FACTORS AFFECTING THE PERFORMANCE OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION PROFESSIONALS IN THE LIBRARIANS' LICENSURE EXAMINATION (LLE) 2006-2010, PART 1: AGE, GENDER, AND TYPE OF EXAMINEES

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Abstract

Presents factors such as age, gender and type of examinees, that affect the performance of the LLE takers for the years 2006-2010. These factors were then correlated with the passing percentage for the years 2005-2010. Found out that all these factors do not significantly affect performance in LLE.

Introduction

The Library and Information Science profession has evolved with rapid advances in information and communication technologies (ICT). As ICT becomes an integral tool of information organization and dissemination, changes and opportunities have posed perennial challenges to librarians. The original set of knowledge and skills that information handlers were expected to have before is now deemed short of meeting the needs of more sophisticated information seekers. Along with this trend is the increasing demand for library and information professionals as the number of those who pass the Librarians' Licensure Examination (LLE) is not enough to fill in vacant positions in the Philippines.

Since the passage of the Republic Act no. 6966, also known as the Philippine Librarianship Act of 1990, graduates of library and information science in the country have been required to pass the LLE before they could assume a Librarian position. Republic Act no. 9246, enacted on February 19, 2004 updates and refines the provisions of the original law. The repeal was a very timely move, as modern ICTs altered the way in which librarians practice their trade. However, statistics show that, compared with other professionals, librarians do not perform as well as expected in the professional licensure examinations. While some professions register 50 or more passing percentage, the librarians' passing rate is experiencing a downtrend (Nera, Peralejo, & Conti, 2009). Examples of professions with more than 50% passing rate in their respective 2012 licensure examinations are the Medical Technologists (82%), Physicians (79%), and Guidance Counselors (55%) (Professional Regulation Commission, 2012).

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The LLE covers six major subjects required by the Library and Information Science curricula for both the undergraduate (BLIS) and graduate degrees (MLIS). These are: Library Administration, Cataloging and Classification, Reference, Bibliography and Information Services, Collection Development involving Multimedia Resources, Indexing and Abstracting, and Information Technology. An examinee must have "a weighted general average of seventy-five percent (75%), with no grade lower than fifty percent (50%) in any subject" (Republic Act 9246, 2004).

Table 1 gives figures on the number of passers and passing percentage from 2004 up to 2010. The average passing percentage is only 30%.

Table 1. *Performance of Library and Information Professionals in the Librarian's Licensure Examination (LLE), 2004-2011*

Year	Number of Examinees	Number of Passers	Number of Non-Passers	Passing Percentage
2004	599	174	425	29.05
2005	762	240	522	31.50
2006	825	303	522	36.73
2007	868	278	590	32.03
2008	1,003	237	766	23.63
2009	947	284	663	30
2010	699	191	508	27.32
2011	764	211	553	28
Averages	**808**	**240**	**569**	**30**

In the light of this negative performance, it was deemed necessary to examine the reasons behind this unexpected trend. There is no previous research conducted on this topic yet. This study will look into statistics from the Professional Regulation Commission's (PRC)

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data bank and compare the effect of various variables that might have a bearing on passing the LLE so that improvements in the system may be effected. This research will shed light on the reasons behind sub-standard performance of takers.

Objectives and Scope

This study aims to determine the factors which might have a bearing on the dwindling performance of examinees in the LLE: age, gender, type of examinees (first-time takers or repeaters), graduate or undergraduate degrees, date of graduation, and universities attended. This paper will tackle the first three variables, namely age, gender, and types of examinees. The others will be the subject of part 2 of this paper. The length of work experience was intended to be included in this study but data for this factor are not available. An analysis of statistics pertaining to these factors will enable the Board for Librarians (BFL) to draw a clear profile of LLE takers. Correlating this profile with the passing rate of librarians in the LLE will help the Board in the formulation of future policies and to adopt possible courses of action for the improvement of the licensure system.

The study covers data over a five-year period, i.e. all examinees from 2006 to 2010 as data from 2006 are the earliest that are available in the PRC data bank.

Methodology

PRC's Educational Statistics Task Force (ESTF) is the office in charge of maintaining an electronic database of information pertaining to examinees for all professions. All data, as given in the examinees' application form, are encoded in this database. Computer-generated statistics pertaining to age, gender, and performance of repeaters and first-time takers, were supplied by the ESTF for use in this project. Figures were compared and correlated with passing percentages for the years under study. Comparative data for each of the factors were tabulated, followed by the computation of percentages, differences, and averages where needed.

Results and Discussion

Based on statistics provided, the impact of each of the three variables on LLE performance was closely studied. The following tables show how each factor rates in relation to passing percentage.

Age of Examinees

The general opinion is that the younger the person, the better the scholastic achievement. In the same way, it is assumed that the younger examinees would get higher passing percentages than their older counterparts. In the present study, the age differences among examinees were analyzed to see if they have a significant effect on passing the LLE.

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Table 2. *Age of Examinees and LLE Performance*

Age Group	2006 (825)		2007 (868)		2008 (1003)		2009 (947)		2010 (699)		2006-2010 (4342)	
	Passed	Failed	Passed	Failed	Passed	Failed	Passed	Failed	Passed	Failed	Passed	Failed
<20	1	0							2	1	3	1
20-30	228	330	209	351	171	439	225	360	165	290	**998**	**1770**
31-40	42	129	45	139	39	179	44	157	11	108	**181**	**712**
41-50	25	49	18	86	21	123	11	127	12	90	**87**	**475**
>50	7	10	5	13	6	24	4	18	1	19	**23**	**84**
Erroneous figures	0	4	1	1	0	1	0	1			**1**	**7**
Total	**303**	**522**	**278**	**590**	**237**	**766**	**284**	**663**	**191**	**508**	**1293**	**3049**

Table 2 shows five (5) age brackets of LLE takers from the youngest (<20) to the oldest (>50). A majority of LLE takers belong to the 20-30 age bracket (2768, shaded yellow in Table 2). This is expected as this comprise the ages when students normally finish their undergraduate degrees. This group also produced the highest number of passers (998) as well as non-passers (1,770) or 36% and 64%, respectively. The next highest bracket is the 31-40 age group with 181 passers and 712 non-passers or 20.27% and 79.73%, respectively. The 41-50 age bracket registered a 15.48 passing percentage or 87 out of 562 and 84.52 failing percentage or 475. There were only 4 takers in the below 20 age group, with 3 passers and 1 non-passer. The >50 age bracket shows the smallest difference between passers and non-passers, but this group represents the second lowest number of takers following the <20 group. The cells containing erroneous data represent unrealistic figures as encoded in the PRC database, e.g. those whose birthdates are too recent (below 18) to qualify them for the LLE. These are presumed to be encoding errors.

Table 3 gives the total number of LLE takers in the various age brackets from 2006 to 2010 and the numbers of passing and failing examinees plus percentages. The biggest difference between passers and non-passers is shown in the <50 age group, while the smallest difference is seen in the 41-50 age bracket.

Table 3. *Age of Examinees and Passing/Failing Percentages (2006-2010)*

Age group	Total Number of Takers	Passed	Failed	Percentage of Passers (%)	Percentage of Non-Passers(%)	Differences between Passing and Failing Percentages (%)
<20	4	3	1	75.00	25.00	50.00
20-30	2768	998	1770	36.00	74.00	38.00
31-40	893	181	712	20.27	79.73	48.46
41-50	562	87	475	36.00	64.00	28.00
>50	8	1	7	12.50	87.50	75.00

Although data show that librarians in the 20-30 age bracket performed better than those in the other age brackets, it cannot be safely deduced that age is significant in passing the LLE because of the higher number of non-passers in the same age group.

Gender of Examinees

Gender differences have been studied in many educational situations with varying results (Bolger & Kellaghan, 1990; Hyde & Mertz, 2009), and with the gap between the achievements of the two genders narrowing with time (Stumpf & Stanley, 1996). But none was found that deals with gender effects on licensure examinations such as the LLE. The 3,756 female examinees outnumber the 586 males in the 5-year period covered by this study. Table 4 summarizes how male and female examinees performed in the LLE. Figures enclosed in round brackets after each year represent the total number of examinees per year. Statistics pertaining to gender shows an average ratio of 6.46 females to 1 male.

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Table 4. *Gender and LLE Performance*

Gender	2006(825)		2007 (868)		2008 (1003)		2009 (947)		2010 (699)		2006-2010 (4342)			
	Passed	Failed	Passed	Failed	Passed	Failed	Passed	Failed	Passed	Failed	Passed	Failed	Total	%
Female	252	466	221	532	187	679	235	594	144	446	**1039**	**2717**	**3756**	**86.5**
Male	51	56	57	58	50	87	49	69	47	62	**254**	**332**	**586**	**13.5**
Total	**303**	**522**	**278**	**590**	**237**	**766**	**284**	**663**	**191**	**508**	**1293**	**3049**	**4342**	**100**

There is a notable increase in the number of male examinees from 2006 to 2008. However, the figures went down from 2009. A similar trend is seen in the data for female examiners. This may be attributed to the provision in Republic Act 9246 limiting the degree requirements for LLE takers to BLIS and MLIS degree holders only. RA 9246 was approved in 2004 so that starting with this year, LLE examinees should be holders of BLIS or MLIS degrees. In terms of performance, the male examinees, although lesser in number, show a lower mortality than their female counterparts with a ratio of one passer for every 1.3 non-passers. For females, the ratio is twice that for males, i.e. 1 passer for every 2.6 non-passers.

Type of Examinees: First Timers(FT) and Repeaters(RE)

The term "repeaters" refers to those who have taken the LLE before but failed to make it. An examinee who fails in the examination is required to retake the examination in all the six subjects covered by the LLE. There is no limit to the number of times a non-passer could retake the LLE.

Table 5. *Performance of First Timers and Repeaters, 2006-2010*

Type of examinees	2006(825)		2007 (868)		2008 (1003)		2009 (947)		2010 (699)		2006-2010 (4342)		Total	%
	Passed	Failed	Passed	Failed	Passed	Failed	Passed	Failed	Passed	Failed	Passed	Failed		
1st timers	202	260	218	264	200	394	174	129	147	120	**941**	**1167**	**2108**	**48.55**
Repeaters	101	262	60	326	37	372	110	534	44	388	**352**	**1882**	**2234**	**51.45**
Total	**303**	**522**	**278**	**590**	**237**	**766**	**284**	**663**	**191**	**508**	**1293**	**3049**	**4342**	**1**

For the 5-year period, repeaters (2234) outnumbered first time takers (2108). Up to 2008, there were more FTs than REs; but from 2009 onward, REs outnumbered the FTs. In 2009, there were 303 FTs as against 644 REs. The same trend is seen for 2010 data: 267 FTs and 432 REs..

Table 6. *Percentage of Passers and Non-Passers in the FT and RE Groups, 2006-2010*

Type of Examinees	Total Population	%	Passed	%	Failed	%
1st Timers	2108	48.55	941	21.67	1167	26.88
Repeaters	2234	51.45	352	8.11	1882	43.34
Total	**4342**	**100**	**1293**	**29.78**	**3049**	**70.22**

In comparing performance for the 5-year study period, the passing percentage for FTs is higher than REs as expected. There were 941 passers in the FT group as compared to 352 in the RE group or 21.67 % and 8.11%, respectively. In both types of examinees, the FTs performed better than the REs. However, in the FT group, those who failed outnumber the passers, so one cannot definitely conclude that taking the LLE for the first time is a major factor in passing the exam. The performance of REs is definitely inferior to those of FTs. This is one contributory factor to the decrease in passing percentage in the succeeding years. As the passing percentage decreases, the number of repeaters is constantly increasing each year. Perhaps, it would have been good to look into the years when the repeaters obtained their BLIS or MLIS degrees as well as the LIS curricula. These could probably explain why they failed in the LLE.

Conclusions

Age

The data for 2006-2009 show that persons in the 20-30 age bracket performed better than those of the other age brackets. However, it cannot be concluded that age is a major factor in passing the LLE, because this age group also produced the biggest number of non-passers. The latter outnumber the passers.

Gender

There were 3,756 female and 586 male examinees. Although male examinees are lesser in number, they showed a lower mortality rate as compared to their female counterparts. For males, the ratio is 1 passer for every 1.3 non-passer; for females, the ratio is 1 passer for every 2.6 non-passers. However, the difference is not so significant, considering the small number of

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males as compared with the females.

Type of Examinees

In the 5-year study period, the passing percentage for First time examinees (FTs) is higher than Repeaters (REs). There were 941 passers in the FT group as compared to 352 in the RE group or 21.67 % and 8.11%, respectively. In both types of examinees, the FTs performed better than the REs. However, those who failed outnumber the passers, so one cannot definitely conclude that taking the LLE for the first time is a major factor in passing the exam. The performance of REs is definitely inferior to those of FTs. The big number of REs pulls down the passing rate considerably.

The foregoing study shows that such factors as age, gender, and type of examinees do not directly influence the rate of passing in the LLE. The BFL has been tasked to work towards increasing the LLE passing percentage in order to solve the current shortage of licensed librarians in the country. This study is one way of addressing the urgency of increasing the number of LLE passers and eventually solve the current shortage of licensed librarians in the Philippines.

Recommendations

While the first two factors in this study cannot be controlled, there is something that can be done regarding repeaters. The possible courses of action are to:

- limit the number of times a repeater can take the LLE, which definitely would not be agreeable to a big number of repeaters;
- require repeaters to take up refresher courses in the subjects where they failed;
- make repeaters take the LLE only in subjects where they failed.

All of these recommendations require amendment of Republic Act 9246 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations. This is a long and tedious process. Before final amendments could be proposed, a general consultation meeting with various sectors would be undertaken by the Board for Librarians. In the meantime, a poll would be conducted online to feel the pulse of library and information science professionals regarding these recommendations.

Since the above three factors were found to have no direct bearing on LLE performance, it was deemed necessary to take into serious consideration other factors that may influence the passing percentage. More factors were analyzed and correlated with the number of successful examinees. Data on academic degrees, year of graduation, and academic institutions and their influence on the performance of Library and Information Science degree holders in the LLE will be presented in the Part 2 of this paper.

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