

# Bachelor of Psychology Programs: A Digital Discourse on the Qualification Requirements to Educate

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## Abstract

The Commission on Higher Education Faculty Development Program has set a standard that a teacher at higher education level must attain a master degree at least. These development programs were signified as a critical factor that helps in building strong educational conceptual understanding, improves the quality of education and improves the teacher's self-efficacy. The aim of the current research was to examine the qualification requirements to teach in the Bachelor of Psychology programs as perceived by practitioners and teachers in higher education in the field of Psychology. A qualitative research method design was used to assess the qualification requirement for teaching in both explanatory and exploratory nature. Ten professionals participated in the research voluntarily. Thematic analysis was conducted to analyze the findings. The findings of the study backed the CHED implication of at least obtaining master degree in the relevant field; however, many professionals also backed having a PhD, passing license exam or outweighed experiences and license along with a bachelor's degree in case of death of master qualified teachers.

## Keywords

Qualitative Research Design, Psychology, Teacher's Self-Efficacy, Thematic Analysis, CHED, Abana

## 1. Background of Study

The quality of education depends largely on the faculty's qualifications and competencies (Commission on Higher Education's Faculty Development Program). As per their requirements, the teachers at higher education level must at-

tain master's degree at least in the field they aim to teach. The Faculty Development Program (FDP) is a critical factor towards building the strong foundation of an educational system to ensure quality education. Our nation cannot compete with its neighboring countries that are now moving towards offering cutting-edge programs and technologies unless we invest in creating a pool of experts in our academic institutions. This critical mass will then be capable of training and equipping students for significant and promising careers in the global market. To raise the standard of instruction in our higher education institutions (HEIs), more than half, or 70,000 faculty members, must update their credentials and competencies. Development programs play a major role in helping faculty members cultivate their roles.

Low qualification of the teachers inevitably leads to low standards of learning achievement among students. CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 40, s. 2008 which requires all higher education institutions (HEIs) faculty to have at least a master's degree shall be fully implemented by AY 2011-2012. Hence, there is a need to encourage and provide assistance to HEIs to enable them to meet this CMO requirement. Lower funding for higher education has resulted in reduced funding for faculty development, less support for students, and more pressure to secure outside funding (Mitchell & Leachman, 2015). Teachers need to be skilled in research, teaching, and service because of the various roles they play. Faculty members must be able to balance their tripartite workload, deal with societal demands for accountability, comprehend students, learn new technologies, and comprehend how the job market is changing.

Psychology has transformed the spirit of education and has given a new meaning of learning. Psychology and education are intertwined because, according to researchers, teaching without understanding psychology is unavoidable. Psychology has revolutionized the access to education from only available for upper class to providing opportunity for everyone to learn, providing concepts and understanding of individual differences that every child has different mental ability and learns at a different pace. For years, teacher educators have written about the purposes, aims, and goals of educational psychology and have stressed the relevance of the field for the practice of teaching and learning (Alexander 2004; Berliner 1993; Brophy 1974; Woolfolk, 2000). However, as Sternberg (1996) noted, educational psychologists seem to be having more and more trouble explaining to educators what they do and why educators should care.

Review of literature suggests that a number of studies have been carried out to study the psychology graduates career preferences throughout the world but very little in the Philippines more specifically in Iloilo City. With a change in psychology graduates' attitudes and perceptions regarding the career growth and opportunities in the academe, there arises a need to study and analyze the requirements and qualifications that constitute the ability to educate. Moreover, there are no or very few studies on Philippines psychology majors' career preferences and opportunities and the requirements that come along.

The current paper examines the prerogative of both psychology practitioners and educators on higher education. Specifically this paper aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the needs of the institutions as perceived by the private practitioners and professors/instructors in the field of Psychology in relevance to the policies implemented by the Commission on Higher Education; to know the efficacy and efficiency of their acquired academic competencies industry experiences to teach in higher education; to serve as reference to future researcher, psychology majors and future educators in the field of Psychology.

### 1.1. Objectives

The paper aims to examine the qualification requirements to teach in the Bachelor of Psychology programs as perceived by practitioners and teachers in higher education in the field of Psychology. Specifically, this paper aims to:

- Identify the current requirements imposed by CHED to all colleges and universities in hiring teachers in higher education.
- Identify development programs that are implemented by schools to assess their faculty needs and the formulation of goals and objectives for faculty development activities which are essential elements for the measurement of faculty development activities?

### 1.2. Literature Review

Education development programs play a significant role for faculty members to cultivate their roles, improving student success and retention through participation in development program design for faculty (Perez et al., 2012), as well as having a positive impact on student learning, satisfaction, and motivation (Ambrosino & Peel, 2011; Trigwell et al., 2012). Faculty members who took pedagogical training credits reported higher self-efficacy than those who did not (Postareff, et al., 2008). Unfortunately, faculty development workshops are often viewed as just one more item on the “to-do” list and are not necessarily valued. However, well-designed faculty development programs can enhance the quality of teaching and assessment practices (Cilliers & Herman, 2010). One study, conducted with over ten thousand full-time, tenure-track faculty, indicated that early career faculty members were more likely to be successful and satisfied with their jobs if resources for professional development are available and a culture of collegiality, collaboration, and community is created within the university (Trower & Gallagher, 2010). Another study indicated that satisfaction with the job and experiencing personal growth explain the greatest variance in the overall job satisfaction score (Foor & Cano, 2011).

A more focused review of teacher efficacy with college faculty revealed that faculty members in public universities had higher a perception of teaching efficacy than those of private universities and faculty members in education reported higher levels of teaching efficacy than those in other disciplines (Chang, Lin, & Song, 2011). Self-confidence in one’s ability to be an educator is lowered when

a faculty member is not prepared for the teaching role (Schriner, 2007). Nursing faculty, in particular, had higher levels of teacher self-efficacy when they had formal education courses and teaching experience in nursing and non-nursing settings (Nugent & Bradshaw, 1999). The challenge of being a “good” teacher for faculty members can be overwhelming. It is through mastery experiences and social persuasions that faculty members felt were particularly influential sources of self-efficacy (Morris & Usher, 2011).

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1. Research Design**

This study’s research methodology will be a descriptive qualitative approach, and the results will be presented in a descriptive way. As a result, it would be exploratory and explanatory, as this study aims to further investigate registered nurses’ motivations for pursuing careers as emergency medical technicians and firefighters.

### **2.2. Methods**

The researcher will use the triangulation of data method, in which the researcher will collect data in multiple ways, including direct observation, in-depth interviews, and a review of available documents, such as evaluation tools from their supervisors and certificates from seminars attended. There will be direct interactions between the researcher and the target sample of participants who have been purposefully chosen for this study. The interview will be the primary tool for gathering data from the chosen respondents.

### **2.3. Sampling**

Ten participants were selected through purposive sampling and interviewed for this research study, from Iloilo City. Crossman (2018) stated that purposive sampling is selected based on characteristics of a population and the objective of the study, she also stated that purposive sampling is non-probability sample, also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling.

### **2.4. Participants**

This study involves data gathering and interviews with possible groups like private and state universities and colleges, specifically the researcher considered ten (10) professionals participating in this study—2 guidance counselors, 3 testing facilitators and 5 college instructors. Additionally, this study would also aim to gather more supporting data from interviews with the Commission on Higher Education, especially regarding the qualifications and requirements of teachers in higher education.

## **3. Results**

Thematic analysis was used for the qualitative analysis of the interviews. The aim

was to investigate the qualification requirements for teaching in Bachelor of Psychology programs, gathering insights from private practitioners and higher education teachers. By the end of the analysis, the descriptive course aims to provide the understanding of how the development programs, and qualifications can facilitate the teachers in teaching and helps to fill in the gap.

### 3.1. Theme 1: Minimum Qualification

Commission on Higher Education's Faculty Development Program requirements states that the teachers at a higher education level must attain master's degree at least in the field they aim to teach. Research has highlighted teachers who have higher degrees have more pedagogical understanding of the subject in hand and can provide more practical examples and more researched knowledge for students to fully grasp the idea. Majority of the participants highlighted that teachers must have at least master's degrees as:

Participant 2 highlighted

*The teacher must have masters in psychology, just like what I am taking right now... I think, as I have observed, the teacher who teaches psychology must have earned a bachelor of Psychology program and must have a master's degree in psychology followed by passing the Licensure exam in psychology.*

Furthermore, the participant added

*This is what the society is requiring right now... one must engage itself on this venture to fully realize the career path.*

While other participants shared their views as;

*For institution that cannot find teachers having this qualification, teacher applicant which has a minimum of master's degree units, a graduate in psychology or any related courses with a spirit of dedication to teach different areas in psychology is sometimes given the luck to teach in such program [participant 3]*

However, few participants highlighted that it entirely depends on the course a teacher is teaching and level of expertise that is required. As many participants vouch for PhD and a relevant good experience.

*Typically a psychology teacher should not just be a psychology teacher... Considering the broad perspective the teacher teaches, ranging at different topics a teacher should be licensed... of course given the paradigm one must earn a psychology program first, must finish a master's degree, with good moral character and must have relevant experiences. [participant 5].*

### 3.2. Theme 2: Passion

Another theme that the respondents highlighted was being passionate about teaching students. The respondent carried a response on how being passionate

toward teaching insights a new realm of being keen self-critical and allows the teachers to work on self-betterment and become worthy applicants to be hired. This ability of being self-critical and passionate can help to instigate passion that can beat others and allow teachers to become passionately involved in teaching students. As participant 9 has expressed their views as;

*“...if you have an endorsement... you’ll have an advantage... of course, you need to show that you’re a worthy applicant to be hired... Hahaha... well, of course, if you have the passion, you can beat the others...” [participant 9]*

Supporting this stance, participant 4 has also contributed their opinion on how being passionate toward teaching can have a long path of success.

*First thing’s... kaylangan ang teacher na gustong magturo must be passionate... kaylangan magaling siya sa field ng psychology. [participant 4]*

### **3.3. Theme 3: Self-Inquiry**

Another theme highlights that self-inquiry can help in enhancing the scope of teaching as it allows the teachers to teach with the spirit of dedication that helps them to excel in the area in which they like to teach. Furthermore, they have claimed that being self-critical and inquiring allows one to become aware of their strengths and weaknesses, things a teacher is good at and allows them to reflect on spaces where they require more effort. All of these inquiries allow the teachers to understand their own limitations and helps the teachers to become more vigilant towards how to overcome their short fallings and how to maximize the positive aspects. Participants has shared their opinions as;

*“For institutions that cannot find teachers having this qualification, a teacher applicant which has a minimum of master’s degree units, a graduate in psychology or any related courses with a spirit of dedication to teach different areas in psychology is sometimes given the luck to teach in such a program.” [participant 5]*

*“First of all as an applicant you have to view your strengths and weaknesses... to where you are good at... so that you will be able to assess within yourself as to where you are going to focus your career as a psychology program specialist.” [Participant 8]*

### **3.4. Theme 4: Licensure Examination**

Another important criteria that majority of the participants seconded was the need of passing the licensure examination. It reflects a correct self-inquiry regarding the need of passing examination and having a license to practice. Majority of the participants were aware of the legality and authenticity that a license brings and how much it helps the therapist or teachers in providing well-versed education. Participants has highlighted it as;

*“Correct, indeed... I think first things first... and let’s see where we can*

*teach... because if in secondary school, first and foremost... we'll take the teacher licensure examination, after that, you proceed to your master's... just like what we are doing right now... but as an applicant, it seems like you're all talking."* [participant 8]

Another participants shared their views as;

*"I think, as I have observed, the teacher who teaches psychology must have earned a bachelor of Psychology program and must have a master's degree in psychology followed by passing the Licensure exam in psychology. This is what the society is requiring right now... one must engage itself on this venture to fully realized the career path"* [participant 2]

Also, participant 5 reported;

*"Considering of the broad perspective the teacher teaches ranging at different topic a teacher should be a licensed..."* [participant 5]

As per participants 4, passing the licensing exam should be a must add in the criteria along with following;

*"Of course one must have the protocol coming from the Commission on Higher Education... of course to pass the licensure examination after the graduation of the masters aligned to it..."* [participant 4].

Also another participants has presented it as;

*"Precisely po... mas maayo gid nga certified gid cla of course para taas sweldo... pero tani kay nag eskwela naman kita sa undergrad... like any other courses... pwede na kaubra freely pagkatapos licensure examination as psychologist... yong hindi nakukuha ang masters degree... at full psychologist na... pero... god thing naman na magkaroon ng masters degree ng sag anon hindi ka palamuti pagkatapos mong mag apply... so una... kumuha ng master's degree... tapos... pasarin and board at mag aral ng magaral ulit ng magiging dalubhasa sa field... Hehehe..."* [participant 10].

#### 4. Discussion

Education reforms have highlighted a need to develop qualification requirements for the faculty to educate. These reforms aimed to increase enrollment, graduation rates, and average years of schooling in elementary and secondary education. The goal of creating this digital discourse was to improve high school education quality. Many of these reforms were implemented against the backdrop of falling educational standards in the Philippine education system during the first decade of the twenty-first century. The quality of education depends largely on the qualifications and competencies of the faculty. In view of the faculty's vital role in influencing education outcomes, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) requires that teachers at higher education level must have at least master's degree in the fields in which they teach.

The current research emphasizes on the qualification for the tertiary faculty as well as initiates the need to identify different requirements to teach in Bachelors of Psychology programs and teachers in higher education in the field of Psychology in reference to current requirements imposed by CHED to all colleges and universities in hiring teachers in higher education. Moreover, this research identifies development programs to assess the needs of facilities which further facilitates the goals and objectives of faculty activities.

The current study is a single case study as the major purpose was to study the tertiary practitioners in the psychology field. Also, the study was explanatory and exploratory in nature presented descriptively. It provides in depth information through interviews and direct observation of the professionals and analyzing their competencies and skills. Triangulation method was used to analyze the data while the questionnaire was validated by another psychologist to reduce the bias.

Following data collection and transcription of the interviews, the researcher conducted a descriptive analysis of the participants' response. According to the research findings, the Commission on Higher Education's minimum faculty qualification for undergraduate programs is a Master's degree holder to teach primarily in his major field and, where applicable, a holder of an appropriate license requiring at least a bachelor's degree for professional courses. However, in fields where Master's degree holders are in short supply, a holder of a professional license requiring at least a bachelor's degree may be qualified to teach.

#### **4.1. Conclusion**

The respondents are calibrated to the qualifications set by CHED; however, some respondents would like industry experience and other training to be weighted in hiring faculty because they are critical to providing students with quality education.

#### **4.2. Recommendations**

In view of the aforementioned findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are advanced:

- This study may be replicated in order to substantiate the analysis of the qualification requirement for faculty handling Bachelor of Psychology programs.
- To strengthen the quality of education in the Philippines, future researchers of the same nature maintain an equal number of respondents and utilize similar techniques in analyzing data.
- To inculcate the value of educational attainment and industry experience among our faculty, school administrators should revisit their programs and current compensation plan to give support and encourage success.

#### **Conflicts of Interest**

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this pa-

per.

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