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Perspectives of Implementers on the Student Teacher Practicum Program of a Philippine University: Inputs for Program Improvement

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Abstract

This study sought to determine the perspectives of the 316 program implementers of the Student Teacher Practicum Program in the Leyte Normal University, Tacloban City. Using the descriptive survey method the inquiry focused on the importance, objectives, relevance, and competencies of the program. The Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to test the level of significance between the perspectives of “in-campus” and “off-campus” respondents. The implementers construed the program as Very Important, Very Effective in attaining its objectives, Very Relevant, and the competencies Very Useful. The null hypotheses were not rejected on the aspects of importance, attaining the objectives and competencies while on the aspect of relevance it was rejected.

Keywords: *Student Teaching Program, Perspectives, Implementers*

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Introduction

Education as a profession is considered the most important as other professions highly depend on teachers. Training of future teachers is thus of equal importance as it orients students to the reality of the world of work in the classroom.

The Leyte Normal University (LNU) is a state university recognized as a teacher training institution in the Eastern Visayas Region in the Philippines. It was awarded the Center of Excellence (COE) in teacher training status by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). As such, it is tasked to produce quality graduates in education both in the fields of Bachelor in Elementary Education (BEED) and Bachelor in Secondary Education (BSED).

One of the most important trainings that each education student must undergo is the Student Teaching Practicum/Internship Program. This is part of the curriculum in both the elementary and secondary education programs. Under this program students are assigned to different participating schools for their practicum/internship assignments. They are required to finish a total of two (2) shifts. The final stage before certification, student teaching, emphasizes the processes of becoming a teacher and its purpose is the full assumption of the teacher's role in a learning community. The Student Teaching Program provides an opportunity to develop and evaluate the student's competence in an actual school setting. Student teaching is intended to bridge theory and practice.

Perspectives (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993) are set in the concrete world of actual situations and refer to particular actions. It is imperative that the perspectives of the people involved in the program implementation are taken into consideration in order to have bases for changes that may be adapted in the program under scrutiny. The different viewpoints of the people involved in the program are based on the meaning that the program has impressed upon them. Meanings are the bases of perspectives. Meaning is what Beard (1934) referred to as the frame of reference on which thought and action are consciously or unconsciously based.

The Student Teaching Program aims to acquaint future teachers with the professional and social responsibilities of a regular teacher, orient them on the needs, interests, and conditions of the community where they expect to teach, provide them with relevant experiences to develop desirable professional interests, attitudes, ideals, character and skills.

The program includes an "in-campus" and "off-campus" actual teaching experience. The "**In Campus**" is done in the Integrated Laboratory School (ILS) of the University. The student finds himself in an educational environment where he has ample opportunity to engage in profitable experience in observation, in sharing and participating, and in teaching with the guidance and supervision of college and laboratory personnel. It is an environment established to enable the students to gain self-confidence and self-direction as they work with children. The "**Off-Campus**" teaching experience is done in cooperating schools. These cooperating schools are public elementary and secondary schools operated by the Department of Education (DepEd) which assists the University with some phase of the teacher education program. These public schools receive student teachers under some agreements with the University.

This study aims to gather the perspectives of the implementers of the program to improve the program to make it more effective as a tool for producing high caliber teachers who are well-imbued with knowledge, skills, and attitudes for effective development of the children.

This study sought to answer the following questions: 1. What is the Profile of the implementers in terms of the a) age; b) sex; c) civil status; d) highest educational attainment, and; e) work experience. 2. How do the implementers view the program along its a) importance; b) objectives; c) relevance, and; d) competencies. 3. Do implementers from "in-campus" and "off-campus" differ in their perspectives of the Student Teaching Practicum Program?

This study will utilize the "Improvement-Focused Model" as adopted by Posavac and Carey (2003). It is a model of evaluation in which program improvement is the focus rather than particular methodologies. Improvements can be made in programs when discrepancies are noted between what is observed and what was planned, projected, or needed. Evaluators help program staff to discover discrepancies between program objectives and the needs of the target population, between program implementation and program plans, between expectations of the target population and the services actually delivered, or between outcomes achieved and outcomes projected. The improvement-focused model best meets the criteria necessary for effective evaluation: serving the needs of stakeholders, providing valid information, and offering alternative point of view to those doing the really hard work of serving program participants.

The Conceptual Framework

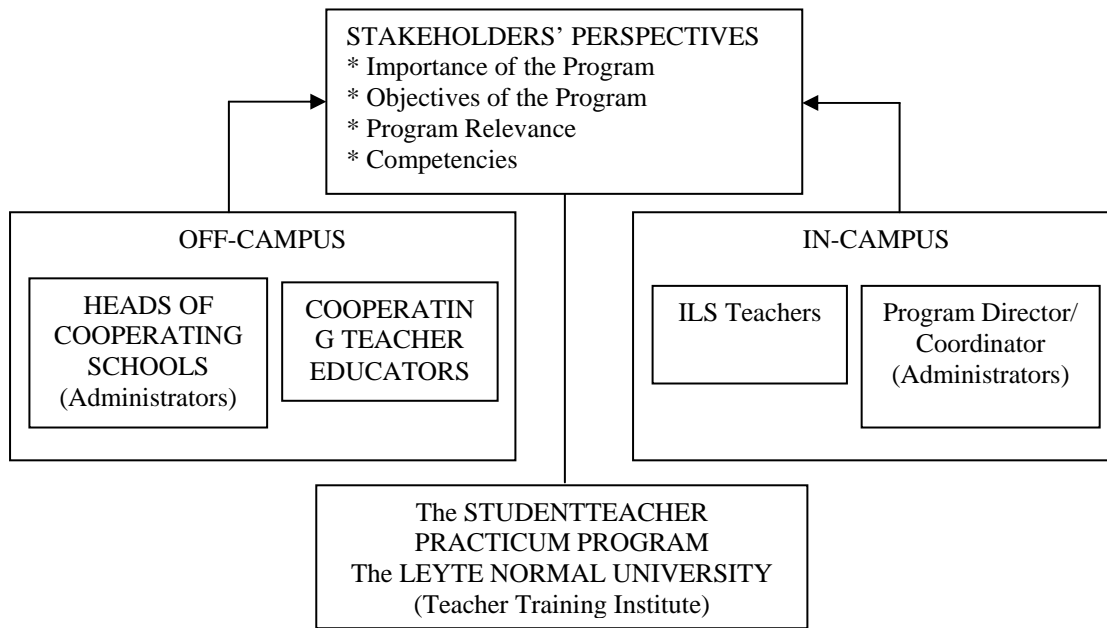


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

This study sought to prove the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the perspectives of stakeholders from “in-campus” and “off-campus” on the Student Teaching Program.

The study covered the Student Teaching Practicum/Internship program implementation during the 1st and 2nd semesters of school year 2007-2008.

The implementation of the Student Teaching program is a collaborative effort of supervisors of student teaching and the cooperating teachers for mentors. This is the phase of teacher education during which a student teacher receives guidance in learning to assume responsibility for the major activities of real teachers.

Bago (2001) asserted that curriculum planning involves participation of various stakeholders. Some participants are school-based (teacher, students, administrators, curriculum specialists); and the others are community-based (parents, community leaders, national government officials, non-government organizations). They provide valuable inputs needed in developing the implementation scheme.

Ochave (2003) in his article in the *Journal of Southeast Asian Education* said the stakeholders-friendly evaluation model is anchored on the principle of stakeholders’ participation as the right subjects in the evaluation process of the program for the simple reason that they are part of the program. Hence they are the beneficiaries, processors, and recipients of the products of the program. The evaluation of the effectiveness of the teacher education program should possess the criteria of simplicity, comprehensiveness, flexibility, isomorphism, efficiency, intuitive appeal, and validity.

Llamas (2007) in her dissertation evaluated the current status of the Education Program of the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Pasay (PLP) of which the results were used as the baseline data for a five-year strategic management plan. A total of two hundred nineteen (219) respondents from the top management, faculty, and students participated in the study. Eight (8) were from the top management, 14 faculty members, 197 senior students of which 101 were from the BSEED and 96 were from the BSSED. Evaluation provides strong basis for decision makers whether a particular program is accomplishing its goals and objectives or not. It is imperative that learning institutions should undergo assessment or evaluation to attain quality and excellence. Their existing laws, policies, and standards are improved or superseded to adapt to the needs of the changing times. This study sought to get the perspectives of the in-campus and off-campus program implementers as inputs for program improvement.

Castro (2006) in his dissertation analysed the determinants of the performance of the student teachers in selected SUCs and used its results as inputs to student teachers’ enhancement program. His respondents included 265 fourth year education students of University of Rizal System who finished

student teaching in the 1st semester of SY 2005-2006 and 25 professors and instructors of the Professional Education Unit. The study concluded that the perceptions of the professionals and beginning teachers differ. The faculty, school, student, and cooperating school related factors influence the performance of the student teachers while the personal qualities, professional qualities, and managerial qualities of a teacher, organizational climate, facilities and physical plant, curriculum, student teaching program, student teaching supervision, and administrative support, political factors, social factors, economic factors, and technological factors of school, personal qualities, and managerial qualities of student, venue or place of assignment, methodology, physical facilities, and control mechanism of the cooperating school are predictors of the performance of the student teacher.

The descriptive survey research method was used in this study. The data gathered were subjected to statistical processing to determine the perspectives of the implementers. Analysis of the data was then made to determine whether there was significant difference between the perspectives of the in-campus and off-campus stakeholders.

This study was conducted at the Leyte Normal University and the eighteen (18) cooperating schools of the Tacloban City Division, specifically, seven (7) high schools and eleven (11) elementary schools.

From in-campus, a total of 10 respondents divided into the following: 3 Program Coordinators; 6 Teachers of the LNU-Integrated Laboratory School (LNU-ILS), and; (c) the Program In-Charge.

From off-campus, a total of 306 respondents divided into the following: (a) 18 school principals or heads of cooperating schools, and; (c) 288 cooperating teachers.

The main data gathering instrument was a questionnaire prepared by the researcher utilizing the student teaching/internship manual in identifying the essential aspects of the program then proceeded to formulate the questions relative thereto. The questionnaire was designed to solicit and document the perspectives of the program coordinator, the program director, the heads of cooperating schools, and the cooperating teachers on the following aspects of the student teacher practicum program: (a) importance of the program; (b) attaining the objectives of the program; (c) program relevance, and; (d) competencies.

The researcher sought permission from the University President to conduct the study. Permission was also sought from the Tacloban City Schools Superintendent for the study to be conducted in the schools in the City Division. The overall retrieval rate stands at 89.38 percent.

To determine the average perceptions of the implementers on the importance, objectives, relevance, and competencies, frequency counting, percentages, and weighted means were used. The Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS) was resorted to compute and determine the mean and standard deviation.

The T-test was used to test the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the perspectives of stakeholders from “in-campus” and “off-campus” on the Student Teaching Program.

Results and Discussions

The respondents are classified as “in-campus” and “off-campus” stakeholders. From the in-campus, respondents include 10 teacher educators. The off-campus respondents include 18 school heads and 288 STE/CTE or a total of 316 implementers. Majority, 299 or 94 percent of the 316 were from Tacloban City. Only 2 respondents or 1 percent came from the Province of Leyte. Seventeen (17) or 5 percent did not indicate their place of residence. The Average age of the implementers stood at 42.77. Out of the 316 respondents, 280 or 88 percent were females while only 34 or 11 percent were males. Two (2) failed to indicate their gender. Majority at 244 or 77 percent were married while 45 or 14 percent were single, 13 or 4 percent were widow/er(s) and 12 or 4 percent did not indicate their status. Majority of implementers at 274 or 88 percent had Baccalaureate Degrees, only 6 or 2 percent had Doctorate Degrees, 26 or 8 percent had Masters Degrees, while 10 or 3 percent had taken subjects in post graduate programs. On work experience, 43 or 13.84 percent had been in the service from 1-5 years, 58 or 18.55 percent had 6-10 work experience, 42 or 13.21 percent had 11-15 years, 34 or 10.69 percent had 16-20 years, 15 or 5 percent had 21-25 years experience, and 34 or 10.69 percent claimed 26 and above years of teaching experience.

The perspectives of the implementers as to the importance of the program are presented in Table 1. It may be noted that the overall mean of their perspectives stood at 2.91 with a description of Very Important (VI). Among the variables, the item on *as an opportunity to interact with pupils, teachers, supervisors and administrators* got the highest mean of 2.97 described as Very Important (VI). The variable on the *opportunity to understand problems of school administrators* got the lowest mean of 2.83 interpreted as Very Important (VI).

Table 1. Perspectives of implementers on the importance of the program

INDICATOR	PERSPECTIVES													
	In-Campus						Off-Campus						Overall	
	Administrators		In-Campus ILS Teachers		submean		Administrators		STE/CTE		submean			
	\bar{x}	D	\bar{x}	D	\bar{x}	D	\bar{x}	D	\bar{x}	D	\bar{x}	D	\bar{x}	D
Component of the Curriculum	3.00	VI	3.00	VI	3.00	VI	2.94	VI	2.83	VI	2.89	VI	2.94	VI
Development of student teacher	2.75	VI	3.00	VI	2.87	VI	2.89	VI	2.84	VI	2.87	VI	2.87	VI
Opportunity to gain initial insights	2.75	VI	3.00	VI	2.87	VI	3.00	VI	2.89	VI	2.95	VI	2.91	VI
Opportunity to interact with apply the knowledge, skills and attitudes	3.00	VI	3.00	VI	3.00	VI	2.89	VI	2.88	VI	2.89	VI	2.95	VI
Opportunity to interact with pupils, teachers, supervisors and administrators	3.00	VI	3.00	VI	3.00	VI	3.00	VI	2.86	VI	2.93	VI	2.97	VI
Evaluating the competencies and readiness of student teachers	3.00	VI	3.00	VI	3.00	VI	2.89	VI	2.86	VI	2.88	VI	2.94	VI
Getting acquainted with the usual problems encountered by teachers	2.75	VI	3.00	VI	2.87	VI	3.00	VI	2.85	VI	2.93	VI	2.90	VI
Developing the skills to understand individual differences of pupils	2.75	VI	3.00	VI	2.87	VI	2.89	VI	2.86	VI	2.88	VI	2.88	VI
Opportunity to understand the problems of school administrators	2.75	VI	2.83	VI	2.79	VI	3.00	VI	2.71	VI	2.86	VI	2.83	VI
OVERALL MEAN	2.86	VI	2.98	VI	2.92	VI	2.94	VI	2.84	VI	2.90	VI	2.91	VI

Legend: 2.31 - 3.0 Very Important (VI); 1.51-2.30 - Important (I); 1.0-1.50 - Not Important (NI)

These findings indicate that most implementers place high premium on the importance of the program and would likewise expect policy-makers to consider the very important nature of such practicum program in the development of future teachers. Thus, focus should be directed towards improving the policies regarding the Teacher Training Curriculum and make it more responsive to the needs of the profession.

The mean perspectives of the implementers on attaining the objectives of the program are presented in Table 2. It may be noted that the overall mean of the implementers' perspective stood at 3.74 described as Very Effective (VE). Among the variables, the item on *developing the ability to evaluate growth and development of pupils* got the highest mean of 3.85 interpreted as Very Effective (VE) while the item on *orienting to the needs, interests and conditions of the community* got the lowest mean of 3.59 construed as Very Effective (VE).

Table 2. Perspectives of implementers on attaining the objectives of the program

INDICATOR	PERSPECTIVES													
	In-Campus						Off-Campus						Overall	
	Administrators		ILS Teachers		submean		Administrators		STE/CTE		submean			
	- x	D	- x	D	- x	D	- x	D	- x	D	- x	D	- x	D
Acquainting the Student Teacher to the responsibilities of a teacher	3.50	E	4.00	VE	3.75	VE	3.89	VE	3.53	VE	3.71	VE	3.73	VE
Giving meaning to the educational theory through observation	3.75	VE	3.83	VE	3.79	VE	3.83	VE	3.57	VE	3.70	VE	3.75	VE
Developing integration between theory and practice	4.00	VE	3.83	VE	3.92	VE	3.89	VE	3.64	VE	3.77	VE	3.84	VE
Orienting to the needs, interests and conditions of the community	3.25	E	3.67	VE	3.46	VE	3.89	VE	3.53	VE	3.71	VE	3.59	VE
Providing experience to promote general welfare of pupils/students	4.00	VE	3.83	VE	3.92	VE	3.78	VE	3.62	VE	3.70	VE	3.81	VE
Developing a sound, workable, and democratic philosophy of education	3.75	VE	3.67	VE	3.71	VE	3.83	VE	3.60	VE	3.72	VE	3.71	VE
Developing greater understanding of the role of the student teaching program	4.00	VE	4.00	VE	4.00	VE	3.72	VE	3.61	VE	3.67	VE	3.83	VE
Developing the skills and abilities for independent teaching	3.25	E	3.83	VE	3.54	VE	4.00	VE	3.55	VE	3.78	VE	3.66	VE
Developing the skills and ability to recognize individual differences	3.75	VE	3.67	VE	3.71	VE	3.72	VE	3.55	VE	3.64	VE	3.67	VE
Developing ability to evaluate growth and development of pupils	4.00	VE	4.00	VE	4.00	VE	3.89	VE	3.52	VE	3.71	VE	3.85	VE
	3.73	VE	3.83	VE	3.78	VE	3.84	VE	3.57	VE	3.71	VE	3.74	VE

Legend:

3.51 - 4.0 -Very Effective (VE); 2.51 - 3.50 - Effective (E) ; 1.51-2.50 - Ineffective (I); 1.0 - 1.50 - Very Ineffective (VI)

Notably the “in-campus” administrators identified the item on *acquainting the student teacher to the responsibilities of a teacher* with a mean of 3.50, items on *orienting to the needs, interests and conditions of the community* and *developing the skills and abilities for independent teaching* both with a mean of 3.25, all 3 items construed as Effective (E).

The objectives of the program are indeed designed to mold the student teachers into the best they can be as future teachers.

The mean perspectives of the implementers on the relevance of the program are presented in Table 3. The overall mean of the implementers’ perspectives on the relevance of the program in molding the student teachers to become highly competent teachers stood at 2.79 interpreted as Very Relevant (VR). Among the variables the items on *building good human relations* and *personality development* got the highest mean of 2.95 described as Very Relevant (VR) while the item on *sourcing funds from pupils and parents due to low or no budget* got the lowest mean of 2.38 understood as Very Relevant (VR).

Table 3. Perspectives of implementers on the relevance of the program

INDICATOR	PERSPECTIVES															
	Administrators		In-Campus ILS Teachers				Administrators				Off-Campus STE/CTE				Overall	
	\bar{x}	D	\bar{x}	D	\bar{x}	D	\bar{x}	D	\bar{x}	D	\bar{x}	D	\bar{x}	D		
Developing proper skills in lesson planning	3.00	VR	3.00	VR	3.00	VR	3.00	VR	2.76	VR	2.88	VR	2.94	VR		
Developing excellent oral and written communication skills	3.00	VR	3.00	VR	3.00	VR	3.00	VR	2.72	VR	2.86	VR	2.93	VR		
Opportunity for employment as a teacher in the country	3.00	VR	3.00	VR	3.00	VR	3.00	VR	2.71	VR	2.86	VR	2.93	VR		
Opportunity for employment as a teacher abroad	3.00	VR	2.17	R	2.59	VR	2.83	VR	2.49	VR	2.66	VR	2.62	VR		
Building good human relations	3.00	VR	3.00	VR	3.00	VR	3.00	VR	2.78	VR	2.89	VR	2.95	VR		
Personality development	3.00	VR	3.00	VR	3.00	VR	3.00	VR	2.78	VR	2.89	VR	2.95	VR		
Teacher providing their own instructional materials	2.25	R	3.00	VR	2.63	VR	2.89	VR	2.50	VR	2.70	VR	2.66	VR		
Sourcing funds from pupils and parents due to low or no budget	2.50	VR	2.00	R	2.25	R	2.67	VR	2.36	VR	2.52	VR	2.38	VR		
OVERALL MEAN	2.84	VR	2.77	VR	2.81	VR	2.92	VR	2.64	VR	2.78	VR	2.79	VR		

Legend: 2.31-3.0 - Very Relevant (VR); 1.51-2.30 - Relevant (R); 1.0 -1.50 - Not Relevant (NR)

The “in-campus” implementers considered the item on *sourcing funds from pupils and parents due to low or no budget* with a submean of 2.25 described as Relevant (R). ILS Teachers rated the item on *opportunity for employment as a teacher abroad* with a mean of 2.17 understood as Relevant (R) and the item on *sourcing funds from pupils and parents due to low or no budget* with a mean of 2.25 construed as Relevant (R). The Administrators considered the item on *teacher providing their own instructional materials* with a mean of 2.25 taken to mean as Relevant (R).

The mean perspectives of the implementers on the competencies under the program are presented in Table 4. The overall mean of the implementers’ perspectives on the competencies under the program in molding the student teachers to become highly competent teachers stood at 2.96 interpreted as Very Useful (VU). Among the variables, five items on *lesson execution, communication skills, punctuality and attendance, grooming, and human relations* all got the highest mean of 2.98 described as Very Useful (VU) while the item on *classroom management and discipline* got the lowest mean of 2.86 understood as Very Useful (VU).

Table 4. Perspectives of implementers on the competencies in the program

INDICATOR	PERSPECTIVES													
	In-Campus						Off-Campus						Overall	
	Administrators		ILS Teachers		submean		Administrators		STE/CTE		submean			
x	D	x	D	x	D	x	D	x	D	x	D	x	D	
Lesson Planning	3.00	VU	3.00	VU	3.00	VU	3.00	VU	2.87	VU	2.94	VU	2.97	VU
Mastery of Subject Matter	3.00	VU	2.83	VU	2.92	VU	3.00	VU	2.92	VU	2.96	VU	2.94	VU
Lesson Execution	3.00	VU	3.00	VU	3.00	VU	3.00	VU	2.92	VU	2.96	VU	2.98	VU
Communication Skills	3.00	VU	3.00	VU	3.00	VU	3.00	VU	2.91	VU	2.96	VU	2.98	VU
Use of Instructional Materials	3.00	VU	3.00	VU	3.00	VU	3.00	VU	2.88	VU	2.94	VU	2.97	VU
Evaluation Skills	3.00	VU	2.83	VU	2.92	VU	3.00	VU	2.90	VU	2.95	VU	2.93	VU
Classroom Management and Discipline	2.50	VU	3.00	VU	2.75	VU	3.00	VU	2.93	VU	2.97	VU	2.86	VU
Punctuality and attendance	3.00	VU	3.00	VU	3.00	VU	3.00	VU	2.91	VU	2.96	VU	2.98	VU
Grooming	3.00	VU	3.00	VU	3.00	VU	3.00	VU	2.91	VU	2.96	VU	2.98	VU
Human Relations	3.00	VU	3.00	VU	3.00	VU	3.00	VU	2.92	VU	2.96	VU	2.98	VU
OVERALL MEAN	2.95	VU	2.97	VU	2.96	VU	3.00	VU	2.91	VU	2.95	VU	2.96	VU

Legend: 2.31-3.0 - Very Useful (VU); 1.51-2.30 - Useful (U); 1.0-1.50 - Least Useful (LU)

The null hypothesis was not rejected on the aspects of importance, attaining the objectives, and the competencies under the program as no significant difference between the perspectives of the “in-campus” and “off-campus” implementers was determined.

Table 5. Statistical Significance of the Difference of the Means of the Perspectives of Implementers on the different aspects of the Student Teacher Practicum Program between the In-Campus and Off-Campus Implementers

Variables	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Importance	-0.637	0.524	Not Significant
Objectives	1.119	0.264	Not Significant
Relevance	-6.799	0.000	Significant
Competencies	-0.637	0.524	Not Significant

The null hypothesis was rejected on the aspect of relevance of the program as a significant difference between the perspectives of the “in-campus” and “off-campus” implementers was determined.

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are formulated:

1. Program implementers are mostly residents of Tacloban City, a clear evidence that as professionals they are serving in their place of residence. They are mostly married females, with average age of 43 years old, mostly with Baccalaureate Degrees and 6-10 years of work experience.
2. Both the “in-campus” and “off-campus” implementers perceive the Student Practicum Program as Very Important and its objectives Very Effective. The program is Very Relevant and the competencies developed are perceived as Very Useful.
3. No significant differences were noted between the perspectives of the “in-campus” and “off-campus” implementers on the aspects of importance, attaining the objectives, and the competencies developed in the program. However, on the aspect of relevance of the program a significant difference between the perspectives of the “in-campus” and “off-campus” implementers was noted.

The policies on the Teacher Training Curriculum needs to be improved and make it more responsive to the needs of the profession. The university should designate more program coordinators based on the number of students taking the practicum program to allow for close monitoring. It should also strictly implement the policy on elimination to maintain its standards. The admissions committee should be meticulous in the evaluation of the communication skills (oral and written) and competencies of student applicants to the program.

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