

ASSESSING THE GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN CULTURAL EDUCATION PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN PHILIPPINES

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ABSTRACT: *The study aimed to assess the Graduate Diploma in Cultural Education Program in the University of Northern Philippines. The researcher made use of mixed research methods, quantitative and qualitative. Data were gathered and analyzed using mean, frequency, percentage, and simple linear correlation. The study involved 72 Graduate Diplomas in Cultural Education scholars from Batches 1, 2, and 3. Results show that most GDCE scholars are males, 26-30 years old, single, and with master units. Most receive a monthly salary ranging from 20,001-25,000, have 1-5 years of teaching experience, and belong to Teacher I-III as their position/rank before taking the GDCE program. Most of them have attended 1-3 seminars related to cultural education. The scholars assessed the program's quality as "Very High," and their level of assessment of the knowledge and skills after taking the GDCE is also "Very High." It was also found that there is a significant relationship between age and the level of assessment of the knowledge and skills of the scholars after taking the GDCE program. The GDCE program is beneficial and contributes to acquiring scholars' needed knowledge and skills in cultural education. It is strongly recommended that the University of Northern Philippines (UNP), the only university in Region 1 that offers the Graduate Diploma in Cultural Education, may, consider offering a Master of Arts in Cultural Education. Likewise, faculty members are also encouraged to attend seminars/training/workshops related to cultural education.*

Keywords: graduate diploma in cultural education, assessment, scholars

1. INTRODUCTION

The National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) is the Philippines' official government agency for culture. It is the overall policy-making body coordinating and grants agency for the preservation, development, and promotion of Philippine arts and culture. Under this agency is the Philippine Cultural Education Program (PCEP), which envisions a nation of culturally literate and empowered Filipinos by ensuring that culture is the core and foundation of education, governance, and sustainable development. It seeks to develop among Filipinos greater awareness, understanding, and appreciation of their culture and arts towards the evolution of a consciousness that will improve the quality of their lives. It was designed to make cultural education accessible to all sectors of Philippine society, particularly the youth, teachers, artists, cultural workers, government officials, government employees, media members, and civil society [1].

One of the Philippine Cultural Education Program projects is the Graduate Diploma in Cultural Education (GDCE) as one of the post-graduate degree scholarship programs. Said program is in partnership with the Department of Education, the Commission on Higher Education, and selected Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Since its conception in 2008, the program has graduated more than 5,000 teacher-scholars from different institutions in the country.

The University of Northern Philippines is the only university in Region I that offers the Graduate Diploma in Cultural Education. It was first implemented by the Center for Ilokano Studies in 2014. A total of 34 scholars had been successfully admitted for Level I. A year after, it was transferred to the College of Teacher Education because offering a program should be manned in a college and not in an office. Strongly aligned with the Philippine Cultural Education Program (PCEP) objectives, the 24-unit program offers scholarship opportunities for public elementary and high school teachers in the core subject areas (Science, Mathematics, Social Studies, and English) Filipino Languages) to undergo a two-

summer intensive training. As an in-service residential program, the scholarship covers a total of 432 hours (8 subjects for two summers) of intensive training designed to integrate a functional understanding of the local and national history, culture, heritage, and the arts into the five core subject areas – Social Sciences, Languages, Science, Math and MAPEH. It requires its participants to produce research on local history, reflection papers, and group and individual lesson exemplars of culture-based basic education. The NCCA-PCEP will cover only the scholarship of the two-summer 24-unit (8 Subjects) post-baccalaureate program divided into Level I and Level II, which offers foundation and major courses to enhance the student's understanding of the basic theories, processes, and applications of arts, culture, heritage in the culture-based teaching of the basic education curriculum. Level I scholars are expected to continue to Level II, with each phase consisting of twelve (12) graduate-level academic credits. Upon completion, the graduates have the option to continue to the Master of Education, Major in Cultural Education [2].

This research is assumed and envisioned to strengthen the GDCE scholars' capacity to deliver substantive and quality instruction to our learners relevant to the needs of the changing times and to be responsive to the demands of the industry. Further, it is also assumed to provide baseline data that the University of Northern Philippines College of Teacher Education can use to develop and improve the GDCE program. The administration will also consider offering a Master of Arts in Cultural Education. Lastly, this study could also be used to get systematic feedback from graduates to know their whereabouts, working conditions, and their retrospective assessment of their course, which may serve as a basis for curricular revisions for more productive graduates.

This study aimed to assess the Graduate Diploma in Cultural Education Program in the University of Northern Philippines for 2014-2019. Specifically, it sought to describe the profile of the GDCE scholars in terms of personal- and work-related

factors, determine the level of assessment of the scholars on the quality of the GDCE program, determine the level of assessment of the scholars on the knowledge and skills after taking GDCE, determine the correlation between the profile and the level of assessment on the knowledge and skills after taking GDCE and identify the comments/suggestions of the scholars about the program.

2. METHODS

This study used mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative designs) of research. Respondents of this study were the GDCE scholars Batches 1, 2, and 3, with 94 scholars. However, only 72 participated in this study, for they were the ones who answered the survey questionnaire that was sent to them via Google form.

The researcher used an adapted questionnaire consisting of three parts prepared by the Philippine Cultural Education Program (PCEP). This study used Frequency count and percentage, Mean, and Simple Linear Correlation to analyze the data.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Most GDCE scholars are males, 26-30 years old, single, and with master units. Most receive a monthly salary ranging from 20,001-25,000, have 1-5 years of teaching experience, and belong to Teacher I-III as their position/rank before taking the GDCE program. Most of them have attended 1-3 seminars related to cultural education.

Table 2: Level of Assessment of the Scholars on the Quality of the GDCE Program

	Items	\bar{x}	DR
1.	Pre-program logistics, support, and information were timely, valuable, and thorough (promotions, invitations, orientation, etc.)	4.61	Strongly Agree
2.	The program's support and logistics were excellent (venue, facilities, etc.	4.69	Strongly Agree
3.	The materials provided were adequate and helpful.	4.68	Strongly Agree
4.	The length of training was sufficient	4.29	Strongly Agree
5.	The content was well organized.	4.56	Strongly Agree
6.	Learning methods and activities (lectures, presentations, film screenings, etc.) were effective.	4.83	Strongly Agree
7.	Resource persons were knowledgeable and effective.	4.77	Strongly Agree
8.	The training was relevant to my needs as a teacher.	4.77	Strongly Agree
9.	The GDCE prompted me to design and implement culture-based activities in my school, either for instructional or school programming.	4.59	Strongly Agree
10.	The GDCE is relevant in advancing Filipino creativity and in safeguarding cultural heritage.	4.84	Strongly Agree
11.	The GDCE has improved my understanding of Filipino culture and arts.	4.91	Strongly Agree
12.	I am interested in attending other activities of the NCCA Philippine Cultural Education	4.81	Strongly Agree
13.	I would recommend this program to other teachers without reservation.	4.79	Strongly Agree
	Overall	4.70	Very High

Item no. 11 states, "The GDCE has improved my understanding of Filipino culture and arts," which was the highest assessment with a mean rating of 4.91. This statement only shows that scholars widened their understanding of Filipino culture and arts. The following claims of the scholars have supported this:

S1- "As a Filipino teacher, a neophyte Ilocano and Tagalog writer, after graduating from GDCE, I can proudly say that I am now more *knowledgeable about our national heritage and local culture*. Now it serves as my inspiration and motivation to write more stories that depict Ilocano culture."

S2- "*Local culture and heritage are one of great help in analyzing issues* because this knowledge has been in the record for many years."

S3- "The GDCE makes me *more knowledgeable on culture*. I was able to make my teaching culturally relevant for my students."

The findings above show that the GDCE program has been beneficial as it helps them appreciate more about Filipino culture more. Others [3] also finds out in their study that in cultural literacy, education, and appreciation, the respondents and beneficiaries have broader awareness, understanding, and appreciation of culture and the arts, as evidenced in their responses to questions during the focus group discussions and interviews at the personal and relational level among their peers and colleagues. Also, [4] stressed that PUP MPA graduate students who are currently in the public service or those who will be in the future would have a deeper understanding and appreciation of the prevailing Filipino culture in public governance and realize its advantages in strengthening public administration.

On the other hand, item no. 4, which states that "Length of training was sufficient," got the lowest assessment with a mean rating of 4.29. This implies that the duration of said training is not enough as it was only implemented for a month. However, the table shows that the overall assessment of the GDCE scholars on the program's quality is "Very High."

Table 3: Level of Assessment of the Scholars on the Knowledge and Skills after taking the GDCE Program

	Items	\bar{x}	DR
1.	Identifying and documenting a specific's natural, tangible (i.e., built, movable), and intangible heritage.	4.48	Very High
2.	Developing community projects based on heritage and their narratives.	4.25	Very High
3.	Understanding of media concepts and educational media concepts in promoting cultural awareness.	4.37	Very High
4.	Creating media-based instructional materials for cultural education.	4.41	Very High
5.	Analyzing major issues in Philippine education and how cultural education can make an impact.	4.29	Very High
6.	Identifying essential Cultural knowledge (ECK in the K to 12 Curriculum across grade levels and disciplines.	4.34	Very High
7.	Developing instructional lesson exemplars across the Basic Education Curriculum using Essential Cultural Knowledge.	4.31	Very High
	Overall	4.35	Very High

It can be seen in the table that item no. 1, which says "Identifying and documenting natural, tangible (i.e. built, movable) and intangible heritage of a specific," got the highest assessment with a mean rating of 4.48. Scholars cited that "I was able to start a project on the *documentation of wildflowers in the municipality*." "After identifying and documenting our local cultural heritage, I have been more appreciative of our *Bauang culture* and used this as a springboard to my lessons." "I was able to document *Baldomir's ancestral house* (built), *Aganon's lacasa* (movable) and the *Pinili Abel and Bawang festivals, Abel Weaving* (intangible)." "The GDCE program helped me appreciate our natural, tangible and intangible heritage in the locality. When we conducted our research in Pob. Norte, Sta. Maria, Ilocos Sur, I was really amazed by the natural beauty of those old building, built and founded during the Spanish regime." Results revealed that the scholars deepen their knowledge and skills in identifying and documenting both natural and intangible heritage. [1] said that their respondents acknowledged the skills they developed from the various interventions, programs, and projects of the NCCED. Among these were program/project formulation, project implementation, writing, choreography, workshop facilitation, communication, listening skills, integration of culture and arts in other subject areas, module development, improved learning, teaching strategies, adaptability, and self-confidence. On the other side, item no. 2, "Developing community projects based on heritage and their narratives," got the lowest assessment with a rating of 4.25. Most scholars claimed they could not develop community projects because of a lack of support from their municipality. However, the overall assessment of the scholars on the knowledge and skills after taking the GDCE program is "Very High."

Table 4. Relationship Between the Profile of the Scholars and their Level of Assessment on the Knowledge and Skills after taking the GDCE

r	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Overall
Sex	-	-	-	-	-	-0.03	-	-0.079
	0.014	0.034	0.068	0.126	0.132		0.081	
Age	.274*	0.175	0.169	0.018	0.15	0.069	0.048	0.141
Civil Status	0.092	0.05	-	-	-	-	0.034	-0.038
			0.131	0.066	0.149	0.054		
Highest Educational Attainment	0.218	0.08	-	-	0.098	0.055	-	0.052
			0.052	0.043			0.024	
Monthly salary	0.08	-	-	-	-	-	-	-0.052
		0.055	0.009	0.123	0.061	0.014	0.121	
No. of years in teaching	0.019	0.094	0.084	0.054	0.071	0.015	-	0.036
							0.098	
Position/ Rank Before Taking GDCE	0.128	-	-	-	-	-	-	-0.061
		0.105	0.028	0.157	0.072	0.006	0.118	
No. of seminars Related to Cultural Education	0.1	0.132	0.043	0.016	-	0.061	-	0.047
					0.042		0.001	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

These results indicate that the program has contributed to acquiring the knowledge and skills of the GDCE scholars on culture education. They can more effectively appreciate,

understand, preserve, and promote Filipino culture through the program. [5] found out in her study that as a result of the GDCE Program, the teachers were equipped to engage in beneficial activities to promote local culture and historical heritage.

Table 4 shows the significant relationship between the profile of the GDCE scholars and their level of assessment of their knowledge and skills after taking the Graduate Diploma in Cultural Education. Of all personal and work-related factors, only age has a significant relationship with their level of assessment of the knowledge and skills after taking the program at a 0.05 level of significance. It only shows that participants within the age bracket of 26-30 demonstrated very high retention of knowledge and skills after taking the program. Contrarily, [6] looked into the graduates' profiles in terms of the UNP-CAT rating, TAT result, general weighted average, practicum performance, and attendance in review classes. Further, it determined the graduates' performance along the components of the licensure examination and its relationship to their profile and the differences in the performance of the three groups of graduates and revealed that the personal profile of the graduates correlate significantly with their LET performance.

Comments/Suggestions of the GDCE Scholars about the program

Great Opportunity. Scholars have been very thankful for this great opportunity. They have been given a chance to widen and deepen their knowledge and skills in cultural education, and enable them to appreciate, understand, preserve, and promote the Filipino culture. They are also indebted to the National Commission on Culture and the Arts, particularly the Philippine Cultural Education Program (PCEP), in partnership with the University of Northern Philippines as the host institution for initiating this course, Graduate Diploma in Cultural Education.

Continue the program. Keep the program so others will be given a chance to widen their understanding of our rich culture. Scholars hope that this program will continuously prosper and benefit every chosen scholar. This is also supported in the study of [3] that a continuing education program for cultural workers and their colleagues from other disciplines to push culture-based education in schools and colleges. [7] the proposed E-Learning Framework for the University of Northern Philippines (UNP), a framework that addresses implementation challenges in order to further the mission statement of the university - to provide quality education. The proposed framework could also be adopted by other State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in implementing their own E-Learning.

An offering of an MA in Cultural Education. Since this program is a graduate diploma, scholars are hoping there should be a continuation of this course leading to becoming a master's degree, and a majority of them are very much willing to continue the said program.

More activities of GDCE in every region. They expect more training in cultural education and module writing regarding cultural icons. There should be more time so scholars can craft, advocate and study cultural education. In his study, [4] recommended that school

officials are encouraged to develop and implement Culture-based lesson exemplars, and school officials are encouraged to conduct local mapping and research writing relevant to cultural or culture-based education. On the other hand, [8] In the implementation of inclusive education, suggests that school administrators must give significant training, seminars/workshops along with inclusive education so that teachers may provide an effective and stimulating environment for all types of students.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Most of the scholars are male-dominated; most belong to the 26-30 age bracket; more than half are single and have masteral units. They earn the minimum salary for teachers since many of them hold the position of Teacher I-III and are still teaching for 1-5 years. Moreover, they need to attend more seminars related to cultural education. The GDCE program has a very high quality, as assessed by the scholars. There is a significant relationship between the age and the level of assessment of the scholars on the knowledge and skills after taking the GDCE program. The GDCE program is beneficial and contributes to acquiring scholars' needed knowledge and skills in cultural education. The GDCE program is an excellent opportunity for scholars. Hence, it must be sustained and conduct more activities in every Region.

This study recommends that since the level of assessment on the quality of the GDCE program and the knowledge and skills of the scholars after taking said program are both Very High, thus this program should be continued. That the University of Northern Philippines may consider offering a Master of Arts in Cultural Education. Faculty members are also encouraged to attend seminars/training/workshops related to cultural education. Conduct more activities that will enrich the awareness/importance of cultural education. Develop instructional materials focusing on cultural education. Research that aims to assess different programs of the college be undertaken.

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[9]

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