The Extent of the General Education Curriculum (GEC) in Accredited Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in CALABARZON Region, Republic of the Philippines: Level of Compliance, Relevance and Effectiveness In the Pursuit of Professional Disciplines

TOPIC AREA: Curriculum, Research and Development

KEY WORDS: General Education Curriculum in the Philippines

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Abstract

This paper evaluated the extent of the implementation of the General Education Curriculum (GEC) in accredited Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the Philippines. The study focused on the level of compliance of respondent-HEIs, relevance and effectiveness of GEC in the students' pursuit of professional disciplines. There were 823 respondents composed of administrators, teachers and students who were directly involved in the implementation of GEC during the Academic Year 2000-2001. Five accredited HEIs were selected based on distinct criteria as research locale. In the belief that GEC should consist of broad-based foundation courses strong enough to provide students with solid footing for their chosen careers, quantitative and documentary data were gathered to lend support to the aforecited contention and thrust of the study. To anchor the study, the mandates of Commission on Higher Education Memorandum No. 59, S. 1996 (CHED Memo No. 59, S., 1996) and the combinatorial Big Bulk and Transformation Theories of Doll (1996) were utilized.

Introduction

As the waves of progress sweep Asia and the Pacific, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the Philippines envision credentialed education for quality life of the Filipinos (Estrada, 2000). Additionally, as cited by Andres (1991), almost all prevailing conditions in the Philippines demand for curriculum change.

Hence, tertiary education must be set to what is actually essential in shaping the learners' quality of life in tomorrow's workplace. It is imperative that curriculum content, administrative practices, teaching competencies, instructional materials and other related factors must be made relevant to the changing demands of society.

Corollary to the above concern, the Commission on Higher Education created Republic Act (RA) 7722, otherwise known as the Higher Education Act of 1994 to improve the quality of education in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The memorandum states:

> In accordance with the pertinent provision of Republic Act (RA) No. 7722, otherwise known as the "Higher Education Act of 1994", and in order to update the General Education Curriculum to make the same more responsive to the demands of the next millennium, a new GEC is hereby adopted and promulgated by the Commission to be required and implemented as part of all the baccalaureate degree programs in all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the Philippines.
>
> Commission on Higher Education, Philippines
> CHED Memo. No. 59, S. 1996

In similar vein, the Commission of Higher Education in the Philippines (Long Term Higher Education Plan, 1996-2005, p. 48), addresses that Higher Education shall be geared toward the pursuit of better quality of life for all Filipinos by emphasizing the acquisition of knowledge and formation of skills necessary to make each individual a

productive member of society. It shall likewise be used to harness the productive capacity of the country's human resources base towards international competitiveness.

Certainly, higher education has greater responsibility on problems of relevance, accountability and efficiency of educational programs. In the same document, LTHED Plan states:

> Higher education must address itself to the national aspirations, progress, and equity. It must help eradicate the ills of society, mainly poverty and injustice. To fill these functions Higher Education must inculcate the basic attitude necessary for nation building, offer appropriate theoretical and scientific knowledge and promote the professions and the Technology for national development which determine the direction of education as well as the medium to propel the country towards economic prosperity and readiness for life's challenges.

In line with the above aims of Higher Education, the General Education Curriculum (GEC), should provide college students the foundation of education from which specialization in an area of knowledge is assured of solid footing. This means that the preparatory courses taken by every student in college are feasible and appropriate to prepare him in the pursuit of professional discipline. A kind of education that is relevant and effective in shaping his future.

How the General Education Curriculum (GEC) inputs to the realization of the declared basic policy and objectives of Higher Education remains a continuing concern of curriculum implementors. Does the learner set of courses vis-à-vis the GEC help meet the objectives of all Higher Education Curricula as articled by Education Act of 1982? Do the general education courses, individually and collectively, produce students who know not only the *what* but also the *how* to be assets in the society? And most

importantly, does the GEC provide each and every college student a sound foundation in the pursuit of his discipline? These were queries that this study evaluated.

Description of Research Locale

(A visual travel to CALABARZON Region, Philippines would be provided through a video clip)

The CALABARZON Region was the particular place where the study was conducted. It is an industrial region within a region. It consists of the five provincial governments, Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon, which are distinct parts of Southern Tagalog Region. It has a total land area of 16,229 square kilometers and occupies the southern central position of the Luzon Island. The total population in 1991 is estimated at 6,349,000 accounting for 10.5% of the population in Metro Manila.

As cited in the Executive Secretary Report of Japan International Conference Association (JICA, 1991 p. 8), the Philippine Government recognized CALABARZON Region as the most dynamic region in the country. In fact, it is the show window of development and industrialization. The place enjoys political and social stability and offers easy access to the rest of the archipelago and other countries in the economically blooming Southeast Asia Region. It is also known as the industrial powerhouse of the Philippines. Please refer to attachment, CALABARZON Map Spot Detail A-A.

In the light of the above concerns, the study made use of five Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the region to be the participating schools in the study. Each of these HEIs came from each province of CALABARZON Region, Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon respectively. The criteria for the selection of these schools

were: 1) HEI with accredited College of Arts and Sciences Program; 2) Most populous in terms of its enrolment statistics during the academic year 2000-2001; 3) HEI offering five or more college programs and 4) a co-educational college/ university.

The complete enumeration of the HEIs in CALABARZON Region with their characteristics is shown in Table 1. After conforming with the criterion references for the selection of the participating Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), the five HEIs were chosen and coded as: HEI1 (**Manuel S. Enverga University Foundation**, ***Quezon***); HEI2 (**De La Salle University – Dasmariñas**, ***Cavite***); HEI 3, (**San Pablo College, *Laguna***); HEI4 (**Lyceum of Batangas, *Batangas***); and HEI5 (**University of Perpetual Help, *Rizal***).

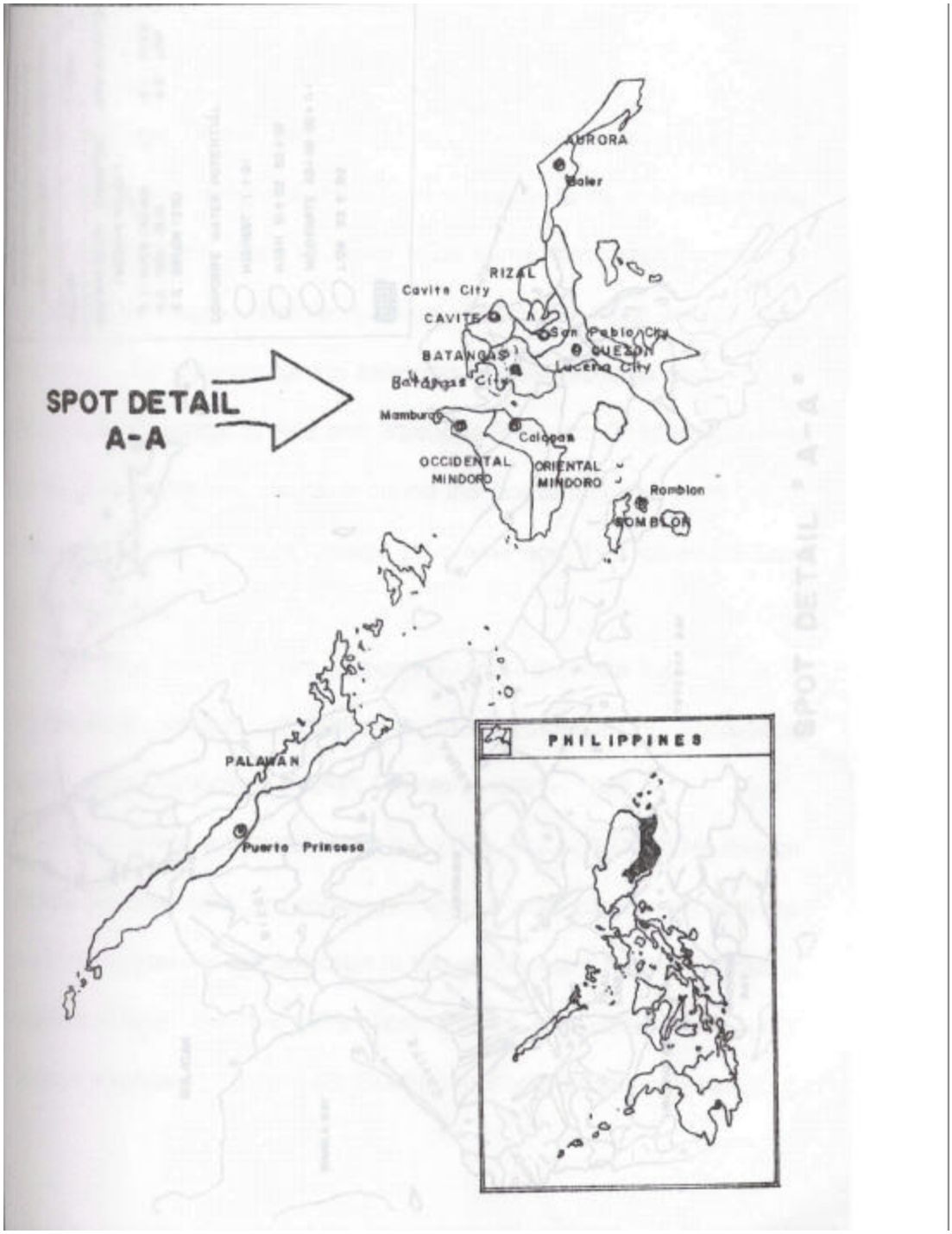


Figure 1: Region IV Southern Tagalog, Philippines

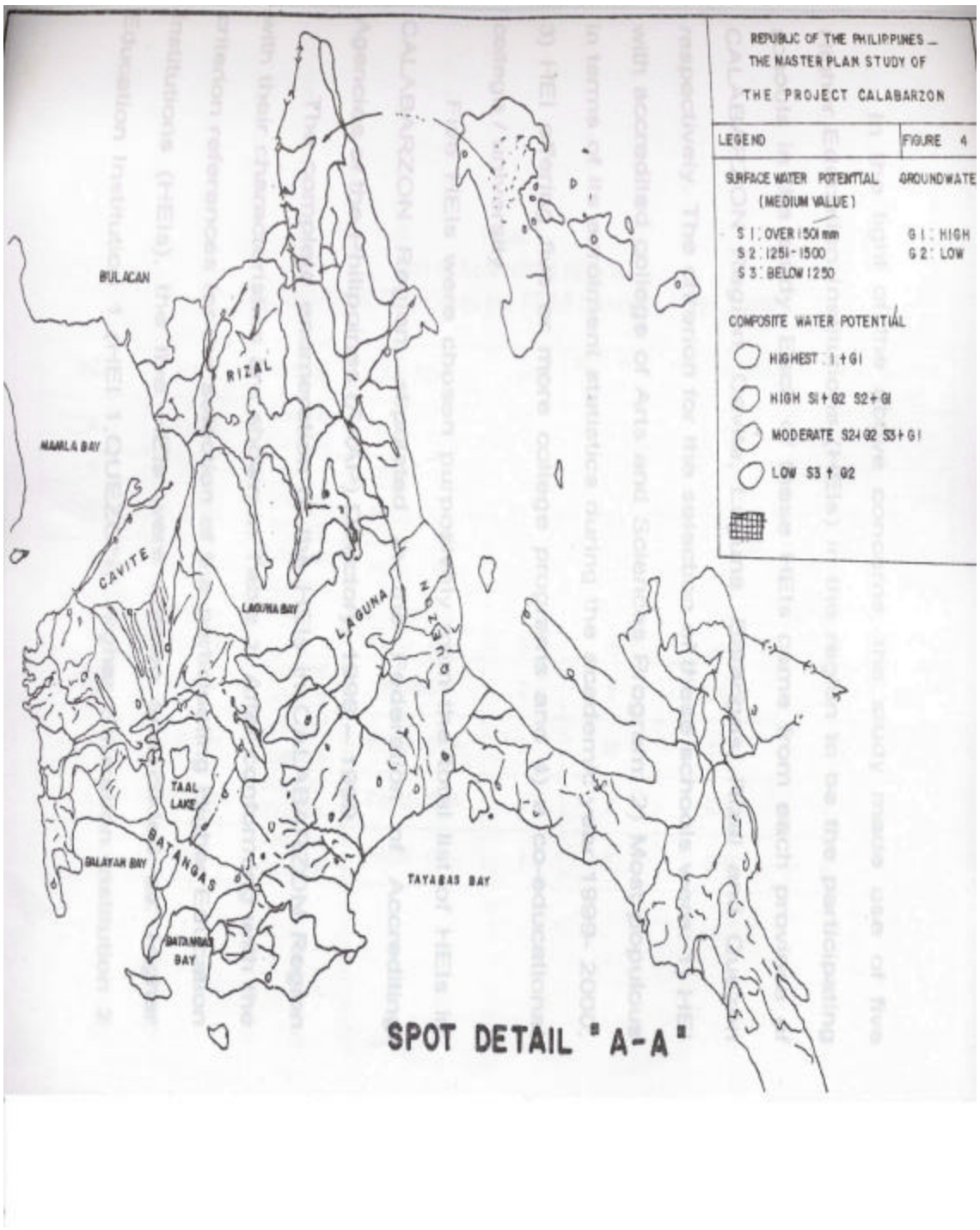


Figure 2: The CALABARZON Region, Philippines

Table 1:
List of Accredited HEIs in
CALABARZON Region as per FAAP (1999-2000)

HEI	Place	Accredited Program	Accrediting Agency	Level	# Col. Program	Pop. Size Respondent	Co-educ.	Selected HEI
A	Cavite	Arts and Sciences	ACSC-All	3	4	743	✓	
B	Rizal	X	ACSC-All	2	7	7105	✓	
C	Laguna	Arts and Sciences	PACU-COA	2	4	4954	✓	
D	**Quezon**	**Arts and Sciences**	**PACU-COA**	**3**	**10**	**7109**	✓	**HEI 1**
E	Quezon	X	ACSC-All	2	7	3906	X	
F	Batangas	X	PACU-COA	2	10	6875	✓	
G	**Cavite**	**Arts and Sciences**	**PAASCU**	**2**	**9**	**10670**	✓	**HEI 2**
H	**Laguna**	**Arts and Sciences**	**PACU-COA**	**2**	**10**	**3276**	✓	**HEI 3**
I	**Batangas**	**Arts and Sciences**	**PACU-COA**	**2**	**9**	**8868**	✓	**HEI 4**
J	**Rizal**	**Arts and Sciences**	**PACU-COA**	**2**	**9**	**9750**	✓	**HEI 5**

Theoretical Framework

As educational theories have its universal acceptance, the researcher adopted Doll's (1996) combination of two curriculum theories namely: **Big Bulk Theory** and **Transformation Theory**, to anchor the study.

Big Bulk Theory stated that one of the major reasons for the creation of schools is to make young citizens more competent and productive, especially college students. In this way, schools should foster national economic interest. The theory further stipulates that *education* is an industry, *learning* is an asset and *knowledge* is a commodity. Thus, the basics and the hard subjects for skill development for getting along on the job, should be the essence of the curriculum.

While the **Transformation Theory**, also termed as Restructuring Theory, stresses the idea that learners should be exposed to varied learning situations. The curriculum as an academic plan should follow a structure. It should provide the students with authentic learning experiences for meaningful life after graduation from college.

At this point, it would be worthy to consider how colleges and universities in the Philippines applied for accreditation of curriculum programs to authorized accrediting agencies. The researcher presents a brief discussion regarding this concern.

Colleges and universities applying for accreditation must adhere to the following requirements of CHED: adequacy of physical facilities, quality of instruction, curriculum programs, outstanding/very satisfactory compliance to the goals of CHED and also with academic qualification of mentors servicing the program.

There are four accrediting agencies under the Federation of Accrediting Agencies of the Philippines (FAAP), these are: Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities of the Philippines (AACUP), Association of Christian Schools and Colleges Accrediting Agency Inc. (ACSC-AAI), Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation (PACUCOA) and Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities (PAASCU), (Dizon, 1990).

For the purpose of progressive deregulation and the grant of other benefits, educational institution programs are classified into: Level 1 (Applicant Status), Level II (Accredited Status), Level III (Re-accredited Status) and Level IV (Accredited Status).

Hence, accredited institutions with accredited programs have distinguished themselves in broad area of academic disciplines and enjoy the prestige and authority comparable to International Universities.

Constituents of the GEC

In as much as the focus of the study is to assess the relevance and effectiveness of the GEC awarenes ss to its requirements is a must.

The minimum requirements for the mandatory General Education Curriculum (GEC) of tertiary courses of study leading to an initial bachelor's degree covering four curriculum years shall henceforth be sixty-three units distributed as follows: 1. Language and literature, English (9 units), Filipino (9 units), Literature (6 units) for a total of 24 units, 2. Mathematics and Natural Sciences, Mathematics (6 units), Natural Sciences (6

units), Science elective (3 units) for a total of 15 units, 3. Humanities and Social Sciences, Humanities, Arts, Philosophy (6 units) and Social Sciences, Basic Economics (with Taxation and Agrarian Reform), General Psychology, Politics and Governance (with Philippine Constitution), Society and Culture (with Family Planning) (12 units), for a total of 18 units, 4. Mandated Subjects, Life and Works of Rizal, Philippine History for a total of 6 units.

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) with all the internal and external elements/ factors within it must function significantly in the attainment of its purpose. This is a realization of the importance of assessing the curriculum plan regularly for its improvement, redirection and intensification.

> *The curriculum's past shapes the present. It is the rigorous training that similarly shapes the lives of students in schools. Hence, curriculum serves as the substantial foundation that shapes the future of college students.*

And because of the paucity of empirical studies in curriculum evaluation of HEIs in the Philippines, this pioneering study is significant, in a sense that it is relevant to the current thrusts of the Commission on Higher Education which is to foster quality education in the Higher Education Institutions in the Philippines.

Relative to the pertinent provisions of the Republic Act 7722, otherwise known as the Higher Education Act of 1994 and along with the strategies for achieving culture of excellence in higher education institutions in the country, studies of this kind will help

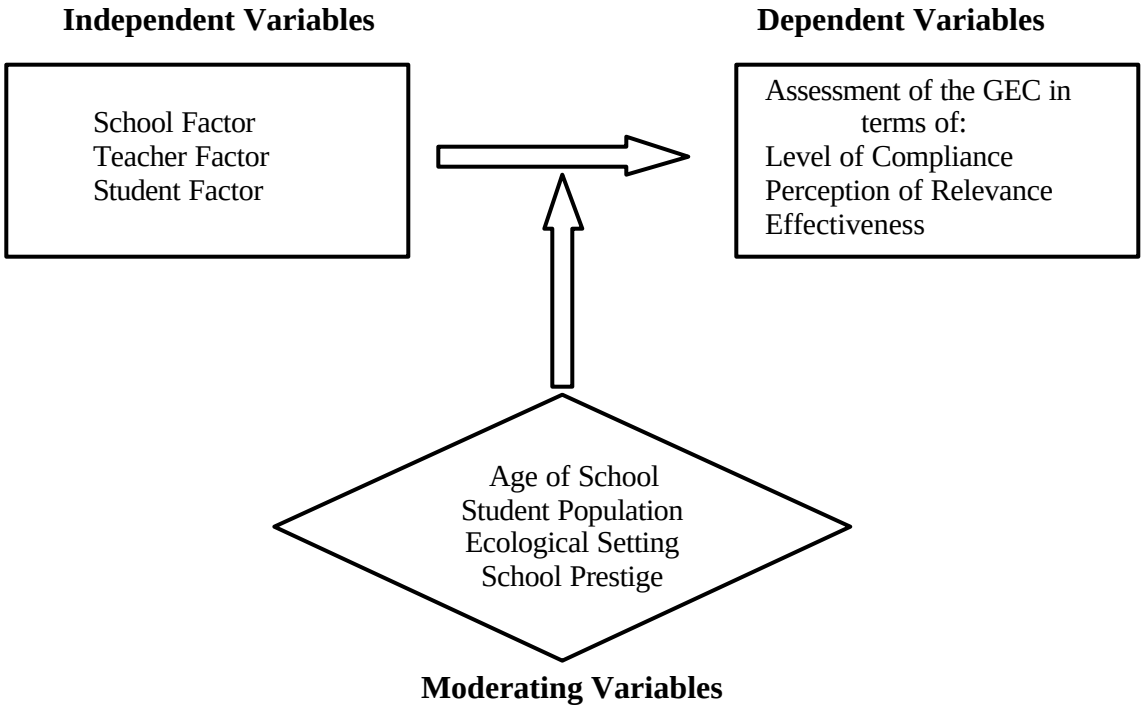
illuminate the merits as well as problems regarding curriculum implementation/ redirection in colleges and universities.

Conceptual Framework

Armstrong (1989), affirmed that for a curriculum to be relevant, it must involve planned interactions involving the prime stake holders of the academic enterprise namely: students, teachers, administrators, policy makers and the community. Along with the stakeholders, are the physical facilities and the learning environment in the school setting. All these plus other related factors, are *sine qua non* to curriculum improvement.

The proceeding illustration is a stepwise paradigm showing the variables of the study. It further illustrates how the independent and the moderating variables served as determinants of the desired outcome, which is the dependent variable.

Figure 3: The Conceptual Paradigm



To illustrate further, Figure 2 in the proceeding page displays the matrix of the variables of the study and their characteristics.

There are six problems posed in this study: 1) What is the level of compliance of the HEIs to CHED Memo. No. 59, S. 1996? ; 2) What is the perception of the respondents on the relevance of GEC? ; 3) What is the level of effectiveness of the GEC among HEIs? ; 4) Is there concordance in the problems encountered by HEIs in the implementation of the GEC? ; 5) What are the problems encountered by the accredited HEIs in the implementation of the GEC; 6) What are the strengths and weaknesses of the General Education Curriculum?

The study proceeded from the following hypotheses: (1) There is no significant difference among HEIs in the perceived level of compliance to the GEC.; 1.1 There is no relationship among certain factors and the level of compliance.; (2) There is no significant difference among HEIs in their level of perception of relevance of the GEC.; (3) There is no significant difference among HEIs in the level of effectiveness of the GEC.; 3.1 There is no relationship among certain factors and the level of effectiveness.; (4) There are no significant differences on the problems encountered by the HEIs in the implementation of the GEC.

Figure 4: The Matrix of the Variables of the Study and Their Characteristics

Independent Variables	Moderating Variables	Dependent Variables
1. School Factor 1.1 Administrative Practices 1.1a. Faculty Loading 1.1b. Student loads 1.1c. Sequencing of Subjects 1.1d. Schedule of Classes 1.1e. Class Size 1.2 Physical Facilities 1.2a. Classrooms 1.2b. School Building 1.2c. Library Book Holdings 1.2d. Laboratories & State of the Art Facilities 1.2e. Recreational Facilities 1.3 Teacher Support 1.3a. Faculty Development 1.3b. Instructional Materials 1.4 Student Support 1.4a. Student Development, Seminars, Workshops, Career Dev't. 2. Teacher Factor 2.1 Academic Qualification 2.1a. Degrees Earned 2.1b. Length of Service 2.1c. Professional Status 2.1d. Training and Seminars Attended 2.2 Pedagogical Skills 2.2a. Evaluation Rating Administration, Peer & Student 3. Student Factor 3.1 GPA	1. Age of School 1.1 number of years in existence 2. Population Size of Students 2.1 Number of Students Enrolled 3. Ecological Setting/ Urban-ness of School 3.1 City/ Non-city 3.2 With Passable Roads 3.3 H2O Supply 3.4 Current Supply of Electricity 3.5 Commercial Facilities 3.6 Means of Transportation 3.7 Communication Facilities 4. Prestige of School 4.1 Perceived Prestige	1. Level of Compliance 1.1 Goals of the General Education Curriculum 1.2 GEC requirements 1.2a. Faculty Servicing the GEC 1.2b. Adoptation to the GEC guidelines on implementation 1.3 Congruence of GEC objectives to courses' content scope covered 2. Effectiveness 2.1 Completion Rate 2.2 Grade Point Average 2.3 Grades in Final Examinations 2.4 Number of Failing Students in Minor & Major Courses 3. Perception of Relevance of the Respondents 3.1 Administrator 3.2 Teacher 3.3 Student

Methodology

To achieve the fundamental thrust of the study, descriptive research design supported with documentary analysis were employed. Personal observation and interview were conducted to enrich and strengthen the information gathered.

Stratified proportionate sampling was used in the selection of respondents. A total of 823 respondents were involved in this undertaking (703 students, 110 teachers and 10 top level administrators all from the College of Arts and Sciences).

The unit of analysis of this research was the extent of the implementation of GEC by Institution/HEI. There were five participating HEIs in the study chosen on the basis of four distinct criteria earlier stated in the description of the research locale.

A combination of descriptive and inferential statistics were used in the analysis and interpretation of data. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to ensure accuracy and precision in the computation of data. Computed values were tested against 0.05 level of significance.

Results

The results of this research are synthesized as follows:

1. Level of Compliance of HEIs to CHED Memo. No. 59, S. 1996.

HEI 1 complied very satisfactorily to the goals of the GEC (WM=8.09, SD=0.48); 100% compliance in terms of goals, physical facilities and instructional learning materials.

HEI 2 had a very satisfactory level of compliance to goals of the GEC (WM=8.02; SD=0.25), 100% compliance to curriculum content and requirements, outstanding average faculty qualification, above average in pedagogical skills, outstanding compliance to physical facilities and commendable compliance to instructional learning materials.

HEI 3 similarly had a very satisfactory level of compliance to the goals of the GEC (WM=8.02; SD=0.25), 100% compliance to curriculum content and requirements, outstanding compliance to faculty qualification, above average in pedagogical skills and physical facilities and a commendable compliance to instructional learning materials.

HEI 4 complied very satisfactorily to the goals of the GEC (WM=8.25, SD=0.28) 100 % compliance to curriculum content and requirements, outstanding compliance to faculty qualification, above average in pedagogical skills, physical facilities and commendable compliance to instructional learning materials.

HEI 5 had a weighted mean 7.85 and a standard deviation of 0.48 indicating a very satisfactory level of compliance, 100% compliance to curriculum content and requirements; outstanding compliance to faculty academic qualifications and above average in pedagogical skills and commendable compliance to physical facilities and instructional learning materials.

2. Perception of the Relevance of the GEC

As regards to the perception of the relevance of the GEC, the study considered four core areas of the curriculum namely Language and Literature, Mathematics and Natural Sciences, Humanities and Social Sciences and Mandated Courses.

a. Collectively the five HEIs found Language and Literature subject relevant with an average mean of HEI 1 (WM=8.38), HEI 2 (WM=8.38), HEI 3 (WM=8.38), HEI 4 (WM=8.03) and HEI 5 (WM=7.78).
b. Results showed that the five HEIs rated Mathematics and Natural Science relevant indicated by their means: HEI 1 (WM=8.03, HEI 2 (WM=7.74), HEI 3 (WM=7.95), HEI 4 (WM=8.48) and HEI 5 (WM=7.72).
c. Respondents from the five HEIs responded that Humanities and Social Sciences was really relevant as shown by their weighted mean scores: HEI 1 (WM=8.10), HEI 2 (WM=8.04, HEI 3 (WM=8.04) and HEI 5 (WM=7.94) and over-all mean perception of 8.11.
d. Relevance of mandated subjects an over-all mean perception of 7.94 was recorded, signifying that the mandated subjects are relevant, the weighted means per school were as follows HEI 1 (8.41), HEI 2 (7.99), HEI 3 (7.74), HEI 4 (7.93), and HEI 5 (7.62).

Summative perception of the relevance of the core areas revealed that HEI 1, HEI 2 and HEI 4 perceived the three core areas: Language and Literature, Humanities and Social Sciences and Mandated Courses were very relevant while for HEI 3 and HEI 5, it was only relevant. However, as a group, they averred that the core areas were very relevant in equipping the students with the competencies for specialization.

3. Level of Effectiveness of the GEC among the Five HEIs

Over-all GPA of the five schools was 84.34, SD=3.17 verbally described as satisfactory while the three factors such as teacher factor, learning environment and institutional learning materials were affecting the relevance of the GEC to a great extent.

4. Concordance of Problems Encountered in the Implementation of GEC.

Kendall's coefficient of concordance and chi-square test were used to ascertain significance of agreement in the perception of problems met by the five HEIs in the implementation of the GEC was found within the acceptance region of the null hypothesis, meaning, there are no significant difference in terms of the perceived problems of the HEIs regarding the GEC implementation with a W value of 0.643 and chi-square of 28.942 implying similarity/homogeneity to some extent.

5. Problems Encountered in the implementation of GEC

There are problems encountered by educators and students in the implementation of the GEC. For educators, excessive non-teaching duties and responsibilities, lack of funding for faculty development, budget for renovations, pressure brought about by CHED requirements and others. While the difficulties met by students were: overcrowded classes, need for additional facilities and tests made by teachers were not congruent to what were taught to students.

Table 2:
Summary Table on the Overall Perceived Level of
Compliance to the Goals of the General Education Curriculum of the Five HEIs

Goal	HEI											
	1	VD	2	VD	3	VD	4	VD	5	VD	AVE	VD
1. Provision of a broad general education that help students attain their potential as human beings.	8.58	O	8.12	VS	7.93	VS	8.54	O	7.25	VS	8.09	VS
2. Enhancing the quality of students participation in the community.	8.27	VS	7.95	VS	7.90	VS	8.17	VS	7.43	VS	7.94	VS
3. Acquisition of the essential educational foundation which transformed students into productive citizen of the country.	8.09	VS	8.67	O	7.94	VS	7.88	VS	7.66	VS	8.05	VS
4. Equipping students in academic and work skills required for national development.	8.12	VS	8.10	VS	8.30	VS	7.91	VS	8.12	VS	8.11	VS
5. Responding effectively to the changing needs and conditions of the society vis-à-vis family community and country.	7.83	VS	7.26	VS	7.76	VS	8.15	VS	8.17	VS	7.83	VS
6. Training students to be future professionals.	8.82	O	8.41	VS	8.32	VS	8.83	O	8.48	VS	8.57	O
AVERAGE	**8.29**	**VS**	**8.09**	**VS**	**8.02**	**VS**	**8.25**	**VS**	**7.85**	**VS**	**8.10**	**VS**

Table 3:
Over-all Perception of the Core Courses by the Respondents in the Five HEIs

ITEM	HEIs											
	1	**VD**	**2**	**VD**	**3**	**VD**	**4**	**VD**	**5**	**VD**	Ave	**VD**
All the course topics listed in the syllabus are fully discussed.	8.16	R	7.75	R	7.84	R	8.61	VR	7.97	R	8.07	R
Time allotment is enough to tackle all learning activities.	8.22	R	7.80	R	7.99	R	8.45	R	7.78	R	8.05	R
The nature of the learning activities is congruent to the course topics.	8.56	VR	8.71	VR	8.15	R	8.49	R	8.63	VR	8.51	VR
The learning activities are appropriate to the course topics.	8.69	VR	8.53	VR	8.31	R	8.96	VR	8.45	R	8.59	VR
Lessons are logically sequenced.	8.52	VR	8.69	VR	8.58	VR	8.96	VR	8.40	R	8.63	VR
Schedule of pre-requisite subject was strictly observed.	9.63	VR	9.53	VR	9.28	VR	8.63	VR	9.17	VR	9.45	VR
Course requirement is equipping students with the needed competencies for specialization.	9.24	VR	8.88	VR	8.97	VR	9.08	VR	9.04	VR	9.04	VR
Lessons are organized around a theme or key concept.	8.80	VR	8.67	VR	8.63	VR	8.86	VR	8.78	VR	8.75	VR
There is interconnection of content within the course.	8.75	VR	8.71	VR	8.30	R	8.76	VR	8.42	R	8.55	VR
There is interconnection of content among the courses in the curriculum.	8.52	VR	8.59	VR	8.59	VR	8.85	VR	8.58	VR	8.63	VR
The methodology of teaching is appropriate to the level of the students.	8.48	VR	8.65	VR	8.45	R	8.80	VR	8.41	R	8.56	VR
The learning experiences provided in the course are related to actual life situations of students.	9.04	VR	8.99	VR	8.76	VR	9.09	VR	8.90	VR	8.96	VR
AVERAGE	8.72	VR	8.62	VR	8.49	R	8.88	VR	8.53	VR	8.65	VR

Table 4:
Overall Ranking of the Perceived Problems by the Student Respondents in the Implementation of the GEC

PROBLEM	HEI 1	HEI 2	HEI 3	HEI 4	HEI 5	Sum of Ranks	Over-all Ranking
Adequate facilities	1	1	2	3	1	8	1
Library/ book holdings	7	10	3	2	3	25	4
Laboratory/ Lab Equipment	3	3	4	1	2	13	2
Instructional Classrooms	5	2	1	4	4	16	3
Building	6	7	5	5	5	28	6
Canteen	10	9	10	10	11	50	10
Gym	11	11	11	11	10	54	11
Competent Mentors	2	8	7	8	9	34	7.5
Supportive Administration	4	4	9	7	6	26	5
Updated Instructional Materials	8	5	8	6	7	34	7.5
Right Schedule of Classes	9	6	6	9	8	38	9

Table 5:
Strengths/Weaknesses of the GEC as Perceived by the Respondents

PROBLEM	HEI 1	HEI 2	HEI 3	HEI 4	HEI 5	Sum of Ranks	Over-all Ranking
All the course topics listed in the syllabus are fully discussed.	2	2.5	4	2	1	11.5	12
Time allotment is enough to tackle all learning activities.	5	2.5	11	11	5	34.5	11
The nature of the learning activities is congruent to the Course topics.	11	5	5	6	7	34	7
The learning activities are appropriate to the course topics.	7	8	10	9	8	42	6
Lessons are logically sequenced.	6	9	9	7	6	37	7.5
Schedule of pre-requisite subject was strictly observed.	12	12	8	10	12	54	1
Course requirement is equipping students with the needed competencies for specialization.	8	7	12	8	11	46	2
Lessons are organized around a theme or key concept.	1	1	1	1	2	6	4
There is interconnection of content within the course.	3	4	6	3	4	20	5
There is interconnection of content among the courses In the curriculum.	10	10	3	4	10	37	7.5
The methodology of teaching is appropriate to the level of the students.	9	11	7	12	9	48	10
The learning experiences provided in the course are related to actual life situations of students.	4	8	2	5	3	20	3

6. Strengths and Weaknesses of the GEC

As to the factors contributory to the **strengths** of the GEC, data showed that competent mentors ranked first among the strengths identified by the respondents. This was followed by the following: adequate facilities; supportive administration; correct sequencing of courses, laboratory and lab equipment.

The factors contributory to the **weaknesses** of the GEC as perceived by the respondents were as follows: canteen facilities; right schedule of classes; and updated instructional materials. Findings imply that there were some obstacles that can affect the effective implementation of the curriculum.

Please refer to Tables 2,3,4 and 5 for the tabular presentation of data.

Discussion

Research is characterized by patient and unhurried activity (Acierto, 1999). It is rarely spectacular. Researchers must expect disappointment and discouragement as they pursue the research.

It is the aim of every researcher to come up with discreet, quantifiable information relevant to the existing needs of society. However, constraints or limitations are inevitable. The probability that some elements in the undertaking may not be seriously considered is expected.

Consequently, other things being equal, the analysis of findings based on the objectives of the study revealed homogeneity of statistical results. In terms of level of compliance the HEIs in the study were perceived very satisfactory. Whereas, relevance and

effectiveness of the curriculum was assessed very effective. This is not quite impossible in a sense that selected HEIs have accredited college programs. Hence, these institutions complied over and above CHED requirements. It is indeed a serious obligation on the part of the school with leveled and accredited programs to foster and maintain the quality of education being serviced by them. These accredited HEIs of learning will certainly exert great effort to make all elements in the institutions congruent to what is required of them by CHED and among others cognizant to the demand of the changing workplace.

Conclusions

In agreement the study highlighted the following conclusions: 1) accredited HEIs complied very satisfactorily to the goals of the GEC; 2)HEIs do not differ significantly in their level of compliance to CHED Memo. No. 59, S.,1996; 3)HEIs population age of school, faculty qualifications, ecological setting, physical facilities and instructional materials cannot account for variation in the level of compliance to GEC; 4) GEC is relevant in preparing college students for specialization; 5) there is no congruence in the perception of relevance of Language and Literature, Mathematics and Natural Sciences, and Mandated Coursets in providing foundations in the pursuit of professional disciplines; 6)the level of perception of GEC is independent of school , teacher and student factors; 7) in general the GEC is effective; 8) the level of effectiveness is not predicted by the differences in school , teacher and related variables; 9) there are similarities in the problems encountered by educators and students in the implementation of GEC and 10) GEC has its own strengths and weaknesses.

Recommendations

The study had the following recommendations:

1) To enhance further the commendable level of compliance to the GEC, the following can be considered by the administrators:
    a. Focus and redirect the targeted goals of the curriculum by exerting more effort towards their attainment. Intensify the basic preparatory courses.
    b. Continuing professional education of the faculty members
    c. To raise the pedagogical competence of those servicing the GEC, deans and department chairs have to institute clinical and developmental modes of supervision.
    d. Budget allocation should be proportional to the existing needs of the institution.
    e. Learning resource centers should be continuously upgraded to respond to the current thrusts of education.
    f. Bookholdings of these HEIs have to be updated and standardized student-book ratio.
2) The five HEIs in CALABARZON Region should sustain their commendable level of compliance to the CHED Memo No. 59, S. 1996 by periodically conducting an organizational audit in order to be vigilant to their deficiencies.
3) Deans and department chairs should exercise their instructional leadership functions to monitor the implementation of the core courses under the GEC.
4) The **teaching of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, as well as Language and Literature needs to be intensified.**

5) The faculty and the students should be made aware of their complementary role in ensuring the level of effectiveness of the curriculum in preparing students in their fields of specialization.
6) Greater focus must be done on the following factors affecting the level of effectiveness of the GEC: updating teaching methodologies, enrichment of library and laboratory facilities; and updating textbooks and syllabi.
7) The number of teaching preparations must be reduced to at least three preparations only.
8) Budget allocation for faculty development must be prioritized.
9) Minimize excessive non-teaching duties and responsibilities for the mentors to concentrate more on the academic side of the curriculum.
10) Professors must help students relate lessons to actual life situation.
11) College teachers should be required to prepare examinations based on a Table of Specifications (TOS).
12) Mentors servicing the GEC should not sacrifice quality for quantity in the teaching of the course syllabi.
13) Students must be made to realize that learning is an enjoyable experience.
14) To enhance the strengths of the curriculum, the following factors should be seriously considered: competent mentors; adequate facilities; supportive administration and correct sequencing of courses.
15) There are factors in the curriculum improvement that has significant bearing in the acadmeic development of the individual canteen facilities; right schedule of classes and updated instructional materials be given importance.

16) This pioneering study on the extent of the implementation of the GEC can be replicated in a different setting/venue, using other elements of the curriculum.
17) The General Education Curriculum or any curriculum in genera; must be evaluated regularly for its improvement and redirection.

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