

Emotional State of the Pre-Service Teachers Prior to Field Study: Basis for Support and Monitoring Program

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ABSTRACT

The proponents aim to assess the emotional state of the pre-service teachers from a tertiary education institution in Olongapo City, Philippines. A total of 185 pre-service teachers participated in the study using a descriptive research design. To gather enough information about the emotional state of the respondents, the study used a standardized instrument, the DASS-21, to assess three aspects of emotional status: depression, anxiety, and stress levels of the respondents. Afterward, the proponents then calculated the descriptive statistics like frequency and percentage. Results show that the pre-service teachers have normal to moderate levels of depression, a moderate to extreme degree of anxiety, and a normal to moderate level of stress in most of them.

INTRODUCTION

Pre-service teachers faced extensive preparation before the actual teaching internship. Tasdemir et al. (2020) stated that pre-service education is essential because a well-prepared teacher significantly adds to student performance, school effectiveness, and efficiency in the entire system of education in the country. Manasia et al. (2019) also suggested that pre-service teachers must possess professional knowledge and practice, engagement, and self-management, which focus on the teacher's job readiness. One of these preparations includes the field study as an essential part of the teacher education program. This idea allows students to gain experiences and knowledge on how to integrate theories learned inside the classroom into the actual field of teaching (Yaras II, 2019). In the study of Villena-Agreda (2021), the pre-service teachers' experiences in their field study may be influenced by the participant's attitude toward the cooperating teacher, preparation, and the school environment. In the same survey, the significant experiences of the pre-service teachers during the field study courses were to have actual class observation and exposure to various learning environments. In addition, Khasawneh (2023) also mentioned that to prepare, effective means like peer-to-peer activities, group discussions, and collaborative projects were essential for collaborative learning and co-teaching skills. Thus, field study provides practice and will be integral to teacher preparation (Vaquilar-Romo & Rafanan, 2019). Scarparolo and Subban (2021) also discussed how a teacher's self-efficacy beliefs among pre-service teachers can influence classroom management, student engagement, attention to the needs of students, and instruction. In the 21st century learning, the implementation of education has a different direction, unlike the previous century.

The institution is responsible for ensuring the preparation and performance of its pre-service teacher before the field study courses. The field study of pre-service teachers happens in schools of the Department of Education (DepEd) in Olongapo City, Philippines. The local institution of higher learning in Olongapo City has forged a memorandum of understanding and agreement so that these pre-service teachers may have actual observation of classes and teaching assistantships and be exposed to various learning environments in certain DepEd schools in Olongapo City. In this study, the main objective is to assess the emotional state of pre-service teachers. The result of this study will help craft mechanisms and processes directed towards a more vital emotional state for the students. At the same time, the guidance office also has a big part in implementing and collaborating its services to the student's welfare.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As the global pandemic struck in 2019, it is undeniable that educational institutions, teachers, and students are affected. A previous article stated that modern society has become more interested in emotionally competent people who possess psychosocial skills to succeed in the social environment (Garcia-Martinez et al., 2022). According to a local study by Brillantes (2022), pre-service teachers had a positive learning experience during the pandemic. However, this pandemic also makes preparing pre-service teachers before sending them to the

actual teaching field challenging. This concept has been so since Hill (2021) exposed that in-person observations and opportunities to practice classroom instruction contribute to teacher readiness and relationship building compared to online learning. Astuti and colleagues (2019) mentioned the characteristics and demands of 21st-century education with four learning characteristics: critical thinking and problem-solving, collaboration, communication, creativity, and innovations, or the 4Cs. Based on these characteristics, the pre-service teachers can create learning with higher-order thinking Skills (HOTS) outputs. Furthermore, Brown et al. (2021) also found that perceptions of preparedness among student teachers and a sense of teaching efficacy increase substantially during their student teaching.

The pandemic has caused anxiety, depression, and stress to tertiary students (Babicka-Wirkus, et al., 2021). A previous study by Essel et al. (2022) related that pre-service teachers' addiction to the Internet has a significant association with depression since the pandemic increased the exposure of students to the Internet. In addition, another previous article by Commey-Mintah et al. (2022) also mentioned that when it comes to depression and anxiety, gender plays a role. With this, it is essential to assess the emotional state of the pre-service teacher as it will affect their performance. Conversely, Hill (2021) also found that pre-service candidates did not have the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of specific teacher performance expectations. In the study of DeMauro and Jennings (2016), emotional states and experiences of the pre-service teachers may enhance or debilitate the teachers' sense of efficacy. It is said that depression, anxiety, and stress negatively affect the efficacy beliefs of pre-service teachers.

Presented in Figure 1 is the conceptual framework of this study. For the input part, the study showed the three vital variables of the study for the students' emotional state which comprised the depression, anxiety, and stress level. As for the process, the study included the data gathering through a structured survey questionnaire. The gathered data underwent basic statistical analysis and interpretation. Based on the results of the study, the output was the proposal of a support and monitoring program by the Guidance Office of the institution.

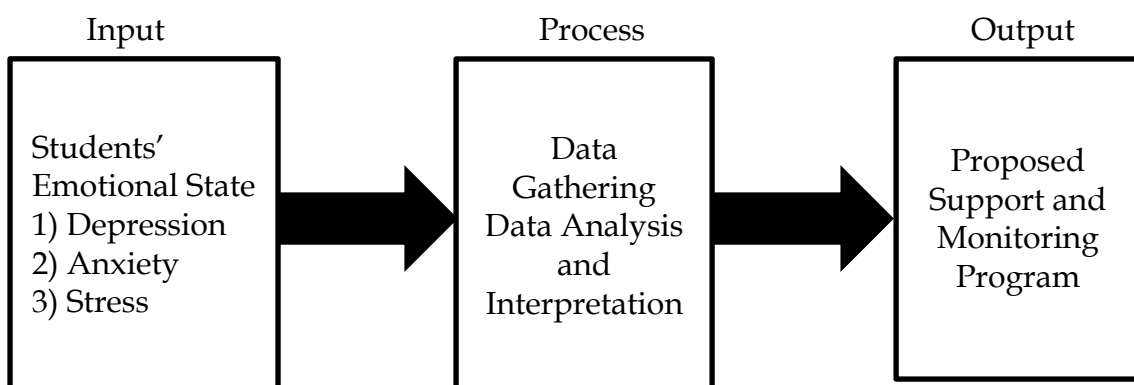


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The proponents of the study used the descriptive-survey research design in this study. They utilized a survey form as the primary data-gathering tool for the study. Since the study intends to assess the emotional state of the pre-service teachers during their Field Study exposure, the descriptive type of research is appropriate for the job. At the same time, in order to generate the necessary data for the study, the survey method is the best choice.

Participants of the Study

The study participants were the Pre-Service Teachers of a tertiary education institution in Olongapo City, Philippines. They came from different programs of the said institution during the academic year of 2022-2023. Each participant was invited to the institution's Guidance Counselling and Testing Center to answer the survey form. A total of 185 pre-service teachers have participated in the survey.

To be included in the study, the participants must consider the following criteria: a) they are currently enrolled in the academic year, b) they are enrolled in one of their subjects in Field Study, c) they are regular students of the institution, d) willing to participate in the survey by the Guidance Counselling and Testing Center, and e) bona fide student of the participating institution. However, the criteria for exclusion include: a) not enrolled in the academic year, b) do not have a Field Study subject, c) they are irregular students, d) not willing to participate in the survey, e) not a student of the participating institution.

Research Instrument

The proponents asked the participants to complete the demographic profiling and the 21-item Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS-21). It is a self-report scale that is used to measure an individual's emotional state of depression, anxiety, and stress (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995). According to Coker et al. (2018), the DASS 21 showed an excellent reliability score with Cronbach's alpha value of 0.81 for the subscale of depressive, 0.89 for the anxiety subscale, and 0.78 for the stress subscale. It was also found that it has excellent consistency and concurrent, discriminative, and convergent validities.

The data gathering period was between August and September of 2023 since the institution prepares the pre-service teachers for deployment for the succeeding month. It was the best time to gather essential information for their emotional state.

Data Analysis

The proponents tabulated, organized, and analyzed the gathered data from the survey. In order to achieve this, they utilized software that can effectively accomplish the said tasks, Microsoft Excel. For the analysis, the study used frequency and percentage for the descriptive interpretation part.

Each subscale on the DASS 21 questionnaire is divided into five severity ranges, which can be used to interpret the scores: normal, mild, moderate, severe, and extremely severe. 'modest', for example, indicates that the individual is above the population mean but likely still below the normal severity of someone

seeking help (i.e., it does not represent a modest level of disorder). The severity labels are used to characterize the entire range of scores in the population. Z-scores from the DASS manual are used to establish the severity levels (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995).

RESEARCH RESULT

The following tables and figures result from the DASS-21 self-report case of the teacher education student. It was participated by 185 pre-service teachers.

Table 1. Depression Score of the Pre-service Teacher

Program	N	Normal		Mild		Moderate		Severe		Extreme		Total (%)
		(0-9)		(10-13)		(14-20)		(21-27)		(28+)		
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
BECED	13	4	30.8	7	53.9	1	7.7	1	7.7	0	0.0	100
BEED	24	10	41.7	6	25.0	7	29.2	1	4.2	0	0.0	100
BCAED	17	6	35.3	2	11.8	7	41.2	2	11.8	0	0.0	100
BPED	27	12	44.4	5	18.5	5	18.5	3	11.1	2	7.4	100
BSED-ENG	35	15	42.9	5	14.3	6	17.1	4	11.4	5	14.3	100
BSED-FIL	20	8	40.0	4	20.0	4	20.0	3	15.0	1	5.0	100
BSED-MATH	16	7	43.8	5	31.3	1	6.3	1	6.3	2	12.5	100
BSED-SCI	20	7	35.0	4	20.0	5	25.0	3	15.0	1	5.0	100
BSED-SOC	13	5	38.5	5	38.5	2	15.4	1	7.7	0	0.0	100
Total (N)	185	74		43		38		19		11		

Table 1 shows the depression scores of the pre-service teacher. The table shows that most pre-service teachers have normal and mild interpretation scores. It is also notable that about 41.2% (7) of pre-service teachers in the program of Bachelor of Culture and Arts Education (BCAED) and 29.2% (7) in the program of Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED) have "moderate" score in the depression scale. On the other hand, the Bachelor of Secondary Education major in English has 14.3 % or five pre-service teachers who have an "extreme" score on the depression scale, which is the highest compared to all other programs. This finding is followed by BSED-Mathematics (12.5%), BPED (7.4%), BSED-Filipino (5%), and BSED-Science (5%). From these results, the table implies that there are already several pre-service teachers who suffer a great deal of depression based on their revealed scores on the scale. Therefore, the guidance office must monitor and regularly consult with these students to help them.

Table 2. Anxiety Score of the Pre-service Teacher

Programs	N	Normal		Mild		Moderate		Severe		Extreme		Total (%)
		(0-9)		(10-13)		(14-20)		(21-27)		(28+)		
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
BECED	13	1	7.7	2	15.4	1	7.7	5	38.5	4	30.8	100
BEED	24	4	16.7	3	12.5	5	20.8	4	16.7	8	33.3	100
BCAED	17	2	11.8	1	5.9	5	29.4	4	23.5	5	29.4	100
BPED	27	10	37.0	2	7.4	4	14.8	3	11.1	8	29.6	100
BSED-ENG	35	4	11.4	3	8.6	10	28.6	6	17.1	12	34.3	100
BSED-FIL	20	3	15.0	1	5.0	4	20.0	3	15.0	9	45.0	100

BSED-MATH	16	3	18.8	2	12.5	6	37.5	1	6.3	4	25.0	100
BSED-SCI	20	2	10.0	2	10.0	5	25.0	6	30.0	5	25.0	100
BSED-SOC	13	4	30.8	2	15.4	3	23.1	0	0.0	4	30.8	100
Total (N)	185	33		18		43		32		59		

Table 2 presents the anxiety scores of pre-service teachers across teacher education programs. It can be gleaned from the table that most of the students have "moderate" to "extreme" scores on the anxiety scale. BSED-Mathematics program has the highest percentage with 37.5% in the "moderate" level, Bachelor in Early Childhood Education (BECED) has the highest percentage in the "severe" level, and BSED-Filipino has the highest percentage with 45% in the "extreme" level. It can also be deduced from the table that the majority of the pre-service teachers have "extreme" scores on the anxiety scale, which is not lower than 25%. The result suggests that the majority of the students have high levels of anxiety experience. Pre-service teachers will be exposed to the world of teaching and learning with real-life students and classrooms. Preparation for such an event is imperative.

Table 3. Stress Score of the Pre-service Teacher

Programs	N	Normal		Mild		Moderate		Severe		Extreme		Total (%)
		(0-9)		(10-13)		(14-20)		(21-27)		(28+)		
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
BECED	13	5	38.5	7	53.9	1	7.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	100
BEED	24	12	50.0	6	25.0	6	25.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	100
BCAED	17	8	47.1	6	35.3	3	17.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	100
BPED	27	18	66.7	1	3.7	6	22.2	2	7.4	0	0.0	100
BSED-ENG	35	19	54.3	5	14.3	5	14.3	4	11.4	2	5.7	100
BSED-FIL	20	10	50.0	4	20.0	4	20.0	2	10.0	0	0.0	100
BSED-MATH	16	11	68.8	2	12.5	1	6.3	2	12.5	0	0.0	100
BSED-SCI	20	11	55.0	7	35.0	1	5.0	1	5.0	0	0.0	100
BSED-SOC	13	8	61.5	2	15.4	3	23.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	100
Total (N)	185	102		40		30		11		2		

Table 3 shows the stress score of the pre-service teachers across all programs offered. It can be deduced from the table that the majority of the pre-service teachers have "normal" to "mild" levels on the stress scale. It was notable that 68.8% of the BSED-Mathematics have "normal" stress scores, which is followed by BPED (66.7%) and BSED-Social Studies (61.5%). In terms of "severe" level on the stress scale, BSED-Mathematics has the highest percentage with 12.5%, which is followed by BSED-English (11.4%) and BSED-Filipino (10%). Notably, 2 (5.7%) BSED-English pre-service teachers have "extreme" levels on the stress scale. The result implies that although a good number of students have normal and mild stress levels, it is equally vital to look into those who experience an even higher stress level. In this manner, the guidance office can support and guide those students in managing their stress while in the field.

DISCUSSION

The main objective of this study is to assess the emotional state of pre-service teachers of a higher education institution in Olongapo City, which will be deployed in the field soon. This study assessed a total of 185 pre-service teachers. It used a standardized tool to analyze three emotional states, namely, depression, anxiety, and stress. Initially, a study by Smit et al. (2021) mentioned that pre-service teachers' emotions became more negative over time.

The result of the depression assessment of the pre-service teachers was quite interesting. More than half of the total pre-service teachers suffer from mild to severe levels of depression. It is an excellent concern knowing that depression is a debilitating emotional state. Based on the ideas of O'Brien et al. (2020), pre-service teachers are at a critical time of transition, moving forward toward their profession. In a different study, depression among education faculty students is a variable for codependency (Karasar, 2021).

As for anxiety, there were more students who experienced a higher level of anxiety, which falls under moderate to extreme. In a related paper by Deng and colleagues (2023), anxious attachment is associated with depression, anxiety, and stress. Also, in the past article of Maulimora (2019), pre-service teachers felt anxious about their first peer teaching practice. Nevertheless, anxiety was high when the pre-service teachers were not to be appointed to the teaching profession (Engin, 2019). Being anxious occasionally is acceptable; however, experiencing beyond is more alarming, for it might lead to specific changes in an individual's behavior and physiological function. Another past literature by Han and Takkac-Tulgar (2019) and Oktaviani and Jaelani (2021) mentioned that before teaching experience, classroom management was the primary teaching anxiety source by pre-service teachers. In the paper of Gorospe (2022), pre-service teachers perceived that the leading cause of their teaching anxiety is high expectations from cooperating teachers and students.

Regarding stress, the pre-service teachers fall under normal to mild stress, with some having moderate to severe stress level experiences. However, in the paper of Bayrakdaroglu and Hekim (2020), pre-service teacher's stress level was above the middle. The perceived stress of pre-service teachers also mediates with factors like the relationship between mindfulness and compromising style (Tekel & Erus, 2020). According to a past article by Birchinall et al. (2019), stress among pre-service teachers is an emerging area of concern, especially upon entering the teaching profession. It is known that collegiate life is very stressful. That includes average to low levels of academic stress (Matoti & Lehu, 2019). Some students can cope, and some cannot. In a previous paper by Lam et al. (2022), they found that stress in the classroom negatively predicts a teacher's self-efficacy for student engagement.

Overall, the result of this survey among pre-service teachers' emotional state contributed significantly to guiding future educators. A previous study mentioned that pre-service teachers experienced common mental health issues like stress, anxiety, and depression, especially during the pandemic period (Kong & Wong, 2021)

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the study, the proponents share the following conclusion:

- 1) The pre-service teachers' depression level falls under the normal to moderate range, with more respondents falling under the normal level.
- 2) The anxiety levels of a good number of pre-service teachers also ranged from moderate to extreme levels. In contrast, the remaining had normal to mild levels.
- 3) As for the pre-service teachers' stress level, most fall under the normal to moderate level of stress.

Based on the results of the study, the proponents of the study shared the following implications:

- 1) Pre-service teachers should undergo regular mental and emotional status checks with the institution's guidance counseling office.
- 2) The findings underscore the need for mental health support services for pre-service teachers. The support should be integrated into the teacher education programs to enhance the overall well-being of future educators.
- 3) Pre-service teachers should also initiate self-awareness conduct with the help of the institution's guidance office in order to promote an emotionally healthier college lifestyle. The program should also include training on managing mental health challenges, which may include strategies for coping with stress, anxiety, and depression and fostering resilience.
- 4) The emotional states of pre-service teachers have long-term implications for their effectiveness as teachers in their chosen field. Addressing these issues early in their training can contribute to a more emotionally stable and resilient teaching workforce in education.
- 5) The college dean should also initiate a screening program or formulate a policy in the college to have a more emotionally and mentally stable pre-service teacher before their field study exposures.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

Like every research articles in the field, this research also has its own limitations and shortcomings. Thus, the researchers have the following ideas for the advancement of this paper. First, since the study only did a descriptive type of research, the researchers strongly suggest performing higher statistical analysis such as comparing of scores amongst the three variables in the study as well as their associations or relationships (e.g., *t*-test, Analysis of Variance, and Correlation). Secondly, the study only focused on pre-service teachers, future researchers can expand the analysis to other courses that undergoes on-the-job (OJT) trainings. Thirdly, the study can also include other schools in the vicinity offering the same courses with the host institution. Lastly, any constructive criticism regarding this paper is open for future collaboration.

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