

STUDENTS PERFORMANCE IN THE UNIVERSITY ADMISSION TEST: AN ASSESSMENT FOR THE PRE- PAREDNESS OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS FOR COLLEGE

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Abstract: With the collective movement of other countries towards globalization, the Philippines has undertaken major educational reform which includes the transition of a 10-year basic education into the K-12 curriculum. This program develops students through the method of using higher level of teaching, broader lessons and actual application of learning in real life. Senior high school students also undergo various programs and subjects under their chosen strand. However, the K-12 curriculum still calls for an evaluation of senior high school students preparedness since admission to college level is one of the need of the K-12 program graduates. Using the KSU Admission Test, this study determined the college preparedness of the K to 12 graduates based on the overall results specifically in its five (5) competency areas namely English, Mathematics, Science, Verbal Reasoning, and General Information. Data were gathered from the records of the entrance examination results of the School Year 2019 to 2022. The results seen from the study presents that examinees obtained almost average scores in all subtests for all the semesters. General information has the highest score for the examinees followed by verbal reasoning, English, Science and last is mathematics. Thus, there is still a need for DepEd to improve the quality of its K to 12 graduates with special focus on the teaching of mathematics. On the whole, the study offers benefits for curriculum improvement, tertiary admissions, and transition interventions to improve the quality of the K to 12 graduates.

Keywords: University admission test; Kalinga State University; student performance

INTRODUCTION:

College Entrance Examination is a type of test that assesses the examinee's chance of pursuing a specific degree in an academic institution (Bai, Chi and Qian, 2014). Before you get into a college or a university, a student should pass their entrance examination. For some schools, the result of the entrance examination is their basis if the student is accepted in a specific program. In some others, the results are used for the placement of students to programs that are best suited to them. For few, the results can be used for profiling. Still, the entrance examination must be passed by the student before s/he could be admitted in a tertiary school.

Senior high school students are the examinees for this examination. Senior high school serves as the preparatory level for students before stepping into college. Before the transition to the K-12 educational curriculum, the basic education in the Philippines consists of ten (10) years of study: six (6) years in elementary education and four (4) years in secondary education. With the collective movement of other countries towards globalization, the Philippines has undertaken major educational reform which includes the transition of a 10-year basic education into the K-12 curriculum (Adarlo et.al, 2017). This program develops students through the method of using higher level of teaching, broader lessons and actual application of learning in real life. Senior high school students also undergo various programs and subjects under their chosen strand. According to the Department of Education, the two additional years will prepare learners with skills that will prepare them for the future, whether it is in aspects of employment, entrepreneurship, skills development and academic excellence.

Despite the promising goals aimed by the Philippine government, several issues have prompted with the implementation of the K-12 curriculum. For instance, Rivera (2017) found mismatch between established learning pedagogies with the expected outcomes of the K-12 curriculum guidelines of the Philippines. Additionally, Relucio and Palaoag (2018) found an overall negative response between stakeholders (e.g., teachers, students, and parents) regarding the implementation of the K-12 curriculum in the Philippines.

Thus, this study would want to determine the performance of incoming freshman students in the entrance examination in Kalinga State University. The study aims to identify the specific fields wherein students performed best and least in the entrance examination. This result will help assess the readiness of senior high school students and it will identify fields which needs necessary reinforcement teaching to students in senior high school.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Chait and Venezia (2009), our society is moving toward a model of preparing all students for some kind of education and training after high school. That is what parents want for their children as well as what students want for themselves. Analysts and policymakers believe that quality education is needed for the success in the global economy. High rates of remediation, stagnant rates of college completion, and more time to degree completion suggest that many students are not fully ready to succeed academically in college. These suggests that weak academic preparation is a growing concern in the society.

Jay Greene (2009) of the Manhattan Institute defines college readiness as graduating with a regular diploma, having completed a minimum set of course requirements and being able to read at the basic level or above on the National Assessment of Education Progress reading assessment. Thus, the government should invest in research and development to support programs that align secondary and postsecondary education and improve students' preparation for college; provide funding to improve academic preparation in struggling high schools; and improve data collection and analysis and require public reporting. Adelman (2009) of the Institute for Higher Education Policy analyzed high school students' transcripts and documented that the biggest predictor of postsecondary success is the intensity and quality of the high school curriculum completed. Other studies have also suggested that the college preparatory curriculum is associated with higher achievement and greater equity in course access of students.

Furthermore, there are different steps on how to establish college readiness. The K-12 standards and assessment is one. According to Sarmiento and Orale (2016), the K to 12 education program in the Philippines addresses the defects of the country basic education curriculum. As claimed by the proponent of the K12 program, the curriculum is seamless, ensuring the smooth transition between grade levels and continuum of competencies. It is also relevant and responsive, enriched and learner-centered curriculum (SEAMEO INNOTECH, 2012).

Bidwell (2014) argued that the SHS curriculum is an entry point to college/university life or business and industry. Furthermore, according to Sarmiento and Orale (2016), the K-12 program is a more effective educational model compared to the old curriculum of basic education in the Philippines. Students can prepare themselves for a more difficult training in the higher education or go immediately to employment or be an entrepreneur.

These takeaways of college readiness have led the K to 12 Program stakeholders to delve on how to adequately prepare students in transitioning from high school to higher education with the ultimate goal of succeeding in their chosen careers. Consequently, worldwide researches on college readiness reveal the necessity for the students to be prepared for college (Conley, 2007). In the western context, for example, Dann-Messier (2011) reports that over 93 million adults in the United States lack the basic literacy skills necessary to be successful and to advance in college and in the workplace. In Texas, a non-profit research and assessment organization indicates that only about a quarter of its high school graduates are prepared for college (Advancing Quality in Higher Education Reference Group, 2012). Recently, it was predicted from a Harvard University study that by 2018, 90 percent of all jobs in the United States would require some form of postsecondary education or training, yet, almost 40 percent of those registered in the postsecondary education, and practically 50 percent of the students from community college still needed at least one remedial course when they enroll for their postsecondary studies. Such findings clearly indicate the gap in the skills and knowledge of students that are necessary for postsecondary school and work environments (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2012).

In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) graduated its first batch of senior high school graduates in 2018 after it had re-engineered its basic education from 10 to 12 years of schooling. However, there is a need to examine the college readiness of these graduates because some studies show alarming picture of the K to 12 students' performance. For instance, the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) report revealed that the Philippines ranked 79th in reading skills with an average of 340 points against Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average of 487 points. Worse, Filipino students obtained low ratings in mathematics and science with 353 points and 357 points against 489 points by OECD (Paris, 2019).

Along access to quality higher education, the government also enforced the Republic Act No. 10931 generally known as the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act. This law provides free tuition and other school fees in State Universities and Colleges, Local Universities and Colleges, and State-Run Technical-Vocational Institutions (Porcalla, 2018). It also establishes the subsidy and loan programs for college students and reinforces the Unified Student Financial Assistance System (UniFAST) for tertiary education. With the enactment of this law, many K to 12 graduates have decided to take tertiary education as an exit in the K to 12 programs. These graduates have opted to enroll in public HEIs because of the benefits accorded by the law.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative design to analyze and describe trends in student performance on entrance examinations over a four-year period (School Year 2019-2020 to 2021-2022). De-identified historical data, including individual sub-test scores and overall composite results, were systematically gathered from institutional records. The analytical approach will utilize descriptive statistics—including means, medians, standard deviations, and frequency distributions—to summarize the data comprehensively. The interpretation of results will focus on the educational significance of these trends, seeking to understand the potential underlying causes for persistent weaknesses in certain areas. Consequently, the findings will serve as a robust evidence-based foundation for generating targeted recommendations. These recommendations will be specifically directed toward secondary schools, suggesting concrete intervention strategies and curriculum adjustments designed to address the identified gaps and ultimately enhance student preparedness and academic performance.

Participants And Procedures

The examinees of the Kalinga State University Entrance Examination for the School Year 2019 – 2022 were the participants in the study. The ethical standards and protocols were adhered to in conducting the study. Permission was sought from the admission office of the university. Moreover, guidelines in test administration, checking, and scoring were strictly observed to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the data. The entrance examination results were taken from the University's Admissions Office. A letter was sent to the Admissions Office requesting the needed data. Names of examinees will be excluded in compliance with data privacy. Data include records of the entrance examination from the academic year 2019 to 2022. After gathering the data needed, it was analyzed and interpreted accordingly.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

With regard to measuring college level preparedness of students, the competencies of the respondents were tested using the Kalinga State University College Admission Test with five subtests: (a) English, (b) Mathematics, (c) Verbal Reasoning, (d) Science, and (e) General Information. As seen from the results shown in figure 1, Second Semester of School Year 2018-2019 has the highest overall performance of examinees with 53.36%. This means that 53.36% (160) of the total item (300) is the overall obtained score of the examinees. First Semester of School Year 2022-2023 recorded to have the lowest overall obtained score with 50.69%. The result may have caused by several factors. For instance, this semester is the time when students are exposed to a class format known as "modular," which has been shown to negatively impact students' ability to retain information. Therefore, the overall performance of the examinees does not appear to be steadily improving from one semester to the next. The result also suggests that there are number of factors, such as the adaptation of teaching to the new learning modality, change of mode of education, after effect of the pandemic, that must be taken into account in order to ensure that students make the most of their educational opportunities. This year also appears to be the beginning of the new normal following the pandemic, thus students' ability to absorb information may be affected as they make the shift from the traditional to the new normal style of learning in education. Mangan (2013) noted that there is a missing link between the expectations of college and high school. He further noted that if the standards and expectations are not aligned, the problem of students not being prepared for college will continue.

The trend of the overall performance of the examinees do not show any increase or decrease for the succeeding semesters so we can infer that the competencies of the examinees is still based in the quality of instruction they experienced for a specific school year.

DISCUSSION

A general trend can be seen from the results shown in figure 2 and figure 3. First, examinees have the highest scores in the General Information subtest with 62.58%. This indicates that the examinees know what is going on in the world and are up to date on recent events, legislation, and the content of the Philippine Constitution as well as other current events. Verbal Reasoning (55.06%) and English subtest (52.27%) comes next to the list. In contrast, the examinees' Mathematics scores were the lowest with (43.73%), indicating that most examinees struggle with issue analysis and solution. With the consistent low scores of examinees in the Mathematics portion, such findings should be addressed as they might be pointing to several other drawbacks in the current K-12 programs. A possible implication could be that the current K-12 curriculum may not prepare the students adequately specifically in the subject Mathematics.

Moreover, it can be inferred from figure 1 and 2 that among all subtests, Science, English and Verbal Reasoning obtained at least an average score. Despite the reforms made in the K-12 curriculum from 2019 to 2022, students may still lack competency in these fields.

To address such weaknesses, the government must develop initiatives in reevaluating the current K-12 curriculum and develop learning outcomes that facilitate the basic competencies of students especially in Mathematics.

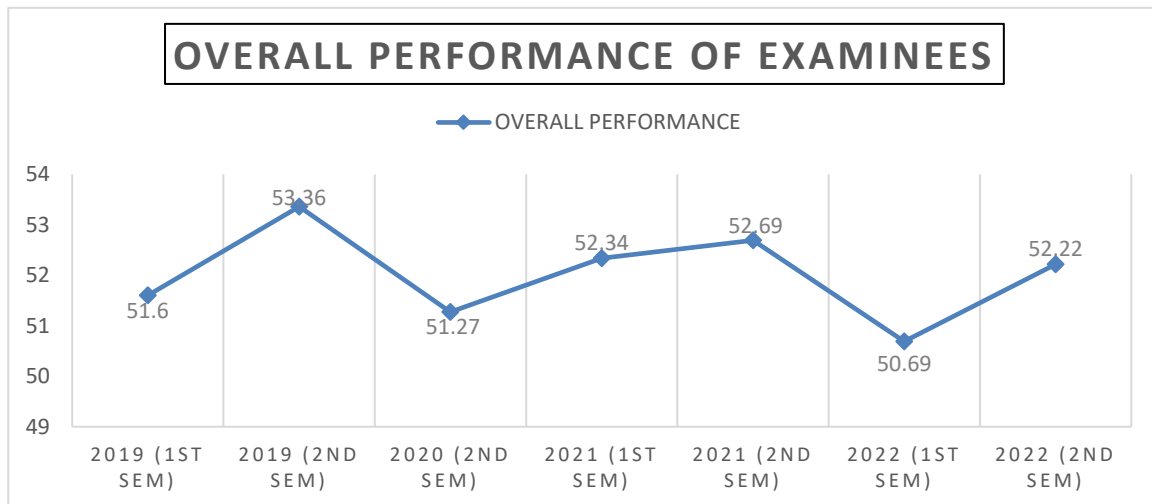


Figure 1. Overall Performance of Examinees. Each plot corresponds to the overall percentage score obtained by the examinees in the college entrance examination for each semester for the year 2019 to 2022.

On the other hand, the results signify that the KSU admission test can discriminate the five competencies being measured: English, Mathematics, Science, Verbal Reasoning and General Information. It implies that the admission test is relevant in its purpose of screening the most qualified examinees to a particular degree program they chose. The findings reveal that the KSU admission test is a good measure for the five competencies. The examiners can use the results as a springboard in choosing the most appropriate degree program for the examinees based on the results of their competencies. Considering that they got a better result in general information, English, verbal reasoning, and science, they may consider choosing degree programs inclined to these proficiencies like Bachelor of Arts in English, Bachelor of Secondary Education major in English, Bachelor of Science in Developmental Communication, and others. Admission officers and the guidance office staff can also use the results to make data-driven decisions in choosing the appropriate students for their programs. Since some of the program has a quota for the number of students, the evaluator can use the admission test result as baseline data.

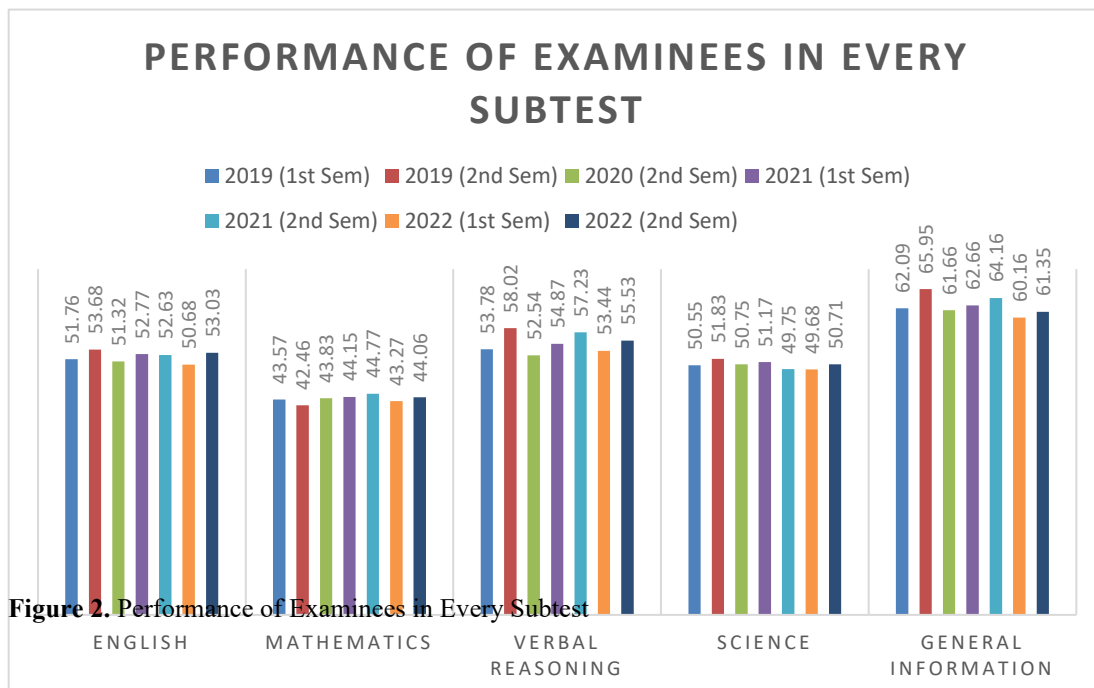


Figure 2. Performance of Examinees in Every Subtest

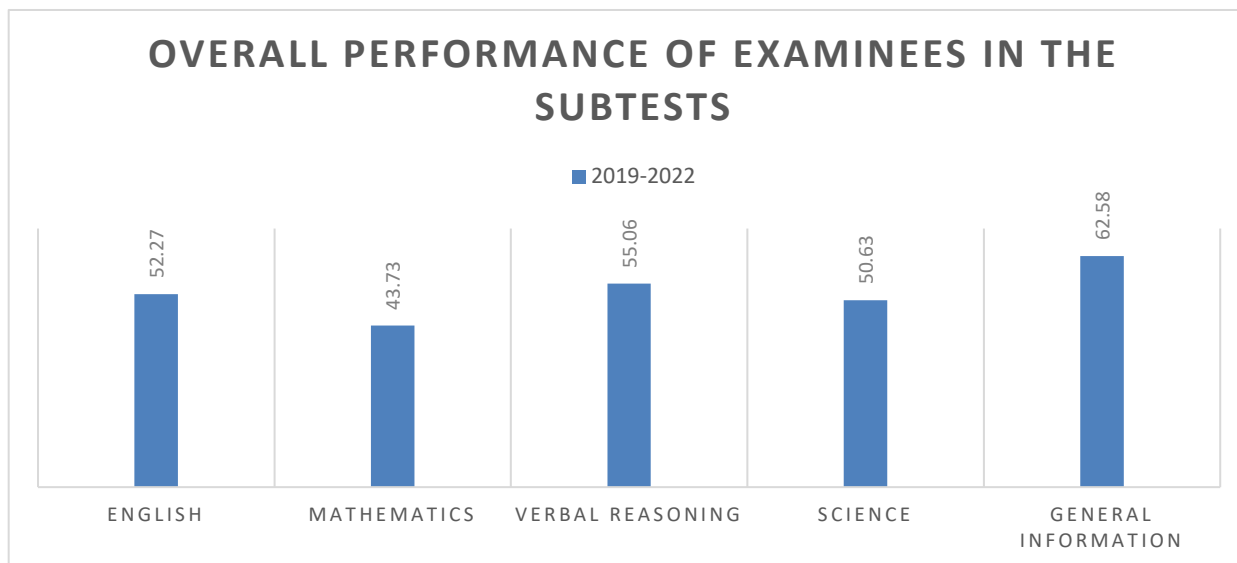


Figure 3. Overall Performance of Examinees in every Subtest from the year 2019 to 2022

CONCLUSION

The results seen from the study presents that examinees obtained almost average scores in all subtests for all the semesters. General information has the highest score for the examinees followed by verbal reasoning, English, Science and last is mathematics. Thus, there is still a need for DepEd to improve the quality of its K to 12 graduates with special focus on the teaching of mathematics. As such, the challenges met in the K-12 transition are crucial to be addressed by developing strategies in aligning the competencies of the K-12 students with their expected competencies. The KSU Admission Test was administered in this paper to measure the competencies of the K-12 students under five subtests (English, Mathematics, English, Science, Verbal Reasoning, and General Information). A descriptive analysis was used to draw inferences from the data. By evaluating the performance of the K-12 students, experts would have understandings on how the K-12 educational system works in the Philippines education system.

Finally, the KSU Admission test is also a credible measure of college preparedness and it is a potential tool for college admission. It has reliability and validity that classifies students' proficiency level which is a basis to direct them to choose their course. The test can provide guidance counselors and admission officers inputs for career placement and academic guidance.

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