RESEARCH ARTICLE

Quality Assurance of Nursing Education in the Philippines

Ria Valerie D. Cabanes, MAN, RN[1], **Raquel M. Joaquin-Quino,** MHPEd, MD[2],
and **Maria Lourdes Dorothy S. Salvacion,** MHPEd, DDM[3]

Abstract

The Philippines continues to produce globally competitive nursing graduates. However, it performs poorly in international standards for quality education in nursing. This paper investigates the objective parameters of quality assurance: Commission on Higher Education (CHED) accreditation, Philippine Regulation Commission (PRC) licensure examinations, and other international and local standards to measure the quality of nursing education inputs and outputs. Results showed an accreditation rate of 3% for nursing programs, less than the national average of 10% for all programs across all professions (CHED 2018; CHED n.d. -a; CHED n.d. -b). Some highly regarded programs have advanced to Level IV (seven baccalaureate programs and two master's programs). Although there is a link between graduates' performance and effective instruction and sound evaluation in university procedures (Amanonce & Maramag, 2020), written board exams cannot assess some performance indicators to determine if a student has met program objectives. Although the country has produced globally competitive nursing graduates, steps must be taken to improve the program's compatibility with the concept of globalization. Strategies should be aimed at performance indicators in a global nursing education and profession landscape.

Keywords: *Curriculum, Curriculum Evaluation, Nursing, Nursing Evaluation, Nursing Education, Quality Assurance*

Introduction

The world has long regarded Filipino nurses for their dedication, hard work, and compassion, making significant contributions to global healthcare systems. Over 300,000 Filipino nurses are recognized globally, working in various regions where they are praised for their professionalism, clinical expertise, and ability to provide high-quality patient care. Their adaptability and flexibility shine through as they navigate diverse healthcare contexts, including hospitals, long-term care facilities, and community health centers, contributing to global healthcare systems (Babate & Catiwa, 2023).

While Filipino nurses are highly regarded globally, Appiah (2020) acknowledges that nursing education programs in the Philippines are considered good quality. However, the concept of quality in nursing education is complex, encompassing various dimensions. Quality is defined as meeting high standards in both theoretical knowledge and practical skills (Lopez-Entrambasaguas et al., 2020). The prevailing challenge is the lack of objective evidence consistently demonstrating the production of high-quality nurses. While recognized for dedication and compassion, a thorough evaluation is required to support the claim that the Philippines consistently produces high-quality nursing professionals, demanding a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted nature of quality in nursing education.

Quality of Nursing Education

The quality of institutional programs can be determined by examining the institution's inputs and outputs through the standard methods of quality assurance: accreditation and performance in licensure examinations. Accreditation determines the quality of institutional programs by combining self and peer evaluations of various quality indicators. The level of accreditation granted indicates the institutional quality. Meanwhile, performance in licensure examinations speaks to the quality of the institutions' outcomes.

[1] Corresponding author; Asst Professor, Institution: University of the Philippines Open University, Los Banos, Laguna, Philippines; Email: rvcabanes@gmail.com
[2] Clinical Associate Professor, Institution: University of the Philippines College of Medicine, Taft Avenue, Manila, Philippines
[3] Asst. Professor, Institution: University of the Philippines, Manila, Malate, Manila, Philippines

According to Appiah's profile study (2021), the factors contributing to the high quality of the nursing education program in the country are the school and program's long history of over forty-five years, certification by an accreditation agency, and an intermediate level of accreditation. Furthermore, a program over 45 years can show an institution's dedication to curriculum, instruction, physical development, equipment, student services, and admissions (Appiah, 2021).

Licensure results and faculty quality also affect program quality. These factors affect the quality assurance of Philippine nursing programs.

Quality Assurance and Accreditation

Accreditation assures the program's strength from the perspective of various input elements, including a faculty profile, efficient utilization of learning resources such as libraries and laboratories, compliance with accreditation standards, and a robust monitoring and review system.

Accreditation emphasizes infrastructure and curriculum improvements, which go through various stages of development to adapt and improve. Intermediate accreditation shows the institution's and faculty's progress and dedication to program development.

Self-regulation measures educational quality in the Philippines, and accreditation impacts higher education quality. The Philippines has PAASCU, the PACUCOA, and ISO certification for quality management systems. The PAASCU and PACUCOA focuses on identifying excellent institutional principles and practices. ISO certification controls and improves core business processes, improving business performance. Qualitative standards help institutions achieve their goals. The school's philosophy and goals evaluate the academic program and operations. The survey evaluates community involvement, faculty, curriculum and instruction, library, laboratories, physical plant, student services, administration, and how well it matches its purpose and practice with international linkages. Outputs consist of user satisfaction and include student and faculty performance, the establishment of a dynamic learning environment, the provision of pertinent academic programs, the sustainability of programs, board exam results, placement of graduates, and a high rate of faculty retention (Cuyegkeng et al., 2013; CHED 2017b).

The CHED also gives the title of Center of Excellence (COE) to a department within HEIs that continues to excel in instruction, research and publication, extension and linkages, and institutional qualifications. It bestows the title Center of Development (COD) on a department within a higher education institution with the potential to become a Center of Excellence.

Quality Assurance and Board Examinations

The nursing national board examination assesses competencies concerning the eleven key areas of responsibility outlined in the Philippine competency standards for nursing practice, which include safe and quality nursing care, communication, collaboration, and teamwork, health education, legal responsibilities, ethical-moral-spiritual responsibilities, personal and professional development, resource and environment management, records management, research, and quality improvement. These are classified into four major competencies: patient care, empowerment, enabling, and enhancing (PRC, 2021). The growing demand for nurses locally and internationally has significantly increased the number of students undertaking the licensure exam. Nevertheless, the issue of compromising the quality assurance of nurses (standard of nursing education and the competence of the nurses being trained) arises.

International standards: Times Higher Education (THE) and Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) provide global rankings. London-based British magazine THE uses 13 indicators in five broad categories. These include industry income, teaching, citations, research, and international mix. Due to low research output and a lower international-to-domestic student ratio, Philippine HEIs are mostly excluded. QS quality indicators include academic peer review, recruiter review, faculty-student ratio, faculty citations, and international orientation, emphasizing international and publication citations.

This research reviewed the Philippines' standing in quality assurance, particularly the trends of nursing program accreditation over the past five years. This paper illustrates the overall state of nursing schools using common indicators and explains the challenges for educational evaluators, assessors, quality assurance officers, examiners, and commissioners.

Methodology

Diverse strategies are used in the document analysis. To identify regulatory frameworks and dynamic standards, an analysis of the Policies, Standards, and Guidelines on the Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program was undertaken, beginning with the CHED Memorandum Orders. Compliance with self-imposed benchmarks was determined by reviewing the Institutional Sustainability Assessment Self-Evaluation Documents (ISA-SED). The list of accredited institutions (international and local) provided valuable insights into specific institutions' accomplishments. In contrast, the statistical data from CHED and the Professional Regulatory Board of Nursing contributed to a statistical overview of accreditation status. Finally, a thorough review of the most recent scholarly articles on quality assurance and nursing

education from the previous five years was conducted. This entailed bringing together various points of view to create an article that synthesized academic discourse, institutional practices, regulatory frameworks, and practices.

The authors adhered to the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) Core Practices. The authors took measures to promote accountability and transparency, implemented well-defined procedures for addressing misconduct allegations, and approached each claim equally. Strict authorship and contributorship policies were upheld, encompassing transparent definitions and dispute-resolution mechanisms. The authors disclose no conflicts of interest.

Results

CHED Accreditation

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) governs the higher education institutions in the country. The leading universities are the University of the Philippines, Ateneo de Manila University, University of Santo Tomas, and De La Salle University, which offer nursing programs.

According to CHED data, the country had 333 schools offering nursing programs as of July 2021. Nursing schools were most prevalent in the National Capital Region, Calabarzon, and Central Luzon, with 62, 49, and 29 nursing schools, respectively. However, not all of these institutions have applied for accreditation. The CHED had only accredited 101 HEIs as of January 24, 2022, of which only 11 offer nursing programs. That means only 3 percent (11/333) of nursing programs are now accredited by CHED.

The authors examined the most recent available data on accredited nursing programs because accreditation can be sought for a program rather than an institution (March 2018). The list indicates the level and length of accreditation granted. According to the data, there were 84 HEIs with certified nursing programs. There were 79 bachelor's programs and 14 master's programs among these. Only ten nursing programs and three master's programs are still accredited in 2022, according to the duration of accreditation granted. This approximates and agrees with the January 24, 2022 data.

Nursing programs are accredited at a rate of 3 percent, lower than the national average of 10 percent for all programs across all professions. A few programs have achieved high levels, even Level IV (7 baccalaureate and two master's programs). However, these are few

Table 1. *Performance Ratings of Universities Offering the Nursing Program in the Philippines (2017 - 2021)*

		First Timers				
		Passed	Failed	Conditional	Total	%Passed
Jun-17	2017	2436	882	2	3320	73.37
Nov-17	2017	3873	954	2	4829	80.2
Jun-18	2018	2701	552	1	3254	83.01
Nov-18	2018	3961	1404	4	5369	73.78
Jun-19	2019	2909	464	0	3373	86.24
Nov-19	2019	5776	1038	1	6815	84.75
Jun-20	2020					
Nov-20	2020					
Jul-21	2021	2406	460	6	2872	83.77
Nov-21	2021	2504	690	4	3198	78.3
May-22	2022	1514	303	2	1819	83.23

		Retakers				
		Passed	Failed	Conditional	Total	%Passed
Jun-17	2017	1446	6409	1	7856	18.41
Nov-17	2017	2002	6038	0	8040	24.9
Jun-18	2018	1625	4993	1	6619	24.55
Nov-18	2018	850	5812	0	6662	12.76
Jun-19	2019	2150	4167	1	6318	34.03
Nov-19	2019	1851	5149	1	7001	26.44
Jun-20	2020					
Nov-20	2020					
Jul-21	2021	2602	2264	8	4874	53.39
Nov-21	2021	3582	5040	7	8629	41.51
May-22	2022	5102	2794	13	7909	64.51

		Overall Performance				
		Passed	Failed	Conditional	Total	%Passed
Jun-17	2017	3882	7291	3	11167	37.74
Nov-17	2017	5875	6992	2	12869	45.65
Jun-18	2018	4326	5545	2	9873	43.82
Nov-18	2018	4811	7216	4	12031	39.99
Jun-19	2019	5059	4631	1	9691	52.2
Nov-19	2019	7627	6187	2	13816	55.2
Jun-20	2020					
Nov-20	2020					
Jul-21	2021	5008	2724	14	7746	64.65
Nov-21	2021	6086	5730	11	11827	51.46
May-22	2022	6616	3097	15	9728	68.01

Professional Regulation Commission Uploaded Documents

compared to the vast majority who have not applied for accreditation. Most accredited programs (75-78%) have only received Level II accreditation or less. Remember that a Level III accreditation denotes exceptional performance across the quality indicators, while a Level IV accreditation denotes global excellence.

Regarding accreditation, the quality of nursing education in the Philippines does not appear to be high. Of the twelve institutions granted, eight are private, and 4 are state universities. However, each category has an equal number of COE and COD.

PRC Licensure Examinations

Table 1 presents the performance of first-time candidates, retakers, and the overall performance of takers in a series of examinations across various years. The data includes the number of candidates who passed, failed, and received conditional results, along with the total number of candidates and the percentage of candidates who passed.

The analysis of examination data reveals significant trends in candidate performance, with a notable difference between first-time and retaker profiles. While the overall passing rate has steadily increased over the years, this trend is not universally applicable, especially for first-time examinees, who show a more unpredictable trend. Furthermore, a notable observation is that more nurses are taking the exam in November than in July, indicating a distinct pattern in the takers' profiles. Retakers outnumber first- time candidates, and the passing rate for first-timers is consistently twice that of retakers, indicating a significant performance gap. The impact of the pandemic years is an important highlight, where a compelling shift is observed. Passing rates for retakers have increased significantly, rising from an average of 23.5% (2017-2019) to 53.1% (2021-2022). In contrast, first-time candidates maintain a consistent average passing rate, ranging from 80.2% (2017-2019) to 82.8% (2021-2022).

As for international standards, according to a Florida study conducted in 2015, the Philippines did not rank among the top 100 universities in the world, nor the top ten in Asia, and only a few made the top QS 500 list.

Discussion

The accreditation system assesses various quality indicators based on outcome-driven and input-driven criteria. The primary goal is to ensure that HEIs seeking program accreditation exceed the minimum criteria set by CHED. (Conchada and Tiongco, 2015). Accreditation is private and voluntary (Conchada & Tiongco, 2015; CHED CMO 01 s2005). Slightly more than 10% of the entire population has been accredited, primarily due to the low participation rate resulting from the voluntary nature of the country's accreditation system. In the case of the nursing profession, it is even less, with only 3% of HEIs offering nursing programs accredited. Despite the efforts of both public and private accrediting agencies and the CHED enforcement of the minimum requirements for a program to operate, HEIs with programs are still performing poorly, as reflected in their board passing rate and low employment rate in their respective fields.

The staggering number of approximately 124,000 licensed and registered Filipino nurses unemployed, underemployed, or working in unrelated fields highlights a critical issue in the domestic labor market and quality assurance in nursing education. Compounded by the fact that 51% of licensed nurses, or 316,415, sought employment opportunities abroad in 2021 (Flores & Porcalla, 2023; Beltran, 2023; Dela Pena, 2023), the situation necessitates a critical examination of the factors contributing to the mismatch between the supply of qualified nurses and the available opportunities within the country. This evident mismatch between the number of licensed nurses and the domestic demand underscores the imperative to align nursing education with the dynamic needs of the local healthcare industry.

The concern of more than 10,000 prospective nurses failing the board exam in 2022 and 2023 (Beltran, 2023) emphasizes the need for targeted strategies to improve nursing graduates' preparation and employability in the local healthcare sector. The increasing number of prospective nurses failing the board exam emphasizes the importance of reassessing and improving the quality of nursing education programs to ensure graduates are adequately prepared for the profession's demands. Quality assurance efforts should prioritize curriculum relevance, practical skill development, and fostering a closer alignment between educational outcomes and the changing healthcare employment opportunities in the Philippines.

There is a need to assess whether evaluation and quality assurance measurements are aligned with the program goals or core competencies. According to CMO 15 (CHED, 2017), a professional nurse must perform three major roles: client care, leadership and management, and research. Anchored in the nursing process, the Philippine Nurse Licensure Examination utilizes a framework that emphasizes health promotion, illness prevention, curative and rehabilitative care, and the alleviation of suffering. The competencies tested align with the eleven key areas of responsibility outlined in the Competency Standards of Nursing Practice in the Philippines, encompassing Patient Care Competencies, Empowering Competencies, Enabling Competencies, and Enhancing Competencies (PRC, 2022).

The examination ensures a comprehensive assessment of nurses' abilities in safe and quality nursing care, communication, collaboration, and ongoing professional development. These sections encompass Community Health Nursing, Care of Healthy/At Risk Mother and Child, and Care of Clients with Physiologic and Psychosocial Alterations. The examination evaluates fundamental knowledge, skills, and attitudes in key subject areas, including Fundamentals of Nursing, Maternal and Child Nursing, Community Health, Communicable Disease Nursing, Nursing of Adolescents, Adults and Aged, and Mental Health and Psychiatric Nursing (PRC, 2022). It was not stated, however, that actual skills are being tested.

It should be noted, however, that the Professional Regulation Commission has mandated under CMO 14 the submission of clinical cases (5 Major Scrubs, 5 Minor Scrubs, 5 Newborn Delivery, 5 Delivery Assist, and 5 Cord Dressing). This will assess nursing students' abilities to assist as scrub and circulating nurses, deliver a baby, and provide newborn care (PRC, 2016). Given the increasing cases of poor care despite rising healthcare standards worldwide (Gamble & Ion, 2017), we suggest that the importance of practical examinations be reconsidered.

In order to evaluate clinical competence, an Objective Structured Clinical Exam can help novice nursing practitioners handle real-life situations in their job, according to the findings of Chen et al. (2021). Although the Objective Structured Clinical Exam (OSCE) is already included in the Bachelor of Nursing Curriculum as a formative evaluation, a summative evaluation of this type may be beneficial. This relates to certain comparisons between the content of the nursing board exam and that of the dentistry exam, in which practical examinations are included. However, considering the relatively smaller number of examinees (1,479 in dentistry versus 14,634 in nursing as of May 2023 (PRC)), this cannot be supported at this time due to the impracticability of the assessment. Investigating viable options for evaluating essential nursing skills, such as patient assessment, comforting distressed family members, utilizing nonverbal therapeutic communication, and applying nursing core values is crucial. It is necessary to investigate modified approaches in order to achieve a balance between practical competency evaluation requirements and the need for feasibility.

Moreover, using a comprehensive multiple-choice exam to assess the four-year learning journey may not accurately reflect the quality of education. While the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) employs diverse strategies like multiple responses (select all that apply), Bow Tie, and Fill-in-the-blank, among others, Flores-Harris (2019) highlights a shift in the NCLEX approach. This change aims to prioritize clinical judgment, responding to the observed deficiency in novice nurses' critical thinking and decision-making skills. It addresses the concern of the struggles of nurses to apply their academic knowledge effectively in real-world practical settings.

The focus of quality assurance in nursing education in the Philippines primarily revolves around using the licensure examination as the main indicator of student performance. However, this is just one aspect of a complex process. Regrettably, this exclusive concentration fails to adequately assess other crucial dimensions essential to the educational environment. Missing from the evaluation are assessments of faculty credentials, the variety and sufficiency of educational materials, the efficiency of support systems, and the extent and influence of community engagement initiatives - all of which are essential elements of the horizontal dimension as specified in CMO No. 46, s 2012.

Finally, how we can assist retakers in passing their exams is challenging for all faculty members and educational leaders.

Accrediting organizations should try to refocus, remodel, and strategize their purpose. Much of the responsibility given to them is centered on the infrastructure aspect of institutions rather than determining the credibility and reliance of the institution in achieving its vision and mission. A balance between their purpose and goal should be studied and adapted to the needs of the new generation rather than being stuck to the needs of the past generations. Restructuring the system of how the institutions respond to the changing times should be prioritized, if not at least considered. In exchange, the government should take a proactive stance in performing the checks and balances of the institutions they allow to operate.

The nursing profession should be taken care of to improve its standards worldwide. It should constantly be revisited and protected so the Philippines will maintain its relevance in the world as an esteemed provider of health care professionals in a global standard.

The persistently low results of the Philippine licensure exams and nursing school accreditation rates indicate a critical need for a comprehensive reevaluation of the present state of education. While the root causes are multifaceted, a proactive approach entails cultivating a culture where accreditation is viewed as a strategic imperative for institutions rather than a choice. Understanding what drives schools to seek accreditation is critical, necessitating a nuanced examination of the intricate interplay between academic institutions, regulatory bodies, and the larger educational ecosystem. The need to meet international quality standards in nursing education should be recognized, prompting regulatory bodies to pressure institutions to pursue accreditation rigorously.

To initiate a transformative shift toward accreditation, governing bodies must work together to create a regulatory environment that actively encourages and, in some cases, mandates accreditation. International benchmarks should be incorporated into the accreditation process, creating a global standard for institutions to strive for. However, accreditation should not be treated as a formality; it necessitates stringent quality controls to ensure that the accreditation process reflects a genuine commitment to raising educational standards. The collective goal is to improve the overall quality of nursing education in the Philippines by creating a climate where accreditation is both a regulatory requirement and a symbol of educational excellence.

Recommendation

The authors recommend that nursing institutions foster a culture of proactive engagement with accreditation and self-assessment processes. Institutions should prioritize conducting extensive research and studies to identify areas for improvement in the quality assurance of nursing education. It is critical to understand that accreditation can ensure quality assurance by covering the dynamics of the flow of nursing educators, thoroughly researching teacher shortages and rapid turnover rates, critically examining educational outcomes, and ensuring that syllabi adhere to established standards.

Furthermore, institutions should be encouraged to actively pursue accreditation, as it not only improves educational standards but also acts as a deterrent to the unfortunate trend of skilled professionals seeking opportunities abroad, preventing a drain on the overall quality of nursing education in the country.

References

Amanonce, J. and Maramag, A. (2020). *Licensure examination performance and academic achievement of teacher education graduates. International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*. 9(3). pp. 510~516. DOI: 10.11591/ijere.v9i3.20614

Appiah, S. (2021). *Quality of Nursing Education in the Philippines: The Impact of Nursing Programme Profile* (pp.1-14). Research Square. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-847625/v1

Babate, J. and Catiwa, J. (2023). Filipino nurses play a significant role in global health. Philippine Daily Inquirer. Retrieved from https://opinion.inquirer.net/163187/filipino-nurses-play-a-significant-role-in-global-health#ixzz8Kou4yfTm

Beltran, M. (2023). Philippines to hire unlicensed nurses as shortages bite. Nikkei Asia. https://asia.nikkei.com/ Business/Health-Care/Philippines-to-hire-unlicensed-nurses-as-shortages-bite

Chen, S. H., Chen, S. C., Lai, Y. P., Chen, P. H., & Yeh, K. Y. (2021). The objective structured clinical examination as an assessment strategy for clinical competence in novice nursing practitioners in Taiwan. BMC nursing, 20(1), 91. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12912-021-00608-0

Commission on Higher Education. (2012). 2012. *Guidelines for the Implementation of CMO 46.*

Commission on Higher Education. (2005). *CHED Memorandum Order No. 01 Series of 2005. Revised Policies and Guidelines on Voluntary Accreditation in Aid of Quality and Excellence in Higher Education.* Retrieved from https://ched.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/CMO-No.01-s2005.pdf

Commission on Higher Education. (2017a). *CHED Memorandum Order No. 15 Series of 2017 Policies, Standards, and Guidelines for the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) Program.*

Commission on Higher Education. (2017b). *Institutional Sustainability Assessment Self-Evaluation Document (ISA-SED).*

Commission on Higher Education. (2018). *Certified Levels as of March 10, 2018 (191 member institutions, 1,661 program).* Retrieved from https://www.sei.dost.gov.ph/images/stsd/certlevelfaap.pdf

Commission on Higher Education. (n.d. -a). *List of Centers of Excellence and Development.* Retrieved from https://ched.gov.ph/centers-excellence-centers-developmentcoescods/

Commission on Higher Education. (n.d. -b) *Deputized Higher Education Institutions.* Retrieved form https://ched.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/OPRKM-ETEEAP-Data-Request-as-of-January-24-2022.pdf

Corpus, M.T. (2003). Historical perspectives of the Philippine quality assurance system. *Journal of Philippine Higher Education Quality Assurance, 1*(1), 1–7.

Conchada, M., & Tiongco, M. (2015). *A Review of the Accreditation System for Philippine Higher Education Institutions* (pp. 1-44). Makati: Philippine Institute for Development Studies. Retrieved from https://dirp3.pids.gov.ph/webportal/CDN/PUBLICATIONS/ pidsdps1530.pdf

Cuyegkeng, M., Detoya, G., Lapitan, L., Laurito, A., Lorenzo, F., Teehankee, B., Vea, R., and Vicencio, E. (2013). CHED Implementation Handbook for OBE and ISA CHED TFOTQA. Retrieved from https://vle.upm.edu.ph/pluginfile.php/151958/mod_ resource/content/1/CHED%20Implementation%20Handbook-OBE%20ISA-02072014.pdf

Dela Pena, K. (2023). Filipino Nurses' best' in the world but decent pay, work elusive in Philippines. Philippine Daily Inquirer. Asia News Network. Retrieved from https://asianews.network/filipino-nurses-best-in-the-world-but-decent-pay-work-elusive-in-philippines/

Flores, H. and Porcalla, D. (2023). DOH: 124,000 nurses jobless, underemployed. The Philippine Star. https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2023/07/12/2280490/doh-124000-nurses-jobless-underemployed

Flores-Harris, M. (2019). A Radical Change to Nursing Board Exams. Medscape. https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/917116?form=fpf

Florida, J ,& Quinto ,M. (2015) .*Quality Indicators In Higher Education Institutions:Implications to Global Competitiveness.* The Online Journal of Quality in Higher Education, 2(4),53-62.

Gamble C. and Ion, R. (2017). Poor Care and the Professional duty of the Registered Nurse. Nursing Older People. 29, 4, 20-24. doi: 10.7748/nop.2017.e908

López-Entrambasaguas, O. M., Calero-García, M. J., Díaz-Meco-Niño, A. M., & Martínez-Linares, J. M. (2019). Quality Assurance in Nursing Education: A Qualitative Study Involving Students and Newly Graduated Nurses. International journal of environmental research and public health, 17(1), 240. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17010240

M. Honingh, M. Genugten, and R. Blom (2018). Do Boards Have Any Importance? Investigating the link between school boards and educational quality. Administration and public policy 35. Sage Journals (1). https://doi.org/10.1177/0952076718789739

Professional Regulatory Board of Nursing. (2016). Type of Qualification and Documentary Requirements to Accompany an Application to Take a Licensure Examination. https://www.prc.gov.ph/uploaded/documents/mListofRequirements.pdf

Professional Regulatory Board of Nursing. (2021). Program of the Philippine Nurse Licensure Examination on July 3 and 4, 2021 in Manila, All Regional Offices, and Zamboanga. Professional Regulation Commission. https://www.prc.gov.ph/sites/default/files/PNLE%20Progam%20%20JULY%202021%20LOGO.pdf

Professional Regulatory Board of Nursing (2022). Program of the Philippine Nurse Licensure Examination on May 29 and 30, 2022 in NCR, Baguio, Cagayan De Oro, Cebu, Davao, Iloilo, Koronadal, Legazpi, Lucena, Pagadian, Pampanga, Rosales, Tacloban, Tuguegarao and Zamboanga. Retrieved at https://www.prc.gov.ph/sites/default/files/032122%20exam%20progam%20MAY%202022%20PNLE%20(nursing).pdf

Sala-I-Martín, X., Bilbao-Osorio, B., Hanouz, M. D., Galvan, C., & Geiger, T. (2014). *The Global Competitiveness Index 2014-2015: Accelerating a Robust Recovery to Create Productive Jobs and Support Inclusive Growth* (Issue 1). http://www3.weforum.org/docs/GAC/2014/

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Ria Valerie D. Cabanes, MAN is an Assistant Professor at The University of the Philippines Open University (UPOU), teaching various health-related courses. She is presently the program chair of the Master of Arts in Nursing (MAN) program at UPOU. Her research interests and pursuits center on education, nursing academics, mental health, and online and distance learning.

Raquel Joaquin-Quino MD, MHPEd is a Clinical Associate Professor from the University of the Philippines-College of Medicine. She holds a master's degree in Health Professions Education and practices as an ophthalmologist with a subspecialty in Glaucoma. Research interests include andragogy, self-directed learning, health professions education and glaucoma.

Maria Lourdes Dorothy S. Salvacion is a practicing dentist and Assistant Professor from the University of the Philippines, National Teacher Training Center for the Health Professions. She has a master's degree in Health Professions Education, and is currently finishing her doctoral studies in Health Professions Education. Her research interests are academic stress and resilience, health professions education, spirituality and health

Acknowledgment