

Teacher training candidates' profile and preferences: Implications for recruitment programs, admission policy and curricular management

Cacho, Reynald M. 

Philippine Normal University South Luzon, Philippines (cacho.rm@pnu.edu.ph)

Villamor, Brenda B.

Philippine Normal University South Luzon, Philippines (villamor.bb@pnu.edu.ph)



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Abstract

The paper describes the first senior high school cohort and university admission teacher training candidates in terms of their profile and program preferences which are significant to the recruitment programs, admission policy, and curricular management of a small teacher education campus in the Southern Luzon part of the Philippines. The study used survey questionnaire administered to the examinees (N=864) of the December 2017 university admission test. Predominantly, teacher training candidates are 18-year-old female students from public school senior high school (SHS) academic track with Roman Catholic faith, academic award distinctions, and propensities to writing, arts, music and sports event(s) coming from the campus town site or nearby municipalities. Generally inclined to pursue primary academic subjects as their majors, they prefer secondary teaching education programs than elementary. Nevertheless, there appears to be stronger bend to English, Mathematics, and Social Studies as primary choices for their specializations insofar as the January 2018 admission passing result is concerned. Unfortunately, only one in every 10 teacher training candidates successfully reached the admission test passing (cutoff) scores which is highly regulated by a university system for the 2018-2019 intakes. Program, policy and management implications are then critically discussed.

Keywords: admission; higher education; program management; recruitment; senior high school; specializations; teacher education; teacher training candidates

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1. Introduction

Education institutions worldwide are responding to the “turbulent context, characterized by growing uncertainties and ambiguities” (Agarao-Fernandez & De Guzman, 2005, p. 130) of globalization and internationalization (Altbach & Knight, 2007). Essential to addressing these complexities are competent and productive citizens trained from equitable and quality basic and tertiary levels of education (Ogena, Fulgencio, Rungduin, & Sedilla, 2015). Nonetheless, students recruited to higher education are generally products of multiple school settings, environments and contextual factors. Colleges and universities, in the midst of growing competitions and limited resources, need quality students to sustain the vibrancy of their academic programs (Myers, Breja & Dyer, 2004). The continuous inflow of students allows a higher education program to exist. In the same way that the survival of colleges depends on the quality and quantity of admitted students.

Apart from the challenge of sustaining teacher quality (Barber & Mourshed, 2007), attracting a greater number of college entrants in various ways has never been higher. Teacher education institutions around the globe have their own approaches for selection and recruitment of their students for teacher education program. Countries like Singapore, China and Malaysia require a national examination as an entry requirement while some countries like Canada, New Zealand and France have their examinations set by training institutions (Hobson, Ashby, McIntyre, & Malderez, 2010). Most of the time, including the Philippines, passing a highly cognitive oriented pencil-and-paper test is the norm for admission (Magno & Gonzales, 2011; Ogena et al., 2015). Moving forward, higher education institution admission systems should evolve particularly if potential intakes or prospective student examinees are the products of a greatly modified basic education curriculum responding to the call and challenges of time and globalized society.

In not so recent history, the Philippines through the Department of Education (DepEd) implemented its landmark K-12 curriculum reform program known as the “Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013” to all public and private basic education schools nationwide. The law mandates a mandatory basic education that includes one-year kindergarten, six-year elementary, four-year junior high school (JHS) and two-year senior high school (SHS) curricular periods. It begun in school year 2012-2013 and was fully implemented in 2016. This year (2018), the program presently produces its first cohort of senior high school graduates. Nonetheless, they could not just be accepted yet to college without passing the rigorous college admission test prescribed by their chosen public universities, should they decide to study in state-run higher education institutions.

Since the current SHS graduates are first of its K-12 cohort, it would be an interesting knowledge generation undertaking to capture and to describe typical SHS completers bound to take a teacher education program in a small teacher education institution. Most descriptive studies relevant to teacher education program students' profiling are, of course, focus on already accepted students at the early years of their college education (e.g. Avila, & De los Reyes, 2008; Hermosisima, 2004). The need to recognize the significant characteristics and preferences of these examinees or teacher training candidates, however, is of great value or relevance; hence it naturally provides a more updated baseline data for the university to examine its potential intakes. This study could also provide information on how the current recruitment program is perceived by the community with its examinees' place of residence. And more importantly, considering the prospective students' program or course choices, the university could offer programs or specialization greatly aligned to their teacher training entrants' interest and preferences.

Thus, the researchers sought to describe the SHS completers and university admission examinees in terms of their: (1) age, gender and religious affiliations, (2) place of residence, (3) type of school, (4) senior high school

tracks and strands, (5) membership in school organizations, (6) sports engagements, (7) favorite junior high subjects, (8) academic awards, and (9) program and field of specialization preferences.

2. Methods and Procedures

This descriptive study utilized information sheet questionnaire accomplished by the examinees during the conduct of the university admission test for the intake of students for the Academic Year 2018-2019. Specifically, it was December 2017 when potential senior high school completers thronged to the small teacher education campus in the Southern Luzon part of the Philippines. The campus is also one of the testing centers of a teacher education university system which simultaneously hosted a synchronized admission examination across the board for the first cohort of SHS graduating students who plan to pursue a teacher education program in college. Moreover, a batch of campus faculty and staff serving as test proctors were oriented by the OIC-Registrar (co-researcher) to assist in administering the survey. Before the start of the actual examination, the test proctors distributed the materials and briefed the examinees about the significance of the information gathering process for the university and its prospective students, securing the examinees' consent to respond to the questionnaire as honest as they could. Respondents on a rough estimate took 10 minutes to complete the form. A total of 684 out of 685 hopefuls were able to accomplish the survey.

The survey form includes but is not limited to have fill-in blanks for the respondents to write their age, religious affiliation, place of residence, favorite subject(s), program tracks, scholastic awards, senior high track, sports engagements and levels of participation; and check boxes for them to indicate their gender, organizational or club membership, type of school, program preferences and course or area of specialization for secondary level. To minimize the potential bias in the order of listing of major subjects or areas of specializations for the top three choices for the secondary education level, the researchers adopted the listing of fields of specialization for secondary teachers from the program of the Board Licensure Examination for Professional Teachers (BLEPT) for September 24, 2017 exam issued by the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) Professional Regulatory Board for Professional Teachers (PRBPT). Moreover, survey data were organized and encoded by a technical support staff who meticulously went through the accomplished forms. Also, results of the admission test passers posted by the university last January 2018 were compared to the population in terms of their program preferences and turnout. Data were processed using frequencies and percentages, which are further tabulated in summary tables and verified by the researchers and the staff. The two researchers are regular faculty—one resident and the other non-resident of the campus where this study was conducted; hence, presentation of results and discussions are strategically outlined and intently inclined to explicitly suggest possible areas that the university could gain more leverage for its competitive advantage in terms of recruitment, admission and curricular programming management.

3. Results and Discussions

3.1 Age, gender and religious affiliations

In terms of age, the teacher training candidates range from 17 to 23 years old with the mean age of 17.69. Since the examinees are the first completers of the K to 12, it is expected that their ages are more matured than the previous admission test takers who were just in fourth year high school or Grade 10 equivalent in the new secondary school curriculum. Generally, completers of SHS are age (18 years) and work ready upon completion of the senior high school curriculum if they decide not to pursue college education. Meanwhile, female examinees greatly dominate over males with 73% (498) of females and 27% (186) of male examinees. It means that seven (7) out of 10 examinees are females. This shows that teaching is more appealing to females than to males which is still consistent to the results of a previous study (Avila & De Los Reyes, 2008) on the gender profile of first year students in the same small campus a decade ago.

While in terms of religious identities, majority of the religion of the examinees is Roman Catholic with

87.87% (601) followed by Iglesia ni Cristo (INC) with 3.65% (25) and Born Again Christians with 2.92% (20). Aside from 16 examinees not indicating their affiliation, other minorities include but are not limited to Baptist Christian, Seventh Day Adventist, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, and Islam. To be religion inclusive, minorities should have more intake in frequency than what the data shows. Possibly in the recruitment programs, it would be worth mentioning that as a public university, activities conducted are inclusive of any religious affiliation of students although Roman Catholic ways could permeate the traditional religious affairs in the campus. Further recognizing non-Catholic student organizations or religious groups, however, may also be mentioned to attract more applicants coming from other minorities. Overall, Table 1 below shows the summary data on age, gender and religious affiliation.

Table 1

Summary information on age, gender and religious affiliation

Data set	Mean	Range
Age	17.69	17 to 23
Gender (in %)	Female	Male
	72.81	27.19
Religion* (in %)		
Roman Catholic	Iglesia ni Cristo (INC)	Born Again Christians
87.87	3.65	2.92

Note. *Including other minority religions.

3.2 Place of residence

Clustering the examinees by district in the Quezon province, most examinees inherently come from the 4th District, specifically from Lopez, Quezon (264, 40.55%) where the campus and testing center is located. Second in the number of respondents hails from its closest neighbor Calauag, Quezon (106, 16.28%). Interestingly, Buenavista, Quezon from the 3rd District gets a substantial share (62, 9.52%). Very few examinees from other municipalities in the 4th District takes the admission test, so there is a need to refocus recruitment program to these municipalities like Atimonan, Quezon, Plaridel, Perez (in the 4th District) and San Francisco and Catanauan (in the 3rd District). No examinees from the 1st and 2nd Districts of Quezon took the admission; hence, the summary Table 2 that follows only includes the 3rd and 4th Districts in Quezon and non-Quezon areas. Perhaps, the tendency of SHS completers from the first two districts is to go to city colleges or other universities near their areas rather than proceed to the 4th District where the campus is located. Within the 3rd District respondents, there were no examinees coming from San Andres, Mulanay, Unisan, Agdangan and Padre Burgos which the campus occasionally used to have (Avila, & De los Reyes, 2008). However, it was surprising not to encode any test taker from Alabat, Quezon, making it the sole town in the 4th District where no one took the admission test.

The summary Table 2 illustrates the reach of the campus recruitment campaign based on the number of those who responded or participated in the admission exam. Such relatively 4th-and-3rd district centric turnout could be attributed to the fact the campus promotional campaign for 2017 simply covered intently such districts. Campus leadership change, management and deficiencies in human resources and time constraints could be some reasons for these outcomes. On one hand, future promotions and recruitment can be directed to the 1st and 2nd districts of Quezon to attract greater number of intakes. Also, municipalities across the districts with no representative examinees should be paid more attention to. If this teacher education campus aims "to provide education services and opportunities to students and educators coming from different areas in Southern Tagalog Region and Bicol Region" as it traditionally envisioned, it has to adapt a more inclusive, representative, massive promotional and recruitment program that reaches many, if not all, public and private SHS in its catch basin—the entire of Quezon Province and parts of Bicol and other areas in the Region IV-A CALABARZON.

Table 2

Distribution of examinees by residence within and outside Quezon Province

		Quezon Province				Outside Quezon			
4th District	<i>f</i>	%	3rd District	<i>f</i>	%	Municipalities/City	<i>f</i>	%	
Lopez	264	40.55	Buenavista	62	9.52	Del Gallego	1	5.26	
Calauag	106	16.28	San Narciso	44	6.76	Camarines Sur	1	5.26	
Guinayangan	34	5.22	General Luna	31	4.76	General Trias City, Cavite	1	5.26	
Gumaca	27	4.15	Macalelon	21	3.23	Labo, Camarines Norte	1	5.26	
Tagkawayan	19	2.92	Pitogo	14	2.15	Quezon City	1	5.26	
Perez	8	1.23	Catanauan	6	0.92	San Juan, Batangas	1	5.26	
Plaridel	4	0.61	San Francisco	5	0.77	Tanza, Cavite	1	5.26	
Quezon	4	0.61				Sta. Elena, Camarines Norte	13	68.42	
Atimonan	2	0.31							
<i>n</i> = 468 (68.42%)			<i>n</i> = 183 (26.75%)			<i>n</i> =19 (2.78 %)			

Note. 14 (2.05%) – No response

3.3 Type of school

Majority of the examinees (537, 78.51%) are expected to graduate from public senior high school. This typically means that nearly eight student examinees out of 10 come from public senior high schools. Thus, Table 3 presents how public school dominates the private SHS in terms of prospective students pursuing teacher education program in this side of the region. One possible reason of this result is that majority of schools who offer senior high schools in the region are government schools. There is still a need, however, to make arrangements such as career orientation and intensive recruitment activities to private senior high schools particularly in the areas needing inclusion or representation as indicated earlier.

Table 3

Distribution of examinees according to types of school

Type of School	<i>f</i>	%
Private Senior High School	147	21.49
Public Senior High School	537	78.51
Total	684	100.00

3.4 Senior high school tracks and strands

Majority of the examinees belong to the academic track (548, 80.12%) shadowing the technical-vocational-livelihood (TVL) track (92, 13.45%) and the most minimal presence of sports track (8, 1.17%) potential SHS completers. In theory, academic track students upon completion are expected to pursue their college degree study while graduates in the TVL track may opt to apply their specialized skills in the real world of specialized or technical works. Nonetheless, a considerable number of examinees failed to indicate the track they belong. A possible reason could be the students' minds were much preoccupied that they overlooked this question since the survey questionnaire was answered few minutes before the conduct of the admission examination. Nonetheless, no matter what SHS tracks students belong the Commission on Higher Education Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 105, series of 2017, indicates that "No Grade 12 student or graduate be denied acceptance in applying for college entrance examinations in the Higher Education Institutions." The variety of tracks of the grade 12 examinees presented in Table 4 all the more presents the admission test opportunity provided by the campus to such students planning to pursue college education than to work.

Students under the General Academic Strand (GAS) and Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) strand greatly comprise the academic track while Home Economic (HE), Agri-Fishery (AF) and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) strands relatively emerge in the TVL track. Completers from the TVL track have great potential for the campus Technology Livelihood Education (TLE) hubness program. Ideally, students under the HE and Agri-Fishery strands are very much aligned to the Bachelor of Technology and Livelihood Education (BTLE) program which the campus is offering. How they fared in the admission test is however a

different scenario (Details in Table 10). At any rate, the K-12 banner program of DepEd ideally prepares students with enough competencies for them to be college ready. Since most of the examinees belong to the academic tracks, the campus should offer different major fields of specializations programs that aside from teacher training candidates who are exiting from GAS and HUMMS like ABM and STEM strands (Details in Table 4) could fit in or flourish.

Table 4

Distribution of examinees according to senior high school tracks and strands

Senior High School Tracks			Overall (f, %)	
Strand	Academic Track	Sub f	Sub %	548, 80.12%
	GAS - General Academic	347	63.32	
	HUMMS – Humanities and Social Science	123	22.45	
	ABM – Accountancy, Business, and Management	54	9.85	
	STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics	13	2.37	
No Response	11	2.01		
Strand	TVL track subjects and TESDA specialized	Sub f	Sub %	92, 13.45%
	Home Economics	22	23.91	
	Agri-Fishery	15	16.30	
	ICT- Information and Communications Technology	10	10.87	
	Industrial Arts	7	7.61	
No Specific entry under TVL	38	41.30		
Sports Track				8, 1.17%
No Response				36, 5.26%
Overall Total				684, 100.00%

3.5 Membership in school organizations

A great majority of SHS examinees who responded to this section of the survey are more engaged in extra-curricular organizations or skills/interest-based clubs (586, 90.85%) than in co-curricular organizations (59, 9.15%). There is however no limit of responses as long as respondents could indicate all the clubs they belong or participated, if any. Thus, Table 5 below presents that distribution of extra-curricular organizations membership. Dance Group (152, 25.94%), Student Government (152, 25.94%), Lyre and Drum Band (125, 21.33%) and school publications (70, 11/95%) stand out as the major non-curricular organizations which the SHS examinees are part of.

Table 5

Distribution of examinees according to membership to extra-curricular organizations

Non-curricular organizations and/or interest/skills based	f	%
Dance Group	152	25.94
Supreme Student Government	152	25.94
Assistant secretary (26.97%), Auditor (23.03%), Chairperson (11.84%), Counselor (9.21%), Governor (7.24%)		
School Lyre and Drum band	125	21.33
Majorette (47.20%), Lyrist (40.00%), Drummer (9.60%)		
School Paper/Publication	70	11.95
News Writer (18.57%), Editor-in-chief (15.71%), Associate Editors (10.00%), Cartoonist (7.14%), Feature Writer (5.71%), Sports Writer (5.71%)		
School Choir	25	4.27
Sports Group	16	2.73
Girls Scout of the Philippines	15	2.56
Arts Club	12	2.05
Rondalla Group	8	1.37
Student Catholic Action of the Philippines	7	1.19
Boys Scout of the Philippines	4	0.68
Total	586	100.00

It is interesting to note that based on the prevailing organizational memberships, potential SHS completers

who plan to enter in the teacher education programs are generally oriented or have special interests in the culture and arts (dancing and music), leadership (student government), and writing (school papers) among others. Since most of the examinees are female, being dancer, band majorettes and lyrists would naturally dominate over drummers who are traditionally male in character in this part of the region. Moreover, common to high school activities in the province for top students are school press conferences and workshops. Consequently, a considerable number of school papers members from different schools seek a college education as expected. Such examinees or potential teacher education intakes could naturally find a place for skills application and enhancement in the campus' culture and arts performing groups including the college student paper.

3.6 Sports engagements

One major extra-curricular activity in high school is sports participation and competition. Therefore, it is also important to describe the SHS completers in terms of their sports engagement which is of great significance to the campus sports development programs as one of its internal and external affairs. Although very few of the examinees hinted their sports club membership, much of the respondents were not shy of indicating the sports event(s) they are engaged or have been part of in their high school years. Thus, Table 6 presents the summary or distribution of sports engagement of the respondents. Apparently, volleyball (170, 37.53%), badminton (119, 26.27%), basketball (63, 13.91%) are the major sports events substantial number of respondents are involved alongside a relative share of chess (30, 6.62%), table tennis (27, 5.96%), and football (15, 3.31%) enthusiasts. Since most of the examinees are female, volleyball yields majority of sports event participation among the respondents. This is consistent to the fact that volleyball is one of the fastest growing games for women in the Philippines (Blanco, 2017).

Table 6

Distribution of examinees according to sports engagement

Sports Event/Area	<i>f</i>	%
Volleyball	170	37.53
Badminton	119	26.27
Basketball	63	13.91
Chess	30	6.62
Table Tennis	27	5.96
Football	15	3.31
Athletics	9	1.99
Arnis	8	1.77
Taekwondo	7	1.55
Lawn Tennis	5	1.10
Total	475	100.00

Apart from the sports event participation, it is also noteworthy to explore further how the student sports enthusiasts fare in the different levels of competitions within the region. Of those who indicated their highest level of competition reached, the clustered data primarily outline these figures, namely: Institutional or Intramural level (39, 37.86%), District (32, 31.07%), Congressional (39, 37.86%), Provincial (11, 10.68%), and Regional levels (4, 3.88%). Looking into the data trends, it appears that the higher the level of competition becomes, the lesser the number of students makes it. Hence, congressional and district level competitions appear to be the common reach, but the figure goes down in a tougher provincial level and, more so, in the ever greatly competitive regional area. Worth mentioning here is the strikingly four (4) examinees 2 in football, and another 2 in arnis reached as far as the regional level.

Why bother to tap and train further students with great potentials and special skills in participating in sports, dancing, singing, writing and other extra-curricular activities? The answer goes more than the simple answer as the major goal of education of developing well-rounded and holistic individuals. Studies (e.g. Massoni, 2011; Pfeifer & Cornelißen, 2010) have shown the positive effects of participating in extracurricular activities in all

levels and in many different forms. When students engage in sports, debate, clubs, school publications, drama, student council, and other social events they become more educationally productive and emotionally engaged (Massoni, 2011). Although study and sports competitions are very time-demanding activities, empirical evidence suggests that generally women get the more benefits or positive effects in these multi tasks or involvement than men (Pfeifer & Cornelißen, 2010). Hence, keeping a largely-woman populated campus with a balance of both academic and extracurricular affairs is more advantageous for the university and the student intakes. For the same reason, providing alternative admission policy that would provide equitable and wider access for examinees with strong foundation in extracurricular or non-cognitive skills, who may fall a little short in the admission test, is inevitable in order to sustain and reinvigorate the campus performing arts and sports affairs.

3.7 Favorite junior high school subjects

Aside from extra-curricular inclination, another way to describe typical prospective teacher candidates in this part of the region is to acknowledge their curricular interests and accomplishments. One of which is to identify their favorite curricular area(s) or subject(s) and highest academic awards obtained in high school. As shown in the Table 7 below, the most favorite subject of examinees during their junior high school is English (203, 21.99%), then Filipino (187, 20.26%), Mathematics (148, 16.03%) and Science (127, 13.54%). Only the favorite subject(s) in junior high schools were practically asked since students are already clustered in their chosen track and strand in the senior high school. Notably, if the campus program will just revolve in the TLE field of study in the tertiary level, the university is simply responding to the interests of roughly 68 or 7.37%. Students' interest in their choice of favorite subject(s) cannot be overlooked. Much more, that the most dominant factor influencing career choices of students is interest in the subject (Ahmed, Sharif & Ahmad, 2017). Such liking of students toward their major junior high school subject(s) strongly supports why most of the students (548, 80.12%) pursued Academic track in their senior high school. Being responsive and forward looking, the future university curricular offering should equitably accommodate intakes mostly coming from the academic track and their specific strands.

Table 7

Distribution of examinees according to junior high school favorite subjects

Subjects/Areas	<i>f</i>	%
English	203	21.99
Filipino	187	20.26
Mathematics	148	16.03
Science	127	13.76
MAPEH	89	9.64
Social Science (Araling Panlipunan)	82	8.88
Technology and Livelihood Education	68	7.37
Values Education (Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao)	19	2.06
Total	923	100.00

3.8 Academic awards

In 2016, the Department of Education (DepEd) implemented an equitable academic-centered "Policy guidelines on awards and recognition for the K-12 education program" through its DepEd Order No. 36, s. 2016. In this new policy, grades 1-12 students are awarded 'Academic Excellence' on quarterly basis provided that they have maintained an average not lower than 90% and have passed all the curricular subjects without weight on the extracurricular credits for academic awards. Academic Excellence awards have three distinctions within specific weighted average range, namely: 'With Highest Honors' (98-100), 'With High Honors' (95-97), and 'With Honors' (90-94). It is then worth describing how the respondents report their highest academic awards obtained considering this recent policy implementation. Apparently, no examinees who indicated their awards get the highest honors; hence it does not appear in Table 8 that follows. But, roughly half of the SHS completer admission test takers are academic honors achievers of which 'with honors' (325, 47.51%) students greatly

outweigh 'with high honor'. Although there is tendency for academically high-achieving students to less likely choose a career in teaching as they pursue more attractive profession (Katz & Frish, 2016), the proportion of academic achievers and non-achievers among the respondents contradicts such trend.

Table 8

Distribution of examinees according to scholastic awards

Classification	<i>f</i>	%
With High Honors	7	1.02
With Honors	325	47.51
No Response	352	51.46
Total	684	100.00

3.9 Program and fields of specialization preferences

To cap off the descriptive information about the prospective intakes is to recognize their preferred program and/or field of specialization for secondary education. At the onset, DepEd's senior high school program is still at its beginning stage where current human and structural assets are taking shape; this paves way to its first cohort under the SHS of the K-12 curriculum. Since more teachers are generally and urgently needed in the secondary level where additional 2 years (for SHS) are added unlike in the elementary level, a great number of potential teacher education intakes consequently go to more job opportunities and that is to work at the secondary level. Hence, the Table 9 that follows presents the largely stronger preference of SHS completer respondents to prefer teaching at the secondary level (478, 69.88%) than the elementary, while very few rather chose pre-elementary and/or were undecided during the administration of the survey.

Table 9

Program selection

Program	<i>f</i>	%
Secondary Teaching	478	69.88
Elementary Teaching	183	26.75
Pre-Elementary / Early Childhood Teaching	14	2.05
Undecided	9	1.32
Total	684	100.00

Typical strategy to determine the preference(s) for specific field of specialization for those who have chosen secondary program is to draw the respondents' top three choices. The first section of Table 10 presents the respondents' summary of most selected fields or areas of study arranged from highest to lowest with the total number of all three choices (from 1st to 3rd choice). Apparently, English (243, 16.21%), TLE (231, 15.41%) and Filipino (230, 15.34%) gained the most popular choices for the secondary fields of specialization among the respondents. Interestingly, if the number of needed intakes per specialty area is concerned, regardless of the admission test result, only Values Education, Physical Science and Agriculture and Fishery Arts fall short for an ideal 20-student specialization class size. The rest of the first chosen field can be pursued that is, of course, subject to the availability of campus human and physical resources, and, most importantly, teacher training candidates' passing of the admission test.

In reality, Philippine public or state universities nationwide do not have the sufficient resources to absorb the entire number of admission examinees. Otherwise, admission test defeats its main purpose. Moreover, pen-and-paper admission test is ideally designed to screen SHS completers with the essential cognitive skills needed for a specific program for a certain number of intakes. Thus, it is highly practical and relevant to unravel how many of these hopefuls passed the admission exam requirement. The second section of Table 10 encapsulates the number of passers and their chosen program and field of specialization. Comparing or reviewing the names of the initial successful passers which comprised 89 potential intakes provided by the Main campus last January 2018 turns out that 18 or 20.22% preferred elementary program and 71 or 79.78% chose

secondary program. Interestingly, if the minimum number of class size is reduced to 15 for a curricular offering to prosper in the secondary level, English, Mathematics, and Social Studies have the number considering that they are the passers' first choice aside from the current TLE program offering of the campus. English and Math with the exception of Social Studies subject are accounted as two of the most popular subjects for a substantial number of participants in reference to Table 7. Inclination to these subjects in the junior high school level implies a strong tendency for students to pick such fields of specialization in college particularly for secondary level teaching program. Nonetheless, the question is always on the availability of resources of the campus or the determination of the Main campus to respond more positively for these possibilities or eventualities if not in the presence curricular program perhaps for the future offering.

Table 10

Summary of top three choices of specialization for the secondary level

Admission Examinees' Choice (December 2017) <i>n</i> = 478						Admission Exam Passers (January 2018)* <i>n</i> = 71					
Field of Specialization (FS)	1st	2nd	3rd	Total	%	FS	1st	2nd	3rd	Total	%
English	119	59	65	243	16.21	English	23	12	10	45	21.63
Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE)	80	76	75	231	15.41	Social Studies	11	10	8	29	13.94
Filipino	63	80	87	230	15.34	Mathematics	15	7	5	27	12.98
MAPEH	74	61	53	188	12.54	Filipino	3	8	14	25	12.02
Social Studies/ Social Sciences	47	53	39	139	9.27	Biological Science	8	9	5	22	10.58
Mathematics	71	33	28	132	8.81	TLE	4	9	9	22	10.58
Values Education	12	42	67	121	8.07	MAPEH	4	4	5	13	6.25
Physical Science	10	61	28	99	6.60	Values Education	1	5	7	13	6.25
Biological Science	27	37	27	91	6.07	Physical Science	2	5	5	12	5.77
Agriculture and Fishery Arts	2	13	10	25	1.67	Agriculture and Fishery Arts	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	505	515	479	1499	100.00	Total	71	69	68	208	100.00

Note. * 18 or 20.22% of 89 chose Elementary Program.

4. Conclusion

The paper describes the first SHS cohort and teacher training candidates in terms of their profile and preferences which are significant to the recruitment activities, admission policy, and curricular management of the campus where the researchers currently work. With the information and discussions provided, it is but sound and justifiable to characterize what the typical SHS completers wanting a teacher education degree are without discounting the presence of minimal variations in this part of the region. The study is however limited by common constraints relative to the use of survey questionnaire, the size of respondents, and the elements of opportunistic data gathering since the survey was conducted during the admission test for potential intakes for academic year 2018-2019. Needless to say, replicating this survey with added relevant profile and program preference variables is another way forward to explore future trends or change in character for prospective teacher training candidates exiting the senior high school education.

Nevertheless, let these generic descriptions serve its purpose well if not better. Predominantly, 18-year-old females from public school senior high school academic track with Roman Catholic faith, academic award distinctions, and propensities to writing, arts, music and sports event(s) coming from the campus site or nearby municipalities, would want to take teacher education program in this part of Southern Luzon region. Generally inclined to pursue primary academic subjects as their majors, they prefer secondary teaching education programs than elementary. Nevertheless, there appears to be stronger bend to English, Mathematics, and Social Studies as primary choices for their specializations insofar as the January 2018 admission passing result is concerned. Unfortunately, only one in every 10 (roughly 13%) teacher training candidates successfully reached the admission test passing (cutoff) scores which is highly regulated by a university system for the 2018-2019 intakes, and, perhaps, dependent to the campus current program offering and its absorptive capacity.

4.1 Implications for reform and policy improvement

More than these descriptions are the implications which have been explicitly pointed out in the earlier results and discussion sections. Nevertheless, critical inputs could reinforce the significance and purpose of this study. Balancing the teacher education program in terms of changing its admission policy and curricular programs is not new and is much sought after as times call for it just like the case of Abu Naba'h, Al-Omari, Ihmeideh, and Al-Wa'ily (2009). Since teacher education program is generally mainstreamed as a viable career for female widening further the gender gap or inclusivity issue (Watt & Richardson, 2007), more male intakes than the usual should be welcomed. Also, the campus naturally seeks to have representative students from all of its catch basin with equitable consideration for the marginalized and minorities; strategically enhancing further the reach of recruitment activities and policy on admission is always an option. Tapping alumni teachers in the fields to promote the campus and its program(s) and using more intensively social media in connecting with target schools or prospective students should be included in the drive.

More importantly, curricular program or major field specialization offering is not just defined through an institutional-centric programming but the campus should fairly assess its responsiveness and relevance to its major stakeholders. Such stakeholders include the current students and, equally important, potential students deserving a quality teacher education degree. Although much weight is placed on academic competence in the admission process, many, if not all, publicly funded even private HEIs have initiated to consider non-cognitive skills in the arts and sports to provide a more equitable or wider access for college education (Ogena et al., 2015). These potential or promising intakes are not just fillers for the much needed class size of the current program offering but also other aspects of the campus student affairs, like its culture and arts performing groups, publication, sports group, and the likes, thus sustaining or enhancing its institutional character and relational asset. On the critical issue of the campus' absorptive capacity for its program offering, it is then high time for the university system to rethink its incentivization program for the faculty interested in the visiting faculty model or, in the long term, to hire and/or deploy academics where demands are also high.

Like other standardized tests, the one-time pen-and-paper admission test has its inherent limitations. Much more, setting the extent of the passing (cutoff) scores without considering other significant variables seems to be myopic and problematic. Similarly, the present monocentric TLE hubness set by the current system to the campus appears to limit the University's (in part and as a whole) prime mandates enshrined in the Philippine 1987 Constitution, Article XIV, Section 5. Apart from responding to the regional and sectoral needs, enjoying academic freedom, getting the highest budget priority, and enhancing professional development, the campus as higher education institution in the region must regard with much discernment that "every citizen has a right to select a profession or course of study, subject to fair, reasonable, and equitable admission and academic requirements (3)." In doing so, it strengthens the thrust of attracting (Han, Borgonovi, & Guerriero, 2018; OECD, 2011), and, more importantly, keeping motivated and high-achieving candidates into teacher training thus becoming more responsive to the needs of its communities and future work areas. If not taken more seriously, aside from possible unintended ill consequences, the campus could hurt itself unwantedly amidst the brewing and growing competitions among nearby universities (state funded, local government unit aided higher educations and private colleges) which have been offering related teacher education programs or have pursued specific programs the campus currently no longer offers.

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