discovered that there are times when academic performance will have a high influence on the success of the graduates/alumni in licensure examinations. It must be noted that the student factor, school factor, review center factor, and student factor may be worth looking into to have a thorough assessment of the graduates/alumni. Through the coaching/mentoring program, certain deficiencies, concerns, and problems could be detected early by the mentor or coach and initiate early intervention to help increase the chances of passing. Noting these factors, UCLM-CN and UC administration should use the findings of this study to serve as a blueprint to help the students who failed the board exam have a better chance of passing in subsequent retakes.

REFERENCES

1. Alipio. (2020). National Radiologic Technology Licensure Examination Performance: Predicting Success using Discriminant Analysis. *EdArXiv, March*.
https://scholar.googleusercontent.com/scholar?q=cache:tjLLBsB0j1wJ:scholar.google.com/+National+Radiologic+Technology+Licensure+Examination+Performance:+Predicting+Success+using+Discriminant+Analysis.+&hl=en&as_sdt=0,5
2. Amanonce, J. C. T., & Maramag, A. M. (2020). Licensure examination performance and academic achievement of teacher education graduates. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*, 9(3), 510–516. <https://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v9i3.20614>

3. Atemafac, J. (2014). Consequences for Nursing Graduates of Failing the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX). *Consequences for Nursing Graduates of Failing the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX)*, 176 p-176 p.
<http://myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=cin20&AN=109786678&site=ehost-live>
4. Balasabas, J. Y., Laquinon, B. J. I., & Caballero, L. J. (2021). *Examination Performance through the Non- passers ' Lens*. 11(1), 365–380.
5. Binayao, B., & Dales, Z. (2020). A Phenomenological Study of the Passers and NonPassers in the Licensure Examination for Teachers. *International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology*, 5(8), 1704–1721. <https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt20aug828>
6. Board of Nursing. (2018). *Board of Nursing Foundations of Nursing Practice Including Professional Adjustment*.
7. Bongalosa, C. G., & Formanes, M. F. (2020). ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AS A DETERMINANT IN PASSING THE LICENSURE EXAMINATION FOR TEACHERS (LET). *EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR)-Peer Reviewed Journal*, 2, 198–210. <https://doi.org/10.36713/epra2013>
8. Bosco, F. A., Aguinis, H., Singh, K., Field, J. G., & Pierce, C. A. (2015). Correlational effect size benchmarks. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 100(2), 431–449.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0038047>
9. Bussen, J. A. (2018). Nursing students' nonacademic barriers to success on high stakes exams. *Nursing Students' Nonacademic Barriers to Success on High Stakes Exams*, December, 1.
<https://ucc.idm.oclc.org/login?URL=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rzh&AN=124649794&site=ehost-live%0Ahttps://ucc.idm.oclc.org/login?URL=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=psyh&AN=2017-23162-192&site=ehost-live>
10. Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical Power Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences*.
11. Fiscal, R. R., & Roman, A. G. (2022). Pre-licensure examination as a predictor of licensure examination for teachers result. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*, 11(1), 136–142. <https://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v11i1.22133>
12. Gilchrist, M., Samuels Reviewer, P., & Marshall wwwstatstutoracuk, E. (2022). *Pearson Correlation*. www.statstutor.ac.uk
13. Johnson, L. J. (2015). Student Perceptions of Effective Learning Strategies for National Council Licensure Examination Preparation. *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses*, 181.
https://search.proquest.com/docview/1680289377?accountid=12459%5Cnhttp://sfx.unimi.it:9003/unimi?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&rft_val_fmt=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:dissertation&genre=dissertations+%26+theses&sid=ProQuest+Dissertations+%26+Theses+Global%3A+The+Huma
14. Kasprovich, T. (2016). Experiences of registered nurses who were not initially successful on the NCLEX-RN then subsequently passed. *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses*, 193.
<https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/experiences-registered-nurses-who-were->

not/docview/1790791644/se-

2%0Ahttps://media.proquest.com/media/hms/ORIG/2/DyukH?_a=ChgyMDIyMDkyNDA3MjMyNjk5ODo2NDIwMTASBTK3ODM1GgpPTkVfU0VBukNIIgwxMTQuMTAuMTguMTYqBTE4NzU

15. Mathur, M. B., & VanderWeele, T. J. (2018). A Simple, Interpretable Conversion from Pearson's Correlation to. *Physiology & Behavior*, 176(1), 139–148. <https://doi.org/10.1097/EDE.0000000000001105.A>
16. Oducado, R. M. F., Cendana, D. P., & Belo-Delariarte, R. G. (2019). Institutional competency assessment and other factors influencing the nurse licensure examination. *International Journal of Scientific and Technology Research*, 8(12), 268–270.
17. Ong, M. B., Palompon, D. R., & Bañico, L. (2012). Predictors of Nurses' Licensure Examination Performance of Graduates in Cebu Normal University, Philippines. *Asian Journal of Health*, 2(1), 130–141. <https://doi.org/10.7828/ajoh.v2i1.122>
18. Pregoner, J. D. M. (2020). *The Truth Behind the Fallen Leaves : Untold Stories of Unsuccessful LET Examinees*. April. <https://doi.org/10.20944/preprints202004.0506.v1>
19. Professional Regulation Commission. (2017). *Professional regulatory board of nursing resolution no. 11 series of 2017*. https://www.prc.gov.ph/uploaded/documents/PRB_BON_Reso2017-11.pdf
20. Rosales, A., Arugay, Y., Divinagracia, C., & Castro-Palaganas, E. (2014). Analytical study of the nurses' licensure examination performance of graduates of Philippine Colleges of Nursing. *Philippine Journal of Nursing*, 84(1), 4–23.
21. Tsunekawa, K., Suzuki, Y., & Shioiri, T. (2020). Identifying and supporting students at risk of failing the National Medical Licensure Examination in Japan using a predictive pass rate. *BMC Medical Education*, 20(1), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-020-02350-8>
22. Webster, K. (2020). Student Perceptions of Barriers to Professional Exam Success. *Internet Journal of Allied Health Sciences and Practice*, 18(1). <https://doi.org/10.46743/1540-580x/2020.1853>

