

**TEACHING QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING NEEDS OF KINDERGARTEN
TEACHERS IN THE DISTRICTS OF PALAUIG, IBA, AND BOTOLAN IN THE
SCHOOLS DIVISION OF ZAMBALES**

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ABSTRACT

In the Schools Division of Zambales, a big number of kindergarten teachers do not have background in pre-school education. It is in this premise that the researcher is interested to look and analyze the profile of the kindergarten teachers and assess their competencies based on the standards set by the Department of Education. Results of this study will also be used as bases for the Capability Enhancement Program for the kindergarten teachers of Zone 2. A descriptive research design was used to carry out this study. The respondents of the study were the eighty (80) Kindergarten Teachers from the Districts of Palauig, Iba and Botolan. The results of the study clearly reveal the need to enhance the skills and competencies of the kindergarten teachers in Zone 2 in terms of: 1) Coaching and Mentoring; 2) Use of ICT; 3) Providing accurate, timely and constructive feedbacks to learners; 4) Improving strategies for effective communication; 5) Administering teacher-made and standardized tests; 6) Learning environments which are responsive to community contexts; 7) Involvement of partners and networks; and 8) Regular review of codes, laws and regulations.

Key Words: Kindergarten Education, Teaching Qualifications, Training Needs, Quantitative Study.

1. INTRODUCTION

Merriam - Webster Dictionary defines 'qualification' as a special skill or type of experience or knowledge that makes someone suitable to do a particular job or activity. Therefore, teachers' qualification is a particular skill or type of experience or knowledge someone possesses to make him or her suitable to teach. Teachers' qualifications could, therefore, mean all the skills a teacher required to teach effectively. Such skills include formal education, experience, subject matter knowledge, pedagogy studies, duration of training, certificate/licensing and professional development (Zuzovsky, 2009).

Teachers' profession relates to competence in instruction and management of students and materials in the classroom (Hamilton-Ekeke, 2013). Teachers' qualifications, therefore, might not only be the certificate someone is holding as erroneously conceived by some people. Teachers' qualifications are more than just holding a certificate of any institution.

The Department of Education (DepEd) recognizes that the success of any education system greatly relies on the competence of its teachers. Hence, one of the primary issues the Department aims to address through its comprehensive implementation of the K to 12 Basic Education Program is the need for highly competent teachers from kindergarten to senior high school. The program plans to achieve this objective through setting professional standards that will better ensure that the teachers hired are able to significantly contribute to the development of lifelong learners.

Researchers and policy makers agree that teacher quality is a pivotal policy issue in education reform, particularly given the proportion of education pesos devoted to teacher compensation coupled with the evidence that teachers are the most important school-related factor affecting student achievement. However, considerable disagreement surrounds what specific teacher attributes indicate quality and how to better invest resources to provide quality teachers for all students.

Hanushek (1992) estimates that the difference between having a good teacher and having a bad teacher can exceed one grade-level equivalent in annual achievement growth. Likewise, Sanders (1998) and Sanders and Rivers (1996) argue that the single most important factor affecting student achievement is teachers, and the effects of teachers on student achievement are both additive and cumulative. Further, they contend that lower achieving students are the most likely to benefit from increases in teacher effectiveness. Taken together, these multiple sources of evidence—however different in nature—all conclude that quality teachers are a critical determinant of student achievement. In the current policy climate of standards-based reform, these findings make a strong case for gaining a better understanding of what really accounts for these effects. In other words, what is teacher quality?

Teacher qualifications can be divided into two categories. The categories are personal quality and certification. What qualify someone to teach and that can influence students' academic performance are related to certain qualities teacher got in the classroom and was certificated at a particular period of his or her lifetime. The second one are those related to personal quality that are continuous in his or her lifetime. Degree certificates, formal education, and in-field preparation are not throughout the life of a teacher. Once a teacher has them, it is over for his or her lifetime. Teaching strategies, experience, professional development, motivation, and interaction is personal to the individual teacher and keep changing in a teacher life. A teacher who has a bad teaching strategy today may not have it another time. A teacher's experience today will not remain the same in a year to come so is professional development. A teacher who is poor in motivating and interacting with students today may not remain the same another time. The two categories of qualifications influence learning and lead to the learning outcome. This learning outcome could either be positive or negative depending on the teacher. The most important teachers' qualifications are those that relates to "teacher personal" quality. The importance of teacher quality in student learning was underscored by Shamim, et al. (2013). It is crucial as relate to the positive learning outcome.

It is, therefore, not important arguing over certification of a teacher at the expense of his or her personal quality. A teacher who is deficient in good teaching strategy will always produce poor students. Similarly, a teacher who cannot motivate his or her student to learn either through teacher-student interaction or counselling will produce poor students.

Instead, it is imperative to address the current problems that the kindergarten teachers are facing in as much as quality teaching is concerned. The Training and Development (T&D) standards that the DepEd has issued and the National Adoption and Implementation of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers per DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017 are very much relevant in order to come up with a data-driven and research-based plan in order to improve the quality of kindergarten teachers that the DepEd has.

Early, D.M. et.al (2007) in their study said that in an effort to provide high-quality preschool education, policymakers are increasingly requiring public preschool teachers to have at least a Bachelor's degree, preferably in early childhood education. Seven major studies of early care and education were used to predict classroom quality and children's academic outcomes from the educational attainment and major of teachers of 4-year-olds. The findings indicate largely null or contradictory associations, indicating that policies focused solely on increasing teachers' education will not suffice for improving classroom quality or maximizing children's academic gains. Instead, raising the effectiveness of early childhood education likely will require a broad range of professional development activities and supports targeted toward teachers' interactions with children.

Since a big number of kindergarten teachers are not graduates of Bachelor of Science Major in Pre-School Education, the demand to offer a pedagogically sound curriculum that is at par with international standards might be at stake. Finishing an education course and passing the LET do not ensure that the teacher possesses the required competencies in order for him or her to teach effectively and efficiently.

In the Schools Division of Zambales, a big number of kindergarten teachers do not have background in pre-school education. It is in this premise that the researcher is interested to look and analyze the profile of the kindergarten teachers and assess their competencies based on the standards set by the Department of Education. It is hoped that this study will benefit the curriculum supervisors in designing trainings and conducting other professional development activities in order to achieve higher learning outcomes. Results of this study will also be used as bases for the Capability Enhancement Program for the kindergarten teachers of Zone 2.

2. METHODOLOGY

A descriptive research design was used to carry out this study. The purpose of this study was to identify the teaching qualifications and competencies of kindergarten teachers based on the five (5) domains specified in the Training Needs Assessment (TNA) Tool for Kindergarten Teachers. Further, the researcher analyzed the profile and qualifications of the kindergarten teachers based on the different profile variables.

Descriptive research describes and interprets what it is. Its concerns with conditions or relationships that exist; practices that prevail; and beliefs and processes that are going on; effects that are being felt or trends that are developing. Descriptive survey is an approach appropriate wherever the object of any class varies among themselves and one is interested in knowing the extent to which different conditions obtain among these objects (Goods & Scates, 2003).

According to Best and Kahn (2007), descriptive research employs the process of disciplined inquiry through the gathering and analysis of empirical data, and each attempts to develop knowledge. To be done competently, each requires the expertise of the careful and systematic investigator. Salaria (2012) define descriptive survey research as a method of research

which concerns itself with the present phenomena in terms of conditions, practices beliefs, processes, relationships or trends invariably.

According to Aggarwal (2008) descriptive research is devoted to the gathering of information about prevailing conditions or situations for the purpose of description and interpretation. This type of research method is not simply amassing and tabulating facts but includes proper analyses, interpretation, comparisons, identification of trends and relationships.

This study was conducted in Zone 2, Division of Zambales composed of Palauig, Iba and Botolan Districts.

The respondents of the study were the eighty (80) Kindergarten Teachers from the Districts of Palauig, Iba and Botolan.

The easiest and fastest way of gathering information is through questionnaire. According to Calderon and Gonzales (1993), a questionnaire is a set of questions which when answered properly by required number of properly selected respondents who would supply the necessary information would complete a research study. The instrument is composed of two (2) major parts. Part I deals with the profile of the teacher respondents as to age, sex, and position. Teaching qualifications in terms of training, licensure, experience, and highest educational qualifications. Part 2 deals with the competencies of the kindergarten teachers in terms of the following domains: Teaching Learning Process; Student Outcomes; Community Involvement; Professional Growth and Development; and Classroom Management.

To ensure the validity of the instruments, face and content validity were established through consultations with experts in Kindergarten namely, the Education Program Supervisor in Kindergarten and the District Kindergarten Coordinator.

After the validation of the instrument, the researcher wrote letters to the Division Superintendent, School Principal, and target teacher respondents for the distribution and retrieval of the instrument. The researcher allotted ten to fifteen (10-15) days of distribution to ensure one hundred (100%) of retrieval of the instrument.

Percentage, mean, and analysis of variance were used as statistical techniques.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Profile of Teacher-Respondents

Majority of the teacher-respondents were from age group of 30-39 years old. A total of 79 or 98.75% are female while 1 or 1.25% is male. Meanwhile, mostly with 63 or 78.75% are Teacher I.

4.2. Teaching Qualifications of the Respondents

4.2.1 Trainings Attended

All of the respondents, 80 or 100% had 0-2 international trainings with a mean of 1.0. Majority of the respondents, 79 or 98.75% have 0-2 national trainings while 1 or 1.25% has 3-5 trainings. The mean is 1.04. Seventy nine or 98.75% have 0-2 regional trainings while 1 or 1.25% has 3-5 trainings. The mean is 1.04. 70% have 0-2 division trainings; 14 or 17.50% have 3-5 trainings; 6 or 7.50% have more than 9 trainings; and 4 or 5.00% have 6-8 trainings. The mean is 2.5. Meanwhile, majority of the respondents, 47 or 58.75% have 0-2 district trainings. The mean is 3.18. Lastly, 58 respondents or 72.50% have attended 0-2 school trainings.

4.2.2 Licensure

Majority of the respondents, 76 or 95% are passers of LET while 4 or 5% are PBET.

4.2.3 No. of Years in Teaching

Majority of the respondents, 45 or 56.25% have 0-5 years of teaching experience; 23 or 28.75% have 6-10 years; 6 or 7.5% have 11-15 years; 4 or 5% have more than 20 years of teaching experience; and 2 or 2.5% have 16-19 years of teaching experience. The mean is 6.24 years.

4.2.4 Highest Educational Qualifications

Majority of the respondents, 61 or 76.25% got Masteral units; 15 or 18.75% are baccalaureate degree holders; 2 or 2.5% have masteral degree; and 2 or 2.5% have doctoral units.

4.3. Teaching Competencies of Kindergarten Teachers of Zone 2

4.3.1. Teaching Learning Process

The item “Advocates the use of Mother Tongue, Filipino and English in teaching and learning to facilitate the learners’ language, cognitive and academic development and to foster pride of their language, heritage and culture” got the first rank with 3.58 interpreted as ‘highly competent’. Only two items got ‘competent’ ratings: “Leads colleagues in the advancement of the art and science of teaching based on their comprehensive knowledge of research and pedagogy” and “Mentors colleagues in the implementation of policies to ensure the positive use of ICT within or beyond the school”. This implies that there is a need to introduce coaching and mentoring practices among kindergarten teachers in Zone 2. The over-all weighted mean of 3.37 means that the kindergarten teachers are ‘highly competent’ in their teaching competencies in terms of teaching learning process.

4.3.2. Student Outcomes

The three items which got the lowest ratings: “Leads initiatives to support colleagues in applying strategies that effectively provide timely, accurate and constructive feedback to learners to improve learning achievement”; “Shares with colleagues a wide range of strategies that ensure effective communication of learner needs, progress and achievement to key stakeholders, including parents/guardians”; and “Administers teacher-made tests and standardized tests set by the region/division/school for the current school year.” They got 3.10, 3.21 and 3.15 weighted means respectively. On the other hand, the kindergarten teachers are ‘highly competent’ in “Coordinates closely with parents regarding student’s outcomes and behaviors” with a weighted mean of 3.58. The over-all weighted mean of 3.32 indicates that the kindergarten teachers are ‘highly competent’ in terms of student outcomes.

4.3.3. Community Involvement

The two lowest items which got the ‘competent’ ratings are: “Leads colleagues in the regular review of existing codes, laws and regulations that apply to the teaching profession, and the responsibilities as specified in the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers” and “Uses the community as a laboratory for learning” which got 3.20 and 3.08 weighted means respectively. On the other hand, the kindergarten teachers are ‘highly competent’ in “Involves parents to participate in school activities that promote learning” with a weighted mean of 3.66. The over-all weighted mean of 3.29 indicates that the kindergarten teachers are ‘highly competent’ in terms of community involvement.

4.3.4. Professional Growth and Development

All the items were rated ‘highly competent’ by the respondents. The top two items which got the highest ranks are “Allocates time for personal and professional development through

participation in educational seminars and workshops, reading educational materials regularly” and “Improves teaching performance based on feedback from the mentor, students, peers, superiors and others” which got the ratings 3.50 and 3.48 respectively. The over-all weighted mean of 3.36 indicates that the kindergarten teachers are ‘highly competent’ in terms of Professional Growth and Development.

4.3.5. Classroom Management

All the items were rated ‘highly competent’ by the respondents. The top two items which got the highest ranks are “Provides gender-fair opportunities for learning” and “Maintains a safe and orderly classroom free from distractions” which got the ratings 3.66 and 3.60 respectively. The over-all weighted mean of 3.52 indicates that the kindergarten teachers are ‘highly competent’ in terms of Classroom Management.

Analysis of Variance on the Difference in the Teaching Qualifications when Grouped According to Profile Variables

4.4.1 Training

There is a significant difference to the following variables: on the attendance to division training as a teaching qualification when grouped according to position (Sig = 0.04); on the attendance to school training as a teaching qualification when grouped according to position (Sig = 0.05), on licensure as a teaching qualification when grouped according to age (Sig = 0.00), and position (Sig = 0.00) as reflected on the significant values which are all less than (<) 0.05 alpha level of significant; and in the number of years in teaching as a teaching qualification when grouped according to age (Sig = 0.00), and position (Sig = 0.00) as reflected on the significant values which are all less than (<) 0.05 alpha level of significant. Therefore, null hypotheses are all rejected. The rest recorded no significant differences.

4.4.2 Highest Educational Qualification

There was a significant difference in highest educational qualification as a teaching qualification when grouped according to position (Sig = 0.01), thus the null hypothesis is rejected. The rest recorded no significant differences.

Analysis of Variance on the Difference on the Competencies when Grouped According to Profile Variables

4.4.3 Teaching Learning Process

There was no significant difference on the competency on teaching learning process when grouped according to age (Sig = 0.34), sex (Sig = 0.24), and position (Sig = 0.58). Therefore, null hypothesis is accepted.

4.4.5 Student Outcomes

There was no significant difference on the competency on student outcomes when grouped according to age (Sig = 0.75), sex (Sig = 0.19), and position (Sig = 0.45). Therefore, null hypothesis is accepted.

4.4.6 Community Involvement

There was a significant difference on the competency on community involvement when grouped according to sex (sig =0.03) which is less than (<) 0.05 level of significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. The rest recorded no significant differences.

4.4.6 Professional Growth and Development

There was a significant difference on the competency on professional growth and development when grouped according to sex (sig =0.03) which is less than (<) 0.05 level of significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. The rest recorded no significant differences.

4.4.7 Classroom Management

There was a significant difference on the competency on classroom management when grouped according to sex (sig =0.03) which is less than (<) 0.05 level of significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. The rest recorded no significant differences.

Relationship between Teaching Qualifications and Competencies of Kindergarten Teachers of Zone 2

All variables except 1 recorded a weak negative correlation thus accepting the null hypothesis. These are national training and competencies (-.03), regional training and competencies (-0.16), division training and competencies (-.03), district training and competencies (-0.11), school training and competencies (-0.06), no. of years in teaching and competencies (-0.01), and highest educational qualifications and competencies (-0.03).

Meanwhile, licensure and competencies' computed r of 0.10 denotes a weak positive correlation between licensure and competencies, thus, accepting the null hypothesis.

Capability Enhancement Program of Kindergarten Teachers of Zone 2

The results of the study clearly reveal the need to enhance the skills and competencies of the kindergarten teachers in Zone 2 in terms of: 1) Coaching and Mentoring; 2) Use of ICT; 3) Providing accurate, timely and constructive feedbacks to learners; 4) Improving strategies for effective communication; 5) Administering teacher-made and standardized tests; 6) Learning environments which are responsive to community contexts; 7) Involvement of partners and networks; and 8) Regular review of codes, laws and regulations.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the summary of the investigations conducted, the researcher concluded that:

1. The teacher-respondent was a typical female, aged 30-39, and having a position of Teacher I.
2. In terms of qualifications, she attended 1 training in the international, national and regional levels, and three trainings in the division, district and school levels. She is a LET passer, with 0-5 years of teaching experience and had masteral units.
3. All the five domains got 'highly competent' ratings being 'classroom management' and 'teaching learning process' in the top two ranks with 3.52 and 3.37 ratings respectively. The lowest of all the domains which is in rank 5 is 'community involvement' which has an overall weighted mean of 3.29. The grand mean of 3.37 indicates that the kindergarten teachers are 'highly competent' in all the five domains being assessed.
4. There is a significant difference to the following variables: on the attendance to division training as a teaching qualification when grouped according to position, on the attendance to school training as a teaching qualification when grouped according to position, on licensure as a teaching qualification when grouped according to age, and position, and in the number of years in teaching as a teaching qualification when grouped according to age and position as reflected on the significant values which are all less than (<) 0.05 alpha level of significant.

5. There was a significant difference on the competency on community involvement when grouped according to sex and the competency on classroom management when grouped according to sex.
6. There was a weak negative correlation between attendance to trainings (all levels) and competencies, and a weak positive correlation between licensure and competencies. There was also a weak negative correlation between: 1) number of years in teaching and competencies; and 2) highest educational qualifications and competencies.

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