

The Completion of the Academic Requirements at the Graduate School and Its Relation to Thesis-Writing

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Abstract- The Commission on Higher Education standardized the minimum competencies in graduate education. Also, the higher educational institutions set their own parameters in maintaining the pursuit for better outcomes. Duchardt, Furr, and Horton (2016) upheld that graduate students need to model clear and effective mastery of writing, as well as, knowledge and skills expected in their work settings. Moreover, Bishop and Mane (2005) found out that necessitating higher number of academic credits for graduation and setting the minimum competency help the graduates succeed in the labor market. The main concern of the study was to assess the relation of the completion of academic requirements on thesis-writing. The study utilized a descriptive correlational research design which accessed universal sampling of students in the Master of Arts in Education during the school year 2018-2019 in the Graduate School in a private higher educational institution (HEI) in Bulacan.

Index Terms- academic requirements, Graduate School, thesis-writing

I. INTRODUCTION

The Commission on Higher Education standardized the minimum competencies in graduate education. Also, the higher educational institutions set their own parameters in maintaining the pursuit for better outcomes. Duchardt, Furr, and Horton (2016) upheld that graduate students need to model clear and effective mastery of writing, as well as, knowledge and skills expected in their work settings. The relevance of achieving the standards on the varied competencies placed by the HEIs on their graduate students ensures that their graduation from the program automatically earned their competitiveness in the global job market. Moreover, Bishop and Mane (2005) found out that necessitating higher number of academic credits for graduation and setting the minimum competency help the graduates succeed in the labor market.

On the other hand, writing can be an inherent talent or developed as an acquired skill; thus, in the post-graduate education, the writing of a thesis challenges the students (Han, 2014) for a semester, for a school year, and even for years. Thesis-writing is writing in the development of knowledge (Lindsay, 2015). The complexity of the tedious process of thesis-writing stimulated anxiety among graduate students, especially when the thesis has to be written in a second language (Ebadi et al., 2019; Sadeghi & Shirzad Khajepasha, 2015); and necessitating reasoning and critical thinking skills (Dowd et al., 2018).

The completion of a thesis is indispensable in graduate education and no student can receive a diploma in post-graduate without undergoing the rigidity of thesis-writing which some students found ease while others consider as hindrance. Thus, in the hope of removing the threats and challenges in thesis-writing, Faryadi (2019) provided a systematic approach in writing the methodology, results, and conclusion in thesis-writing in consideration of their difficulty as experienced by the graduate students; Lin (2017) explored constructive strategies on how to give effective and efficient course in thesis-writing; Alvarez & Anglat (2019) suggested interventions shared in the virtual peer feedback; and Odena (2017) considered the sources of facilitating experiences and strategies.

This study was, therefore, motivated by the pre-requisite of the completion of the academic requirements before the writing of a thesis. It is interesting to assess the relationship of the completion of the academic requirements at the Graduate School on the thesis-writing of the of the students in the Master of Arts in Education.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study was anchored on Bigg's Model of Constructive Alignment (Poole, 2013) which discussed the shifts in the expectations regarding the entrance criteria and graduation attributes in graduate education. The learning journey of varying lengths and nature from entrance to outcomes added the entrance requirements. It aims to chart the journey of graduate education from start to end. The variation in length of the learning journeys can engender frustrations, disappointments, and helplessness. The model takes consideration of student-centeredness and outcomes-focus and starts with the entrance requirements considering, among other things, the entry

competencies of the graduate student. The expected student outcomes include the attainment of the minimum competencies in higher education which positioned the graduates to global competitiveness.

III. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the study. Variable A which was the completion of the academic requirements included the following subjects: core, major, and cognates. On the other hand, thesis writing included the following ratings: exemplary, proficient, accomplished, emerging, beginner, and failed.

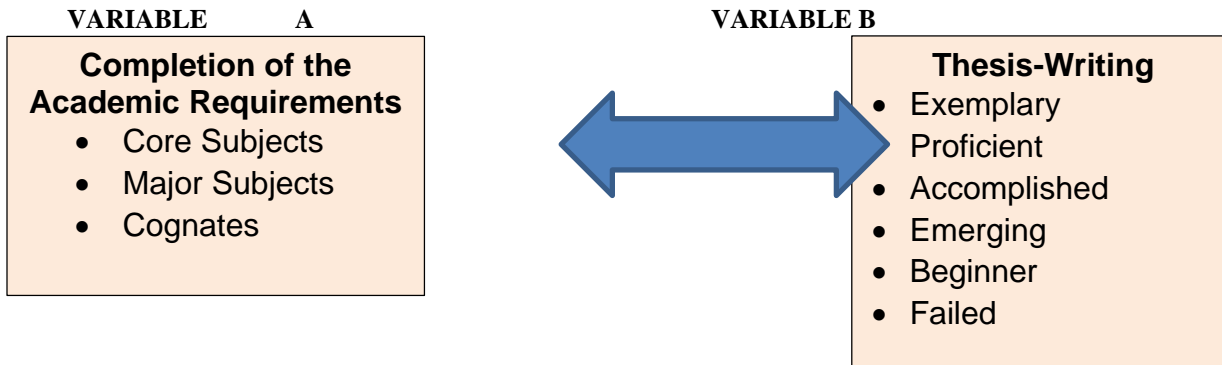


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

IV. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The main concern of the research was to assess the significant relationship of the completion of the academic requirements to the thesis-writing of the students in the Master of Arts in Education.

Specifically, the researchers aimed to find the answers to the following questions:

1. How can the students in the Graduate School be described in terms of their completion of the academic requirements in the following subjects:
 - 1.1 Core;
 - 1.2 Major; and
 - 1.3 Cognate?
2. How can thesis-writing of the students in the Graduate School be described in terms of the following ratings:
 - 2.1 Exemplary;
 - 2.2 Proficient;
 - 2.3 Accomplished;
 - 2.4 Emerging;
 - 2.5 Beginner; and
 - 2.6 Failed?
3. Does the completion of the academic requirements of the Graduate School students have significant relationship on their thesis-writing?
4. What implications in Graduate School education can be drawn based from the findings of the study?

Hypothesis of the Study

The hypothesis of the study was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

“The completion of the academic requirements does not have a significant relationship to thesis-writing.”

V. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Research Design

A descriptive correlational method was utilized in the study. Creswell (2015) discussed that a descriptive research included the researcher’s interest, process, meaning, and understanding of words or pictures; thus making a descriptive research qualitative in its method. Since the descriptive research employs qualitative method, it is considered relevant to the present research which involves data collection for describing the existing situation. The design of this study was descriptive since the researcher collected facts through the survey questionnaire to obtain an accurate description of the existing status of the completion of the academic requirements and the performance in the comprehensive examination. The researcher, also, exerted efforts to assess the relationship of the independent variable to the dependent variable. Moreover, the design of the study provided a systematic, factual, and accurate description, as well

as, a deeper insight into the relationship of the completion of the academic requirements to the thesis writing of the Graduate School students. Also, the researcher utilized the qualitative method which was based on the data provided by the responses gathered from the survey questionnaire and not about the number.

Research Locale

The locale of the study was the Graduate School at a private higher educational institution (HEI) in the Province of Bulacan. The choice of respondents was based on the efforts of the department in assessing the correlation between the completion of the academic requirements and the thesis-writing at the Graduate School.

Population of the Study

The study accessed the universal sampling of the total population of forty-eight (48) graduate school students in the Master of Arts in Education who underwent the thesis-writing during the School Year 2018-2019.

Data Processing and Statistical Treatment

This descriptive correlational research assessed the gathered data and processed them through a documentary analysis of the quantitative data on the completion of the academic requirements and thesis-writing of the graduate students. The completion of the academic requirements was based on the grade point average (GPA) of the students in their core, major, and cognate subjects which were described as follows: *Exemplary* (1.00 -1.24); *Proficient* (1.25-1.49); *Accomplished* (1.50 – 1.74); *Emerging* (1.75 – 1.99); *Beginner* (2.00); and *Failed* (2.25 below). On the other hand, thesis-writing was described based on their rating obtained after their final defense of the thesis as follows: *Exemplary* (1.00 -1.24); *Proficient* (1.25-1.49); *Accomplished* (1.50 – 1.74); *Emerging* (1.75 – 1.99); *Beginner* (2.00); and *Failed* (2.25 below). A regression analysis was utilized to assess the significant relationship of the completion of the academic requirements in Graduate School on their thesis-writing. This produced quantitative data resulting from the documentary analysis of forty-eight total population of graduate students in the Master of Arts in Education in a private higher educational institution in Bulacan during the Academic Year 2018-2019.

VI. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Completion of the Academic Requirements

The students in the Graduate School in a private higher educational institution in Bulacan during the academic year 2018-2019 were described in terms of their completion of the academic requirements in the following subjects: core, major, and cognate.

Core Subjects. Table 1 presents the completion of the core subjects in the Graduate School of the students in the Master of Arts in Education during the academic year 2018 – 2019.

Table 1
Completion of Core Subjects of MAEd Students during AY 2018-2019

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
1.00-1.24 (Exemplary)	16	33.4
1.25-1.49 (Proficient)	30	62.5
1.50-1.74 (Accomplished)	2	4.2
1.75-1.99 (Emerging)	0	0.0
2.0 - (Beginner)	0	0.0
2.25 below-(Failed)	0	0.0
Total	48	100.0
Mean = 1.25 (Exemplary)		
Std. Deviation = .11659		

Table 1 revealed the *exemplary* completion of the core subjects of the students in the Master of Arts in Education during the academic year 2018 – 2019 as shown by a Mean score of 1.25 and a Standard Deviation of .11659. Specifically, it showed 33.4% (16 out of 48) with *exemplary* completion; 62.5% (30 out of 48) with *proficient* completion; 4.2% (2 out of 48) with *accomplished* completion. No one (0%) of the students completed the core subjects as *emerging*, *beginner*, or *failed*. Most of the students were *proficient* (1.25 – 1.49) in the completion of their core subjects.

Major Subjects. Table 2 presents the completion of the major subjects in the Graduate School of the students in the Master of Arts in Education during the academic year 2018 – 2019.

Table 2
Completion of Major Subjects of MAEd Students during AY 2018-2019

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
1.00-1.24 (Exemplary)	21	43.9
1.25-1.49 (Proficient)	26	54.3
1.50-1.74 (Accomplished)	1	2.1
1.75-1.99 (Emerging)	0	0.0
2.0 - (Beginner)	0	0.0
2.25 below-(Failed)	0	0.0
Total	48	100.0
Mean = 1.23 (Exemplary)		
Std. Deviation = .10094		

Table 2 revealed the *exemplary* completion of the major subjects of the students in the Master of Arts in Education during the academic year 2018 – 2019 as shown by a Mean score of 1.23 and a Standard Deviation of .10094. Specifically, it showed 43.9% (21 out of 48) with *exemplary* completion; 54.3% (26 out of 48) with *proficient* completion; 2.1% (1 out of 48) with *accomplished* completion. No one (0%) of the students completed the major subjects as *emerging, beginner, or failed*. Most of the students were *proficient* (1.25 – 1.49) in the completion of their major subjects.

Cognate Subjects. Table 3 presents the completion of the cognate subjects in the Graduate School of the students in the Master of Arts in Education during the academic year 2018 – 2019.

Table 3
Completion of Cognate Subjects of MAEd Students during AY 2018-2019

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
1.00-1.24 (Exemplary)	15	31.3
1.25-1.49 (Proficient)	32	66.7
1.50-1.74 (Accomplished)	1	2.1
1.75-1.99 (Emerging)	0	0.0
2.0 - (Beginner)	0	0.0
2.25 below-(Failed)	0	0.0
Total	48	100.0
Mean = 1.20 (Exemplary)		
Std. Deviation = .104708		

Table 3 revealed the *exemplary* completion of the cognate subjects of the students in the Master of Arts in Education during the academic year 2018 – 2019 as shown by a Mean score of 1.20 and a Standard Deviation of .104708. Specifically, it showed 31.3% (15 out of 48) with *exemplary* completion; 66.7% (32 out of 48) with *proficient* completion; 2.1% (1 out of 48) with *accomplished* completion. No one (0%) of the students completed the major subjects as *emerging, beginner, or failed*. Most of the students were *proficient* (1.25 – 1.49) in the completion of their cognate subjects.

Academic Requirements. Table 4 presents the completion of the academic requirements in the Graduate School of the students in the Master of Arts in Education during the academic year 2018 – 2019.

Table 4
Completion of Academic Requirements of MAEd Students during AY 2018-2019

Subjects	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Core	1.25	Exemplary
Major	1.23	Exemplary
Cognate	1.20	Exemplary
Grand Mean = 1.23		Exemplary

Table 4 revealed the *exemplary* completion of the academic requirements of the students in the Master of Arts in Education during the academic year 2018 – 2019 as shown by a Grand Mean score of 1.23. Specifically, it showed an *exemplary* (1.25) completion of the core subjects; an *exemplary* (1.23) completion of the major subjects; and an *exemplary* (1.20) completion of the cognate subjects. The best *exemplary* completion of the academic requirements of the students in the Master of Arts in Education was on their core subjects as shown by the Mean score of 1.25, while their least *exemplary* completion was on their cognate subjects as shown by a Mean score of 1.20.

Thesis-Writing

Table 5 shows the *proficiency* in thesis writing of the students in the Master of Arts in Education during the academic year 2018-2019 as revealed by the Mean score of 1.45 and a Standard Deviation of .20842. Furthermore, it can be gleaned from the table that the students earned the following ratings: 8.3% or 4 out of 48 as *exemplary*; 16.7% or 8 out of 48 as *proficient*; 60.4% or 29 out of 48 as *accomplished*; 12.5% or 6 out of 48 as *emerging*; 2.1% or 1 out of 48 as *beginner* rating and no one (0%) *failed* in the thesis-writing. The most number of graduate students were rated as *accomplished* (1.50 – 1.74) in thesis-writing, while the least number of graduate students was rated as *beginner* (2.00).

Table 5
Thesis writing of the MAEd Students During the AY 2018-2019

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
1.00-1.24 (Exemplary)	4	8.3
1.25-1.49 (Proficient)	8	16.7
1.50-1.74 (Accomplished)	29	60.4
1.75-1.99 (Emerging)	6	12.5
2.0 - (Beginner)	1	2.1
2.25 below-(Failed)	0	0.0
Total	48	100.0
Mean = 1.45 (Proficient)		
Std. Deviation = .20842		

The Relationship of the Completion of Academic Requirements and Thesis-Writing

Table 6 shows the regression analysis of the relationship of the completion of the academic requirements in the Graduate School on the thesis-writing of the MAEd students.

Results of the regression analysis revealed that the completion of the academic requirements in Graduate School has a relationship to thesis-writing but not to a significant extent as evidenced by the Beta coefficients of 0.072, 0.243, and 0.231 respectively with p-values which exceed the .05 alpha. Though insignificant, the B coefficient values signify that in every unit increase in the completion of the academic requirements in the core, major and cognate subjects in the Master of Arts in Education will mean 0.129, 0.503, and 0.46 respective increase in the rating of thesis-writing of the respondents.

However, the obtained F-ratio of 1.883 was found significant since the associated probability of .146 greatly exceeds .05 alpha. The results suggested that completion of the academic requirements of the respondents were found to be significant predictors of their rating in thesis-writing. Thus, the study *accepted* the null hypothesis which states that *the completion of the academic requirements does not have a significant relationship to thesis-writing*.

Table 6
Regression analysis of Academic Requirements on Comprehensive Examination

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.443	0.468		0.946	0.349
Core subjects	0.129	0.293	0.072	0.441	0.661
Major Subjects	0.503	0.313	0.243	1.604	0.116
Cognate subjects	0.46	0.311	0.231	1.477	0.147

R-squared = .114

F-value = 1.883

p-value = .146

$\alpha = 0.05$

VII. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The data gathered through this research yielded the following results and findings.

Problem 1. The students' completion of the academic requirements in the Graduate School

The *exemplary* completion of the academic requirements of the students in the Master of Arts in Education during the academic year 2018 – 2019 was revealed by a Grand Mean score of 1.23. Specifically, it showed an *exemplary* (1.25) completion of the core subjects; an *exemplary* (1.23) completion of the major subjects; and an *exemplary* (1.20) completion of the cognate subjects. The best *exemplary* completion of the academic requirements of the students in the Master of Arts in Education was on their core subjects as shown by the Mean score of 1.25, while their least *exemplary* completion was on their cognate subjects as shown by a Mean score of 1.20.

Problem 2. Thesis-writing of graduate students

The *proficiency* in thesis writing of the students in the Master of Arts in Education during the academic year 2018- 2019 was revealed by the Mean score of 1.45 and a Standard Deviation of .20842. Furthermore, it can be gleaned that Academic Requirements and Its Relation to Thesis-Writing 14

the students earned the following ratings: 8.3% or 4 out of 48 as *exemplary*; 16.7% or 8 out of 48 as *proficient*; 60.4% or 29 out of 48 as *accomplished*; 12.5% or 6 out of 48 as *emerging*; 2.1% or 1 out of 48 as *beginner* rating and no one (0%) *failed* in the thesis-writing. The most number of graduate students were rated as *accomplished* (1.50 – 1.74) in thesis-writing, while the least number of graduate students was rated as *beginner* (2.00).

Problem 3. The effect of the completion of academic requirements on the performance in the Comprehensive Examination of the graduate students

Results of the regression analysis revealed that the completion of the academic requirements in Graduate School has a relationship to thesis-writing but not to a significant extent as evidenced by the Beta coefficients of 0.072, 0.243, and 0.231 respectively with p-values which exceed the .05 alpha. Though insignificant, the B coefficient values signify that in every unit increase in the completion of the academic requirements in the core, major and cognate subjects in the Master of Arts in Education will mean 0.129, 0.503, and 0.46 respective increase in the rating of thesis-writing of the respondents.

However, the obtained F-ratio of 1.883 was found significant since the associated probability of .146 greatly exceeds .05 alpha. The results suggested that completion of the academic requirements of the respondents were found to be significant predictors of their rating in thesis-writing. Thus, the study *accepted* the null hypothesis which states that *the completion of the academic requirements does not have a significant relationship to thesis-writing*.

Problem 4. Implications in graduate education drawn from the results of the study

Based on the findings of the study, the following implications in graduate education were drawn:

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- That graduate students pursue to exemplify in the completion of their academic requirements;
- That the students in graduate education vary widely from a rating of exemplary to beginner in their thesis-writing competencies;
- That the students may be exemplary in their academic requirements but may not show similar rating on their thesis-writing; and
- That there are contributory factors in the attainment of an exemplary rating in thesis-writing other than their cognitive and writing skills.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following conclusions and recommendations were arrived at after analyzing the results and findings presented by the gathered data.

1. The students of the Graduate School in the private HEI revealed an exemplary completion of their academic requirements. Although several difficulties and hurdles are encountered in the tedious process of balancing school and work, students at the Graduate School pursue to exemplify their best skills and competencies in the accomplishment of thesis writing and its oral defense.

2. Most of the students attained proficiency in thesis-writing which revealed the accomplishment of the minimum competencies required in the graduate education. However, although no one failed in thesis-writing, it is interesting to trace the factors contributory to small percentage of students who was rated as beginner in thesis-writing.
3. The completion of the academic requirements does not have a significant relationship to thesis-writing.
4. There are implications on graduate education drawn from the findings of this study which could guide both the teachers and the students succeeding in the academic requirements and thesis-writing.

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