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The Supervisory Perspective: Uncovering the Lived Experiences of Radiologic Technology Supervisors in Dealing with Poor Licensure Examination Performance

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Abstract

Graduates' performance in licensure examinations is a key indicator of the quality of education in private higher education institutions (HEIs). This study utilized a qualitative phenomenological design to explore the lived experiences of Radiologic Technology supervisors on graduates' licensure examination performance, focusing on strategies and interventions for exam preparation. Through van Manen's six-step thematic analysis, ten emergent themes and fourteen essential themes were developed. The emergent themes included: Maintaining Status Quo of Performance (Supervisor Involvement in Licensure Examination Preparation, Licensure Examination Performance), Overcoming Limitations (Challenges and Areas for Improvement), Providing Administrative and Institutional Support (Professional Supports), Creating and Nurturing Supportive Learning Environment (Fostering a Supportive Learning Environment), Evaluating Track Records and Learning from Mistakes (Leveraging Past Successes, Learning from Failures), Improving Mentorship and Guidance (Mentoring and Guiding Students, Addressing Poor Licensure Examination Performance), Manifesting Empathy and Support (Insights for Other Supervisors), Assessment of Strengths and Weaknesses (Personal Experience and Reflection), Committing Holistic Development among Prospective Examinees (Continuous Improvement, Improving Licensure Examination Results), and Reinforcing Institutional Policies or Support Systems (Institutional Support for Supervisors). The findings highlight the need for reinforcing institutional policies and support systems to ensure equity, inclusivity, and success. Stronger institutional frameworks are essential in fostering supportive learning environments and addressing diverse needs within a dynamic educational landscape.

Keywords: *Social Science, Radiologic Technology Licensure Exam, Phenomenology, Mindanao*

Introduction

Graduate performance from Philippine colleges and universities offering programs in Radiologic Technology is increasingly alarming, especially concerning roughly half of national examinees passing Radiologic Technologists licensure exam. The above statement is verified by the Professional Regulation Commission (2023) as they confirm remotely that only 2,155 out of 3,878 examinees passed the exam. Numerous studies such as Alipio (2020) attribute this to radiologic technology course performance in licensure exams. It's important to note that Radiologic Technology academic performance is influenced by more than just grades. Other supporting factors such as clinical supervision, program structure, and institutional support are just as critical.

Clinical supervision is a cornerstone of education across the global landscape, providing essential support and guidance to learners navigating complex academic and professional environments. Khalaf et al. (2023) and Alyami et al. (2022) emphasize the significant role of supportive supervision in fostering students' development, yet also highlight the persistent challenges faced by learners, particularly in high-stakes licensure examinations. This challenge is not unique to a single context; for instance, in the United States, Babcock (2021) observed that reinstatement candidates for radiography examinations demonstrate significantly lower pass rates, underscoring the critical need for specialized support systems to enhance performance. In the Philippines, a similar trend emerges, where suboptimal licensure outcomes remain a pressing concern, further reinforcing the need for comprehensive approaches that integrate qualitative insights alongside existing quantitative data. Within this landscape, supervisors hold a pivotal role in radiologic technology education, undertaking managerial, educational, and supportive functions that are instrumental in shaping students' academic and professional trajectories (Bwanga & Mwansa, 2022).

This research aims to investigate the experiences of Radiologic Technology supervisors within private higher educational institutions in Mindanao. The study attempts to address how supervisors manage challenges pertaining to student outcomes, aligned with the supervisors' strategy of streamlining outcomes related to licensure performance. From the supervisors' vantage point, the research intends to contribute to the development of policies and aid frameworks that improve student outcomes and institutional productivity.

The guiding research questions are as follows: (1) What are the lived experiences of the Radiologic Technology supervisors in dealing with poor licensure examination performance among students? (2) How do these experiences shape the supervisors' strategies or interventions to improve licensure

performance? What insights can supervisors share to help other educators or administrators address poor licensure examination performance? (3) This study utilizes phenomenological methods focusing on the supervisors' perspectives as academic leaders and mentors within their organizations.

Outcomes resulting from this study will serve the interests of multiple stakeholders. Supervisors of Radiologic Technology Programs may learn some useful strategies to enhance licensure outcomes while students may receive better support throughout their academic pursuits. Educational administrators and institutions may take the recommendations from the study to foster positive learning climate, apply tailored strategies, and improve clinical supervision structures. Most importantly, the study will work towards enhancing the overall licensure performance and radiologic technology educational system in the Philippines.

Methods

This study used a phenomenological approach to examine the experiences of Radiologic Technology supervisors working at private higher education institutions (HEIs) in Mindanao, Philippines. Leveraging the works of Heidegger (1962) and Creswell (2013), the research sought to reveal the essence of supervisors' struggles in managing subpar licensure examination results within a centralized framed meaning framework and layers of subjectivity. This approach shed light on how supervisors make meaning of their roles and the strategies that shaped their responses to low pass rates, guiding exam outcomes. This study offers findings that can help enhance programs aimed at professional development and reflect on the role supervisors and students have in their own learning.

The research was conducted within diverse Radiologic Technology schools in Tagum, Kidapawan, Iligan, Digos, and Davao Cities. Participants were purposefully selected from among the Radiologic Technology supervisors with a minimum of two years in academic practice to ensure sufficient experience and relevance. Seven participants were interviewed, which is in line with Creswell's (2013) recommendation in phenomenological studies. Data collection was through semi-structured interviews of 30 – 45 minutes conducted face-to-face or computer-assisted. An expert-validated interview guide was employed. Supervisors' stories provided the primary data as in-depth interviews centered on barriers and strategies alongside insights revolving around performance issues in licensure examinations.

Obtaining and gathering the data complied with ethical guidelines such as receiving clearance from the Ethics Review Board and acquiring permissions from the relevant bodies. Participants, after being fully briefed on the study's purpose, processes, risks, and benefits, gave informed consent. Recording of interviews was done through audio, and these were later transcribed and confirmed for accuracy by the participants. Participants had all identifying information removed to ensure confidentiality was maintained. As a possible bias as a Radiologic Technology supervisor, the researcher was reflexive and transparent about biases to minimize impact on the analysis and interpretation of the data and ensure accurate representation of the participants' stories.

Data were analyzed using Creswell's (2017) phenomenological steps and thematic analysis techniques. This process involved reading and re-reading transcripts, identifying key phrases, and clustering similar meanings into themes that reflect the essence of the supervisors' experiences. Themes were validated through member checking and triangulation of literature and researcher perspectives. Trustworthiness was established by ensuring credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability, following Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria. The researcher took measures to maintain consistency across data collection and analysis and ensured findings accurately represented the participants' perspectives.

The study maintained strict adherence to ethical principles, including respect for privacy, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. Data were securely stored, accessible only to the researcher and adviser, and later destroyed after analysis. The findings aim to inform strategies for improving licensure outcomes, contribute to the development of supportive academic environments, and offer insights for future research. Through rigorous analysis and ethical rigor, the study sought to produce meaningful contributions to Radiologic Technology education and professional practice.

Results and Discussion

Table 1. Participants' Profile

Participant Number	Pseudonym	Gender	Length of Service	Age	Study Group
1	IDI 1	Male	9 years	29	IDI
2	IDI 2	Female	10 years	42	IDI
3	IDI 3	Male	5 years	30	IDI
4	IDI 4	Male	5 years	30	IDI
5	IDI 5	Female	13 years	43	IDI
6	IDI 6	Female	4 years	34	IDI
7	IDI 7	Female	4 years	35	IDI

Table 1 presents the participant profiles for this study, including pseudonyms, gender, length of service, age, and study group. Seven participants took part in the in-depth interviews, each assigned a pseudonym based on the number that was rank randomly to maintain confidentiality. The study aims to unravel the lived experiences and challenges faced by Radiologic Technology supervisors, Mindanao Philippines who work in the academe specifically

in the selected private higher education that offers BSRT program. Interviews were conducted among seven participants, and responses were carefully gathered, reviewed, and analyzed, with notable statements highlighted for analysis

Lived Experiences of the Radiologic Technology Supervisors in Dealing with Poor Licensure Examination

Maintaining Status Quo of Performance. The maintenance of the status quo ensures consistency, regulatory compliance, and predictability, which can benefit organizations such as healthcare institutions that must adhere to strict standards. This consistency provides stability and fosters trust among stakeholders by creating a routine that clients and customers can rely upon (Breevaart et al., 2019). However, while this approach can uphold standards and reduce risks, it may also lead to stagnation and hinder innovation. Rigid adherence to established practices can discourage employee creativity and engagement, particularly in dynamic environments where continuous improvement is crucial for growth. Organizations that fail to adapt may risk obsolescence, especially in fields where technological advancements and changing demands require flexibility. Therefore, balancing stability with progress is essential—institutions must create a culture that supports both regulatory standards and the pursuit of innovation, ensuring they remain resilient and responsive to change.

"As part of the licensure examination preparation for our students, I am actively involved in various capacities to ensure their success." (IDI 2)

"I provide students with personalized feedback on their progress, identify areas needing improvement, and offer strategies for exam success." (IDI 3)

Overcoming Limitations. Limitations can either hinder growth or act as catalysts for innovation. Individuals can overcome personal barriers, like skill gaps or confidence issues, by adopting a growth mindset, while organizations can tackle systemic issues by fostering innovation, leveraging technology, and empowering employees to challenge constraints. However, challenges remain, such as limited faculty exposure to new trends, minimal professional engagement outside the school, and insufficient mentorship for board exam preparation. Supervisors also struggle with time constraints due to administrative duties and teaching loads. Overcoming these limitations requires collaborative leadership, resourcefulness, and a proactive approach to change.

"Poorly performing areas include faculty exposure to new trends and advancements in the field, engagement in outside-the-school professional activities, and limited mentorship and individualized student preparation for board exams." (IDI 1)

"One weakness is in the limited availability of supervisors due to their other responsibilities, such as administrative duties, research commitments, and teaching loads." (IDI 4)

Providing Administrative and Institutional Support. Administrative and institutional support is critical in ensuring smooth operations, fostering growth, and enabling faculty and students to thrive. By managing tasks like scheduling, budget oversight, and policy adherence, administrative support frees educators to focus on teaching and mentoring. Beyond logistics, institutions can empower faculty and students through resources, professional development, and wellness programs. This support fosters inclusivity, equity, and a culture of innovation. Faculty recognize the importance of their dual roles in bridging theory and practice to enhance licensure exam preparation.

"Educational Support: I can help clarify complex concepts, explain, and offer tailored study plans based on individual needs." (IDI 1)

"Practice Questions: I can generate practice exams and quizzes to help individuals test their knowledge and prepare for licensure exams." (IDI 1)

How the Experiences Shape the Supervisor's Strategies or Interventions to Improve Licensure Performance

Creating and Nurturing a Supportive Learning Environment. A supportive learning environment fosters academic success by promoting engagement, motivation, and emotional well-being. Educators must build positive relationships with students, encourage open communication, and adapt teaching to diverse learning styles. Creating spaces for collaboration and reflection, offering regular study groups, practice exams, and mentorship programs are key strategies. These approaches create a sense of belonging and encourage students to take ownership of their learning.

"Providing regular study groups, access to practice exams, and pairing employees with mentors." (IDI 2)

"Encouraging open communication about struggles and fostering a team-based approach to learning." (IDI 4)

Evaluating Track Records and Learning from Mistakes. Evaluating performance records and learning from past mistakes helps individuals and organizations refine strategies and improve outcomes. Reflection on both successes and failures guides future interventions, such as revising retention policies, running mock exams, and providing feedback. Encouraging a culture that embraces mistakes as learning opportunities builds resilience and innovation, ensuring continuous growth.

"Analyzing student performance data and feedback to identify trends and areas for improvement." (IDI 3)

"Implementing retention policies and strict policies on internship programs and enhancement review programs." (IDI 6)

Improving Mentorship and Guidance. Effective mentorship fosters personal and academic development through clear objectives, trust, and tailored support. Mentors should guide students with personalized study plans, critical thinking development, and regular feedback, while also encouraging mentees to voice their challenges and goals. One-on-one mentoring and feedback loops ensure targeted support, helping students build confidence and resilience in preparation for licensure exams.

"Providing personalized study plans, practice exams, and feedback on areas for improvement." (IDI 4)

"Conducting one-on-one mentoring sessions to identify specific areas where students need help." (IDI 4)

Insights the Supervisors Can Share to Help Other Supervisors or Administrators Address Poor Licensure Examination Performance

Manifesting Empathy and Support. Empathy and support are crucial in creating a collaborative learning culture. By actively listening and understanding students' needs, supervisors build trust and encourage open communication. This culture empowers students to express challenges without fear and

creates space for learning strategies like mock exams, mentorship, and real-world learning applications. Empathy also extends to concrete actions—partnering with external experts and establishing mentorship programs fosters a supportive environment that values students' unique journeys.
"Conduct regular mock exams to identify gaps early." (IDI 4)

"Partner with external experts or review centers to provide additional resources." (IDI 3)
Assessment of Strengths and Weaknesses. Reflecting on strengths and weaknesses guides supervisors in tailoring strategies for student success. While strengths, such as commitment and mentorship, drive positive outcomes, acknowledging weaknesses—like exam anxiety or gaps in test-taking strategies—highlights areas for improvement. Supervisors feel a deep responsibility for students' success and view guiding them toward academic and professional goals as fulfilling. Sharing these reflections openly helps develop targeted interventions that better prepare students for licensure exams.
"When poor licensure performance significantly impacted me or my institution was when a student who had put in effort still fell short, highlighting gaps in our preparation process." (IDI 7)

"I feel a strong sense of responsibility and commitment to addressing this issue as a faculty member with both teaching and clinical experience." (IDI 5)

Committing to Holistic Development Among Prospective Examinees. Holistic development addresses academic, emotional, and practical skills, ensuring students are prepared for licensure exams and future careers. Supervisors collaborate to align curricula with exam blueprints, conduct regular mock exams, and analyze performance data to refine teaching strategies. By integrating higher-order thinking, emotional intelligence, and real-world skills into the learning process, supervisors foster adaptability, resilience, and long-term success in students.
"Collaborating with faculty to ensure the curriculum aligns with the exam blueprint and incorporates practice exams into the curriculum." (IDI 2)
"Analyzing student performance data to identify trends and areas for improvement." (IDI 4)

Reinforcing Institutional Policies or Support Systems. Reinforcing policies and support systems builds a structured, equitable environment where supervisors and students can thrive. Access to updated resources, reduced administrative burdens, and partnerships with external training centers strengthen institutional capacity for supporting exam readiness. Recognizing and rewarding supervisors' contributions fosters motivation, while robust support systems—such as mentoring programs and academic resources—enhance student engagement and retention. This commitment to structure and support ultimately improves licensure outcomes.
"Provide access to updated teaching materials, examination software, and facilities." (IDI 3)

"Reduced administrative burden to focus on mentoring and student engagement." (IDI 5)

Conclusion and Recommendations

The focus of this study was the lived experience of the supervisors of Radiologic Technology with regard to the subpar levels of licensure examination results amongst the students. The participants provided critical insights that reflect the predominant challenges they face. These insights include: Maintaining Status Quo of Performance, Overcoming Limitations, Providing Administrative and Institutional Support, Creating and Nurturing Supportive Learning Environment, Evaluating Track Records and Learning from Mistakes and Improving Mentorship and Guidance. Every stakeholder in Radiologic Technology education can understand the dynamics that impact the outcomes of licensure examinations through each theme and work towards enhancing the outcomes.

Maintaining the status quo, while providing predictability and stability, can be dangerous if it results in inertia. Supervisors emphasized a need for balance in maintaining tradition in the educational quality while

welcoming new ideas and enabling flexible approaches driven by continuous improvement, including Kaizen, through participatory management. Fulfilling the "success trap" must be avoided and calls for engagement from other stakeholders through feedback and granting full scholastic autonomy to faculty.

Overcoming limitations was identified as a key strategy for growth and transformation. Psychological limitations, along with rigid or systematic fears, can stifle advancement. However, adopting collaborative frameworks, leveraging technology, and fostering unyielding adaptability make growth possible. Supervisors underscored the importance of innovation-centered environments where support systems view failures constructively as learning moments, encourage risk, and foster problem-solving that defies conventional bounds.

Providing robust administrative and institutional support emerged as an essential factor for success. Clear vision, unambiguous processes, resource mobilization, and adequately structured mentorship were noted as critical in improving performance for faculty and students. Institutions need to address professional development, wellness initiatives, and feedback systems to build a culture of engagement and collective accountability.

Supervisors must emphasize implementing and sustaining supportive frameworks that facilitate learning. Emotional dimensions such as praise, feedback, collaboration, or diversity, along with supportive academic structures, greatly aid in achieving personal academic milestones. Suggested strategies include active listening, mentorship, and tailored pedagogy to assist students in engaging better and thinking critically while nurturing their sense of belonging.
Considering these findings, it is recommended that Radiologic Technology programs integrate a multi-leveled system to enhance licensure attainment. This includes a balance of consistency and innovation, faculty empowerment through mentorship and professional development, inclusion of vetted

teaching practices, and decisions based on measured and analyzed outcomes. Institutions should also foster a culture of feedback, resilience, and psychological safety, where students and supervisors can navigate, overcome obstacles and perform and excel academically. With these recommendations, Radiologic Technology education can shift from a static model towards a dynamic, adaptive model that better anticipates and responds to the needs of students, systems, and supports effective strategy implementation for successful licensure pathways.

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