Outcomes and Problems of the Librarian's Licensure Examination in the Philippines: An Analysis Using Steps for Coding and Theorization (SCAT)

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This study aims to clarify the outcomes and problems of the Librarian's Licensure Examination and professional licensure system as a vocational qualification, which have been conducted in the Philippines since 1992. The author conducted expert interviews with related individuals and analyzed the content using Steps for Coding and Theorization (SCAT). The results show that the Licensure Examination for Librarians and librarian's licensure system have a great impact on society's recognition of the librarian position as a profession. However, this has also created a shortage of licensed librarians in the workplace. Concerned organizations should cooperate in managing the examination and licensure system.

Keywords: Librarianship Act, Librarian's Licensure Examination, Philippines, Steps for Coding and Theorization (SCAT), vocational qualification

Background and purpose

Vocational qualification as a quality control system for librarians in the Philippines is a unique system in Asia and offers helpful insights for Asian librarians and scholars. Until the legal reform of the vocational qualification system in 1990, the librarian position had not been considered a profession in Filipino society. The academic qualification for a librarian was only an academic degree or a diploma, which is insufficient as proof of a profession in the Philippines; this is due to the massification of higher education after the 1960s, which degraded the quality of higher education and the reliability of academic qualification (Altbach & Selvaratnam, 1997).

The Republic Act 6966, known as the Philippine Librarianship Act of 1990, states that those who want to work in any type of library must pass the national licensure examination, namely the Librarian's Licensure Examination (LLE), to receive the professional qualification of librarian. From a legal perspective, the librarian position now has professional status in the Philippines.

This fact also has value for the sphere of Asian librarians and scholars in general, because the hiring requirement was completely transformed by this change from academic qualification to vocational qualification. It is a moment in the history of Asian library education that is worthy of special

KEY POINTS:

- The Licensure Examination for Librarians and the librarian's licensure system have a great impact on society's recognition of the librarian position as a profession in the Philippines.

- The qualification system of the Philippines is the strictest in the world. Such a strict definition of librarian contributes to enhancing the quality of the profession.

- The Licensure Examination for Librarians and the librarian's licensure system cause a shortage of licensed librarians in the workplace, and the current situation of many vacant posts is a serious problem.

mention, because no other Asian country places limits on the hiring requirement by recognizing vocational qualification; libraries require an academic qualification only. Furthermore, few libraries require that candidates major in library and information science (LIS).

LIS education in southeast Asia has transitioned from the undergraduate level to the graduate level (Miwa, 2006). The level of professional education has increased in the last decade, while LIS quality assurance has been conducted in the region based on an academic degree only, because there is no LIS vocational qualification. Because the quality assurance system for librarians is based on academic qualification, discussions regarding a quality assurance system for library professionals have focused on building an accreditation system (Miyahara, 2015).

Japan, the national origin of the researcher, offers a vocational qualification for librarians (*Shisho*, in Japanese), which has been officially regulated by the Library Law since 1950 as a national certificate. The *Shisho* certificate is obtained through fixed credits in specific subjects at universities. Unlike the situation in the Philippines, there is no national exam requirement in addition to taking courses at an academic institution. It is similar to an academic qualification; however, the *Shisho* program is regarded as a supplement to a regular program, because many of the *Shisho* program credits are not applied to the university graduation requirement, depending on the department's policy. In addition, the *Shisho* certificate is not an absolute requirement when hiring staff for any type of library. Even the National Diet Library does not require a *Shisho* certificate. Therefore, the individual who does not have a *Shisho* certificate can work at a library. As of 2017, the percentage of qualified persons hired as regular staff at public libraries was 52% (Japan Library Association, 2017). This is an obscure system that cannot control the quality and quantity of librarians. The vocational qualification system for librarians has thus been dysfunctional for a long time.

When compared with the Japanese qualification system, it seems that qualification in the Philippines, which excludes unqualified persons from the workplace, strictly follows the rule. This would be an ideal system if the qualification could prove the quality of the profession. However, although

over a quarter-century has passed since the Philippine Librarianship Act was enacted in 1990, only a few studies have examined the substance of the LIS qualification system. It is still unknown whether this qualification system can affect or enhance the quality of the LIS profession. We need to advance related research to understand the significance of vocational qualification for LIS in Asia.

Literature review

The trends in research on LIS education, qualification, and the LLE have changed over the years, from historical and institutional studies based on literature surveys to empirical studies, including case studies. Damaso (1966) and Siega (1969) conducted studies on the history of LIS education in the Philippines during the colonial period. In the 1980s, research on the institutional system of education was presented, including that of Cabañero and Tann (1980) and Vallejo (1981), who at the time examined the new LIS education system.

In the 1990s, when the LLE was instated, some research and conference papers regarding the LLE were presented; academic activities in the LIS sphere in the Philippines are not very active, given that there are no PhD programs in the country. The number of full-time faculty members who can spare enough time and money to conduct research is very low. There are many papers presented by both scholars and librarians; therefore, few scholarly articles are published.

Santos (2003) was the first paper to study the Librarianship Act. It explains the relationship the Library Association has with the licensure examination. Although this was a conference paper presented at the World Congress of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), it led to better understanding of the LLE system globally.

Most empirical studies analyze the exam results using Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) statistics. For instance, Ramos, Ananoria, and Nera (2013) presented factors such as the age, gender, and number of attempts of the examinees, which affected the performance of LLE takers for the period of 2006–2010. They found that none of these factors significantly affects performance on the LLE. Lascano and Bansiong (2017) analyzed the PRC's data on Bachelor of Library and Information Science (BLIS) graduates who took the LLE from 2011 to 2015 and identified the characteristics of those who passed.

Few studies have examined the degree of relevance between the LLE and LIS education. David and Perez (2006) investigated how librarians perceive their readiness for the workplace after graduation and successfully passing the licensure examination. They discovered that the curriculum adequately prepared successful examinees for the examination and the workplace. Lanzuela, Cabonero, Cachola, and Monsanto (2018) studied LLE takers for the period between 2007 and 2013; those studied

were graduates of Saint Mary's University, Nueva Vizcaya. They found that academic performance in major LIS subjects and LIS review classes predicted LIS takers' performance on the LLE.

Very few studies, however, have investigated the result of the LLE and examined its effectiveness in assuring the quality of the profession. Therefore, this study aims to clarify the outcomes and problems associated with the vocational qualification system and to examine the effect of the transition from academic qualification to vocational qualification on enhancing the quality of librarians.

Research methods

Literature survey

This study aims to examine achievements and problems associated with the LLE in the Philippines as the measure for assuring the quality of LIS professionals through vocational qualification. First, a literature survey was conducted to understand the entire LLE context. It included previous studies by scholars and librarians, as well as official examination data and a press release provided by the PRC, which manages the licensure examinations of all professionals in the Philippines.

Interview method: Expert interview

In order to obtain actual evaluations from LLE-related individuals, expert interviews were conducted as semi-structured interviews. The expert interview advocated by Meuser & Nagel (1991) is one in which the interviewee is treated not as an individual but as a professional of a specific sphere. An expert can be described as an individual who specializes in a certain sphere, belongs to an organization with a special function, or has certain professional knowledge gained through experience, or as an individual who has both the knowledge of a professional process and the ability to interpret it.

This study was conducted on the basis of semi-structured interviews with two experts (referred to in this paper as Expert A and Expert B). The researcher selected as interviewees individuals who had a rich experience of being professional librarians and had held several important positions in the library sphere in the Philippines. As one of the interviewees stated, important roles in the Filipino library field are occupied by the same people. The researcher regarded Experts A and B as unique beyond comparison; therefore, for this study only, two interviewees were selected.

The researcher sent interview guides to the interviewees by email before visiting them in Manila. The interview guide included the following topics:

1. LLE achievements and problems;
2. factors in LLE achievements and problems;
3. organized involvement in solving problems;
4. evaluation of the LLE from the standpoint of assuring a profession's quality;

5. evaluation of the LLE from the standpoint of enhancing LIS education quality; and
6. evaluation of the LLE from the standpoint of promoting the job market for librarians.

Each interview was held in Manila on March 6 and 7, 2017, and lasted approximately 150 minutes. Interviews were conducted in English and recorded by an IC recorder. The interviewees were asked to speak freely about the questionnaire items based on the interview guide. This research plan was approved in advance by the research ethics committee of the Sagami Women's University. Before beginning the interviews, the researcher orally explained the purpose and method of the study, as well as privacy protection for interviewees, and obtained consent forms from them.

Analytical methods: SCAT

After the interviews, the researcher converted the audio data from the IC recorder into text data, and analyzed it by coding in the data. Coding methods typically include both template coding and free coding. The latter is a major method in qualitative research. Grounded theory is a representative free-coding method developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) that targets large-scale studies requiring massive data collection and a long research period; it does not apply to small-scale studies and completed studies (Otani, 2008). The researchers instead selected the "Steps for Coding and Theorization: SCAT" method, a qualitative data-analysis method developed by Japanese scholar Takashi Otani (2008). SCAT is effective for a small-scale study such as single data of a specific case study and open-ended questions. Numerous studies have been conducted using SCAT in various research spheres, including educational technology, educational sociology, clinical research, pharmacy, and nursing (Otani, 2017). However, no research had been conducted in the LIS sphere until now.

SCAT is an analytical method that consists of a four-step coding process in which the researcher edits segmented text by adding the code <1> to target words within the text, <2> to words outside of the text that can be replaced by the words from 1, <3> to words that explain the words in 1 and 2, and <4> to themes and constructs. It includes a process of writing a storyline and offering theories that weave together the themes and constructs.

The interview data were segmented and entered into an analytical worksheet with a table. The analytical tables were divided into four groups from <1> to <4>. The storyline was combined with the above four topics/constructs, and the theory generalized from them was described. Since the storyline is an integral and structural description that re-contextualizes the meanings of deep layers of data, the theory can be described through fragmented storylines.

In the SCAT method, the theory is not posited as universal. It refers to a generally accepted principle that can be inferred from the data. This concrete method, which can be performed individually in diverse situations, is not general or universal (Otani, 2008).

Librarianship and the qualification system in the Philippines

Vocational qualification system

In the Philippines, the history of vocational qualification can be traced to the United States' sovereignty. In the 1900s, some professional associations were established in certain spheres and began to offer their own training programs and original certificates. For example, an accounting association offered an original examination and certification as of 1925. With respect to the library sphere, the first professional association, the Philippine Library Association (currently, the Philippine Librarians Association, Inc.), was established in October 1923. Until the LLE was implemented, the Library Association had not offered an original examination or certificate (PRC, 2018).

Since independence in 1946, the number of professional associations has increased, and multiple bodies in each professional sphere have been established. To monitor and manage the increasing number of professional bodies, the PRC was established in 1973 as a national government agency under the Office of the President. In 1975, the PRC began an accreditation for associations to assure their quality. Currently, selected associations given the accreditation are called Accredited Professional Organizations (APO). Successful applicants of licensure examinations are registered to the APO automatically. This includes the Philippine Librarians Association Inc., which is the only nationally accredited professional organization of librarians in the Philippines (Santos, 2003).

The Professional Regulation Commission Modernization Act of 2000 (RA8981) was signed in December 2000. As a result, the function of the PRC changed. According to the PRC, it performs two important functions: (1) conducting and administering licensure examinations for aspiring professionals; and (2) regulating and supervising the practice of professions in partnership with Professional Regulatory Boards (PRBs) in several spheres, including health, business, education, among others (PRC, 2018). Under the new system, each licensure examination is managed by each PRB. This represents a turning point for vocational qualification in the Philippines, since the responsibility of qualification management has been completely transferred to the state.

The Philippine Librarianship Act

On September 19, 1990, Presidential Decree No. 6966 (also known as the Philippine Librarianship Act) was announced, and the Board for Librarians was created as one of the PRBs. As noted above, the Board for Librarians has the responsibility of conducting the LLE.

It is very important for the relevance of an educational system to be limited to applicants who take prescribed degrees, such as the BLIS or MLIS (Master of Library and Information Science). This represented a turning point for LIS education in the Philippines. Vallejo (1981), who had been a dean at what was then the Institute of Library and Information Science at the University of the Philippines, noted that the lack of a "standard LIS program" was a serious problem at all institutions in the Philippines. There was no common LIS curriculum nationally, and degree titles of LIS programs were diversified among institutions. In 1980, the titles of the LIS degree included Bachelor of Library Science, Bachelor of Arts (major in library science), Bachelor of Science in Education (major or specialization in library science), Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education with specialization in library science, and so on (Vallejo, 1996). Thanks to the Library Act, several degree titles could be integrated into the BLIS and MLIS, and it became possible to ensure universality in professional education.

Trends in LLE examination results

In this section, trends in LLE examination results are discussed according to PRC statistics.

The licensure examination for librarians is conducted once a year. Until 2013, the exam was conducted in November. After 2014, it changed to April. Applicants range in number from nearly 800 to 1,000. The number in 2014 was very low due to a transition period in exam implementation, but the number has increased over the past two years.

When the LLE began in 1992, the passing proportion was about half of applicants (47.09%). The passing ratio over the last decade has tended to be low; however, it has risen over the past two years (see Table 1).

Research results

The interview data were converted to a transcription, using an analytical worksheet developed by Otani (2008) that includes dates and numbers of sentences/characters in the interviews, as shown in Table 2. The researcher removed descriptions that had no relation to the subject, performed the four-step coding using the verbatim records of the two expert

Table 1: Passing status of the LLE over 10 years

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Applicants	1,003	947	699	764	812	834	533	742	1,140	904
Passes	237	284	191	211	379	382	149	349	738	545
Passing proportion	24%	30%	27%	28%	47%	46%	28%	47%	65%	60%

Note: Adapted from PRC Board Exam Results Philippines (n.d.).

Table 2: Analytical worksheet (excerpt)

No.	1
Expert	B
Text	So, if in the new curriculum, previous courses are not there anymore but the questions are still in the database and will be picked up by the computer; if it's not being taught anymore in the new curriculum, how will the examinee know the answer?
Notable phrases in the text	(The questions) will be picked up by the computer, yet it's not being taught anymore in the new curriculum.
Rephrased in the text	After the new curriculum began, questions from old curriculum should be excluded. LIS schools should also not treat the old curriculum.
Concepts outside the text	Necessity of database management
Topics or concept	Separation from curriculum and exam
Question	Absence of database manager

interviews, and extracted constructs (see Tables 3 and 4). Finally, the storylines were described.

Worksheet analysis
Table 2 is a sample of the analytical worksheet used in this study. "Text" was extracted from verbatim records of interviews. "Notable phrases in the text" are abridged versions of the text.

Composition concepts
Categories and sub-categories were generated from extracted composition concepts to create a storyline linked to composition concepts (see Tables 3 and 4).

Storylines
In this section, the storylines of Experts A and B that connect all the codes extracted from the text are described to complete the entire story. Sentences are simply connected to terms, without being examined. Code is represented as [ ].

The storyline of Expert A
Expert A recognizes that the LLE has a [positive impact] on [salary increase]. "A" regards the LLE as [proof of fundamental skill] and identifies a [need for continuing education] after passing the exam. "A" thinks that the LLE promotes the [widespread perception] and [better treatment] of the librarian position as a profession. It is successful in the [recruitment of excellent human resources].

Table 3: Composition concepts of Expert A

Research question	Categories	Sub-categories	Code
Outcomes of the LLE	definition, better treatment	definition of a profession	proof of fundamental skill
			need for continuing education
			widespread perception
		enhancement of treatment	positive impact
			salary increase
			better treatment
			recruitment of excellent human resources
			increasing salary scale in public libraries
	expansion of general recognition	general recognition	widespread perception
		standard of profession	standards for professional librarians
Problems of the LLE	shortage of human resources	shortage of qualified librarians	disproportionate number of libraries and licensed librarians
			overwhelming shortage of licensed librarians
			improvement of working conditions at public libraries
			static pay standard at private companies
		outflow of human resources	loss of licensed librarians from the library sphere
			gap between number of licensed librarians and number of practicing librarians
			outflow of licensed librarians overseas
			loss of human resources
			considerable number of unsuccessful applicants
		unsuccessful applicants	low examination pass rate of repeaters
			relevance of institution's level
	quality of education	relevance of the quality of education and examination	concentration on limited institutions that produce successful applicants
			closing the LIS programs that produce less passes

Table 4: Category construct of Expert B

Research question	Categories	Sub-categories	Code
Outcomes of the LLE	enhancement of quality and treatment of profession	quality	quality enhancement of profession
		definition	clarification of definition of profession
		treatment	better treatment
			treatment as a qualified person
			treatment differential
Problems of the LLE	No connection with related organizations	issues of education	discrepancies between educational administration and academic settings
			shortage of excellent faculty
			relevance of educational setting and test result
			no relevance between educational administration and test contents
			no relevance between academic settings and exam preparation
			inadequate reaction of LIS schools
		connection with LIS curriculum	reflecting the latest trends in curriculum
			no relevance between curriculum and test contents
			need for adjustment of test contents
			impossible issue for manual adjustment
			tremendous burden on test givers
		meaning of exam	comprehensive change in IT subjects
			connection between industry and exam
			connection between library sphere and exam
			mismatch between industry, library sphere, and exam
	shortage of licensed librarians	issues of public libraries	differences between licensure system and employment reality
			curbing employment from financial crisis
			poor treatment
			ignorance of related law
			good effect on institutional accreditation
			differences in legal compliance in different types of libraries
			negative attitude to recruiting activity for licensed librarians

(Continued)

Research question	Categories	Sub-categories	Code
		outflow of human resources	talent drain to overseas
	biased affiliation of licensed librarians	issues of special libraries	shortage of monitors
			legal compliance at private/special libraries
			monitoring of special library
			monitoring the person who has an additional post
			monitoring the person based on their job title
			exclusion of unqualified people
			proper staff assignment

"A" points out that the [disproportionate number of libraries and licensed librarians], especially the [overwhelming shortage of licensed librarians], is a problem associated with the LLE. Recently, the [increasing salary scale in public libraries] makes it possible to [improve working conditions at public libraries].

On the other hand, the [static pay standard at private companies] incurs the [loss of licensed librarians from the library sphere] and a [gap between the number of licensed librarians and the number of practical librarians].

The LLE also stimulates the [outflow of licensed librarians overseas] and causes a [loss of human resources]. Also, a [considerable number of unsuccessful applicants] exit. The situation of the [low examination pass rate of repeaters] persists.

In terms of educational institutions, "A" notes the [relevance of the institution's level]. We observe a [concentration on limited institutions that produce successful applicants]. It might help to discuss [closing LIS programs that produce less passes].

The LLE enables the LLE system to promote the [widespread perception] of [standards for professional librarians].

The storyline of Expert B
Expert "B" regards [quality enhancement of the profession] and [clarification of the definition of the profession] as the changes introduced by the LLE. Both "A" and "B" refer to [better treatment] in the workplace as its advantage. Some people experience [treatment as a qualified person]; however, the [treatment differential] depends on the type of library.

"B" points to [discrepancies between educational administration and academic settings] as one of the problems associated with the LLE. Due to

the [shortage of excellent faculty], we observe the [inadequate reaction of LIS schools], related to lack of [relevance between educational setting and test result], [relevance between educational administration and test contents], and [relevance between academic settings and exam preparation].

Although current curriculum is [reflected in the latest trends in curriculum], "B" finds [no relevance between curriculum and test contents]. At the source, there are [impossible issues for manual adjustment] and a [tremendous burden on test givers]. New curriculum aims to be the [connection between industry and the exam] and the [connection between the library sphere and exam] through a [comprehensive change in IT subjects]. However, there is a state of [mismatch between industry, library sphere, and exam]. It [needs for adjustment of test contents].

The [differences between the licensure system and employment reality] are also problematic. All libraries cannot hire licensed librarians, because of the [negative attitude to recruiting activity for licensed librarians], due to [curbing employment from financial crisis], [poor treatment] at public libraries, and [ignorance of related law] at private/special libraries. School libraries are keen to hire qualified people because it has a [good effect on institutional accreditation].

There are [differences in legal compliance at different types of libraries]. The Librarian's Board conducts [monitoring of the special library], but it is difficult to [monitor the person who has an additional post] or [monitor the person based on their job title]. Due to the [shortage of monitors], [legal compliance at private/special libraries] is a priority issue. The Boardd accomplish the [exclusion of unqualified persons] and [proper staff assignment], and establish eligibility for removal. In addition, the phenomenon of the [talent drain to overseas] such as North America and the Middle East has been remarkable.

Discussion

In this section, the main subject of this study, namely the outcomes and problems of the LLE, is discussed based on the results of examining the categories, sub-categories, and composition concepts. In terms of notation, a category is identified by < >, a sub-category by { }, and a composition concept by [ ]. Quotations from expert interview data are indicated by " " with a number.

Outcomes of the LLE

Three outcomes of the LLE were identified: (1) widespread recognition as a profession, (2) improvement of working conditions, and (3) enhancement of the quality of the profession.

Widespread recognition as a profession

This outcome of the LLE points to widespread recognition of the position of librarian as a profession by the general public.

Expert A considers the {definition of a profession} to be: those who have "basic knowledge" (A-2-3); LLE is [the proof of basic ability] that a profession should have. Expert B perceives a qualified librarian as "having a license" (B-2-2), and evaluates the function of the LLE to [clarify the professional concept].

Since numerous professionals should take the national vocational qualification to work in the Philippines, the LLE changes the <recognition as a profession> of a librarian in general and lays the groundwork for librarians to be accepted by society. This is a turning point in Filipino library history, as it transforms the recognition of the profession through the transition from academic qualification to vocational qualification.

Improvement of working conditions

Both "A" and "B" strongly insist on the improvement of working conditions as an outcome of the LLE.

"A" found the [salary increase] of licensed librarians to be important in the current survey, as it leads to [better treatment] of the profession in the workplace.

"B" said, "If they're not professional, or not licensed, they cannot be given such benefits by their employers" (B-2-4). Professional librarians take advantage of benefits due to the [treatment for qualified person]. "B" explains that holding a license leads to [better treatment] as a profession. However, because there are [differences of treatment by workplace], working conditions are different depending on the type of library, for example, public library or school library.

Excellent salary and/or benefits is an attractive factor for librarians and LIS students when deciding on a job in the Philippines (Miyahara, 2009).

Enhancement of quality of profession and LIS graduates

Expert B stated, "The quality of our professionals—of our graduates—has definitely improved when compared with before the LLE, when there was no licensure exam" (B-2-1); it is recognized as [enhancing professional quality through examination].

Since the definition of librarian is strictly limited to those who pass the exam, the licensure system for librarians contributes to enhancing the quality of the library profession.

LLE problems

In this section, three issues are presented as problems of the LLE: (1) the shortage of licensed librarians, (2) the biased affiliation of licensed librarians, and (3) the lack of connection between the related organizations.

Shortage of licensed librarians

Although many licensed librarians appear every year, both "A" and "B" note a <shortage of licensed librarians> in numerous workplaces. In this subsection, three sub-categories are examined as the factors of the shortage.

Unfulfilled vacant positions

The shortage of licensed librarians at domestic libraries is due to [the disproportionate number of libraries and licensed librarians].

While this is merely speculation, since there are no current statistics for libraries, there are more libraries in the Philippines than in other southeast Asian countries. The following are old data presented in 2005, but according to the National Commission for Culture and Arts, the number of public libraries was 338, while there were 101 government libraries, 239 private libraries, and 80 religious libraries (Buenrostro, 2005). In addition, Expert A stated,

> Count the number of schools. There will be about 40,000 schools, high schools, and colleges yet we are only about 5,000? There are really very few, plus public libraries, special libraries. . . . There are not enough of us. We should have around 50,000, maybe. (A-4-8)

Originally, the LLE was not intended to fill vacant positions for short periods; therefore, the issue of {unfilled vacant positions} was bound to surface eventually. The serious situation of [overwhelming shortage of licensed librarians] has emerged. In this context, vacant positions for licensed librarians at many libraries cannot be filled.

Outflow of licensed librarians from the domestic library sphere

The [loss of licensed librarians from the library sphere] is also a critical problem. The PRC statistics indicate that the number of successful applicants from 2007 to 2017 was 3,743 in total. On the other hand, the PLAI had approximately 1,500 members as of 2015 (PLAI & NLP, 2015). The number of librarians who belong to the PLAI is about half the number who pass, and the number of active librarians is less than that of qualified persons.

Expert A stated, "There are only 8,000 licensed librarians" (A-2-10), while "librarians can now work in IT companies, and as web designers and programmers" (A-2-11), and "not all 8,000 are working—probably only 5,000" (A-2-12). Therefore, a [gap between the number of licensed librarians and the number of practical librarians] exists.

Outflow of licensed librarians to overseas

Since 1974, when the Overseas Employment Development Board was established, the Philippine government has promoted sending eligible people overseas. Known as Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW), they support the domestic economy through their transfer of overseas payments. Several qualified professionals such as nurses and caregivers are widespread overseas.

In terms of library professionals, there are "many librarians in the United States" (A-2-13), and Middle East countries are eager to recruit Filipino librarians. While this might be an issue with brain/talent drain, previous studies didn't really acknowledge it as a problem. "They prefer

us also—our graduates—because of facility with the English language as compared to other Asian countries" (B-4-44). Therefore, many Filipino librarians transfer to overseas libraries that provide better salaries. This is a typical situation for the Philippines.

Biased affiliation of licensed librarians

In terms of the recruiting and assignment of qualified individuals, the <biased affiliation of licensed librarians> emerges as an LLE problem. It can be divided into two sub-categories, and the background was examined.

Issues of public libraries

In particular, the <shortage of licensed librarians> has become a serious problem for public libraries. Some departments that control public libraries ignore the Librarianship Act or, worse, are reluctant to recruit licensed librarians.

Public libraries have not been popular with librarians and LIS students, because of poor treatment. Expert B stated, "The main consideration is the salary, especially for the younger ones" (B-4-37). For the younger generation, the criterion for workplace choice is treatment, especially salary. Libraries that provide better treatment are popular among qualified librarians, but libraries with poor treatment face difficulties recruiting them. However, this situation might be changing. President Benigno Aquino conducted a salary standardization in 2015 in order to raise public servants' salary scale. Currently, "the pay of the public library is higher," and "they prefer working in the public" (A-4-13). In particular, the younger generation prefers to work at public libraries over private libraries that "cannot catch up" (A-4-16) to the public salary scale.

Issues of special libraries

Academic institutions and schools recognize [the importance of professional license for accreditation system], and they actively address recruiting activities. On the other hand, at special libraries in cooperative or private settings, some employers do not hire licensed librarians due to [ignorance about related law] and [low priority of recruiting activity for licensed librarians].

Expert B stated, "So, okay, you can do the job, you can organize our library, fine; so, even if you don't have a license, it's okay. And that happens usually in a corporate setting" (B-7-3). This common sense causes [stagnation of the percentage of licensed librarians] in cooperative settings and adds to [differences between the licensure system and the employment reality].

According to "B," the Board for libraries conducts [monitoring of special libraries]. However, it becomes difficult to [monitor the person who has an additional post] because many qualified librarians in corporate settings have tasks other than those of the library, so it is difficult to [monitor

the person based on their job title]. Currently, the Board for Libraries conducts activities to [monitor job contents] and takes job descriptions into account; in addition, librarians have [a legal responsibility by job title].

Lack of connection between related organizations
There are no institutional connections between the three related organizations, CHED, PRBL, and LIS schools. The three relationships, along with sub-categories, are described.

Separation between LIS curriculum and sphere of education
The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) conducted a curriculum reform of the library and information science program in 2015. It aimed to address current curriculum issues in the library sphere and enhance the quality of education. Although a transition period of three years has passed, curriculum reform has not yet been completed. Expert B states,

> There are still many schools that don't follow the revised curriculum. There are still a number of schools that cannot follow the revised curriculum. Or, even if they say that they are following it, they cannot teach the required courses properly and with quality, with high standards; their products don't pass the licensure exam. (B-3-1,2,3)

Separation between LIS curriculum and examination contents
The Professional Regulatory Board for Librarians (PRBL) administers questions to examinees. The revised curriculum does not correspond with the examination contents of the LLE. Expert B stated, "In the licensure exam, they are still testing based on the old curriculum" (B-3-8).

Even if universities offer proper programs in accordance with the revised curriculum, the LLE examination contents are still based on the old curriculum. There is thus a discrepancy between LIS curriculum and examination contents.

Relationship between educational environment and examination results
Even if the revised curriculum is excellent, it could be idealistic if the educational environment cannot be reformed. In particular, faculty development is an emergent issue because "they cannot teach the required courses properly and with quality" (B-3-2). LIS schools/programs with a low quality of education graduate students who cannot pass the LLE.

In terms of faculty development, Expert A identifies a [need for continuing education]. The issues of continuing education for faculty members are twofold; [institutional issues] and [personal issues]. The [imperfection of the faculty development system] is an [institutional issue]. Originally, faculty development was conducted as the [duty of academic institutions]. However, there is an [abandonment of training programs at institutions] for part-time lecturers.

In the sphere of library and information science, more institutions could hire full-time faculty members. Many programs are managed by part-time lecturers who do not receive enough academic training and cannot even write academic papers. [Basic training for part-time lectures on the active list] is an urgent issue.

Conclusion

One of the purposes of this study was to clarify the outcomes and problems of the LIS vocational qualification system. Two findings of the study, the outcomes and problems, are described as follows:

1. The Licensure Examination for Librarians and the librarian's licensure system have a great impact on society's recognition of the librarian position as a profession. Licensed librarians apply for professional status and appropriate treatment with improved working conditions. A strict definition of *librarian* contributes to enhancing the quality of the profession.
2. The Licensure Examination for Librarians and the librarian's licensure system cause a shortage of licensed librarians in the workplace. First, the number of successful applicants is not enough to fill all of the vacant posts, while all licensed librarians do not work in libraries. The major factors in selecting the workplace are the working conditions and treatment by libraries. Three organizations, the CHED, PRBC, and LIS schools, should cooperate to manage the examination and licensure system.

As noted above, the most important meaning of the LLE system is to officially grant library workers professional status. As a result, qualified librarians can gain the treatment they expect. It also enables libraries to acquire brilliant and motivated workers and to prevent a talent drain from the library field.

There are more effects on LIS education. For private higher-education institutions, graduates' performance on the licensure examination has become a source of prestige and a force that attracts prospective enrollees (Lascano & Bansiong, 2017). It also allows library schools to obtain future LIS students, to prevent a decrease in the number of students, and to keep the LIS program from closing.

High-quality librarians can offer top-tier services to library users and can enhance the quality of overall library services, as well as citizens' knowledge. The LLE system and vocational qualification of the Philippines has good ripple effects in terms of working conditions, LIS education, and library services.

The qualification system of the Philippines is the strictest in the world, and the current situation of many vacant posts is a serious problem. Furthermore, the issue of brain/talent drain from the Philippines to elsewhere in the world might occur in the future because many countries are

eager to recruit quality librarians. It would be ironic if Filipino libraries became empty.

Another research subject, the examination of the effect of the transition from academic qualification to vocational qualification on enhancing the quality of librarians, is not examined in this paper. More research on the brain/talent drain of librarians needs to be conducted.

Acknowledgments

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