

## EXAMINING THE PERSONAL FACTORS AFFECTING LICENSURE EXAMINATION PREPARATION

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### Abstract

*Students' high performance, if not 100% passing rate, in taking the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) is the ultimate goal of every Teacher Education Institutions (TEI). Hence, it requires all the necessary preparations not only for what the school can provide but also with the examinees' personal accountability. This paper investigated the respondents' personal preparedness in taking the licensure examination along with self-motivation, study skills and habits, and time management. There were 40 (22 Bachelor of Elementary Education and 18 Bachelor of Secondary Education practicum students) of the University of Nueva Caceres College of Education, Naga City, Philippines, who were used as the respondents of this study. These students were also preparing for their LET Examination through once a week assessment classes for the entire duration of their practicum. The survey revealed that respondents were exceptionally high in their personal drive along self-motivation but their commitment/goal setting needs to be defined. The use of resources was noted to be very highly used along study skills but health habits were the least given attention. It was further revealed that time management skills of the respondents were very high along deciding and starting their study routine but are struggling with difficult tasks that are not of their interest but might be highly relevant to their professional examination.*

**Keywords:** *Licensure Examination, Personal Factors, Personal Preparation*

### INTRODUCTION

Students' high performance, if not 100% passing rate, in taking the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) is the ultimate goal of every Teacher Education Institutions (TEI). Hence, it requires all the necessary preparations not only for what the school can provide but also with the examinees' personal accountability. The Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) is the assessment required of all applicants for registration as professional teachers as mandated by RA 7836. It is given once a year in places and dates determined by the Board of Professional Teachers (Attorneys of the Philippines, 2017). Licensure examination is one of the factors that influence the quality of teachers and teaching in the country; thus, a passing average performance in LET is one of the outcome indicators under the present curriculum and in the instruction parameters.

Licensure exam results intend to distinguish between those who are capable to enter the teaching profession in terms of skills and competencies measured by the examination from those who are not. This is done ideally to limit the supply of teachers only to those who are competent. Bagadion and Tullao study (2018) concluded that licensure examination provides quality assurance of education, promotes professionalism among teachers, and somewhat improves student outcomes. Therefore, passing the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) is an indication of quality education.

Preparation in taking board examinations must be given careful attention. Hence, there are several “personal factors” that were seen as influential and assumed to have been existing and practiced but not totally developed among students or exam takers. It involves their readiness along with personal motivation, study skills and habits, and time management. With this in consideration, this study focused on the mentioned personal factors. This study delimited other factors such as academic and or extracurricular activities to fully assist the licensure exam takers to benefit from a more enhanced research-based personal preparation.

According to Gando (2019) the University of Nueva Caceres’ College of Education is undeniably one of the best producers of effective teachers in the region and a responder to the needs of the teaching industry. As such, all efforts must be done to maintain this reputation. In reality, however, it is an overwhelming task for administrators, teachers, and students of the college to maintain and target a 100% passing rate for the board examination. It requires all the necessary preparation both on the College of Education staff and most especially the students.

To further the improvement of the university’s performance in the board examination, this study examined the students’ level of personal factors in taking the Licensure Examination for teachers, First semester, School Year 2018-2019. Specifically, this paper answered the following: 1. What is the level of students’ personal factors in taking Licensure Examination for teachers along: a. Self-Motivation; b. Study skills and habits; and c. Time management?; and 2. What measures can be proposed to increase the level of students’ personal preparedness in taking the Licensure Examination for Teachers?

This study is anchored on the Self-efficacy Theory by Bandura (1997) which refers to an individual's belief in his or her capacity to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance attainments. Self-efficacy reflects confidence in the ability to exert control over one's own motivation, behavior, and social environment. These cognitive self-evaluations influence all manner of human experience, including the goals for which people strive, the amount of energy expended toward goal achievement, and the likelihood of attaining particular levels of behavioral performance. This theory assisted in understanding the nature of the respondents’ personal preparation for their licensure examination.

This would further evaluate the current state of the LET Examinees and the step towards attaining success in the high performance of the institution. Also, this study would allow other institutions to reflect on their board exam performance as well.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study used mixed methods through survey questionnaires which helped in gathering the answers of the respondents. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was also utilized to validate the results. The survey instrument was designed and validated by the College’s research committee composed of the dean and three (3) faculty panelists. The respondents were 22 Bachelor of Elementary Education and 18 Bachelor in Secondary Education practicum students of the College of Education, University of Nueva Caceres, City of Naga, Philippines. The data gathering was conducted during the first semester of the school year 2018-2019. Weighted mean and ranking were the statistical tools used to further analyze the result and the survey was interpreted using a 5-point Likert scale.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Self-Motivation Factors

The first factor investigated in this study was motivation along personal drive. Table 1.1 shows that two parameters were rated highest with 4.7 weighted mean and interpreted as exceptionally high. These parameters are 'I feel good when I get positive feedback from my classmates, teachers and friends' and 'I take ownership of problems and not to blame others. These results suggest that confirmation and support from their peers is a vital factor in boosting their confidence. It also indicates that they are already matured as they can take full responsibility for their actions. It is followed by 'I am open to criticism and willing to improve myself for my betterment with a weighted mean of 4.6, rank 3, exceptionally high. This parameter shows that students are open to correction for their self-improvement.

Among the ten parameters, the last two ranked were "I am willing to learn new skills that will help me in my LET preparation, 4.0, rank 9, very high" and "I love to take challenges task to learn new topics", with a weighted mean of 3.9, rank 10, very high. The last two rated parameters suggest that these students feel that they have enough skills to pass the LET exam and they don't need challenging tasks to learn new topics. It also implies that the students are already reluctant to take additional or more stressful tasks to prepare for the licensure exam. This may be regarded as a factor that will not affect their performance. This phenomenon echoes the study of Li (2012) who posited that effort could only be regarded as an indirect factor but not a necessary factor in bridging the relationship between attitude, self-efficacy and academic achievement

Table 1.1. Self-Motivation Along Personal Drive

Parameters	Weighted Mean	Rank	Interpretation
<i>Personal Drive</i>			
<i>1.I enjoy taking responsibilities for additional learning.</i>	4.1	8	VH
<i>2.I love to take on challenging tasks to learn new topics.</i>	3.9	10	VH
<i>3.I take ownership for problems and not to blame others.</i>	4.7	1.5	EH
<i>4.I am willing to learn new skills that will help me in my LET preparation.</i>	4.0	9	VH

<i>5.I readily accept tasks even if they are not within my subject requirements.</i>	4.2	6.5	<i>EH</i>
<i>6.I keep identifying areas of improvement in my work and try to develop in those areas.</i>	4.4	4.5	<i>EH</i>
<i>7.I have the strong desire to achieve and excel.</i>	4.4	4.5	<i>EH</i>
<i>8.I feel good when I get positive feedback from my classmates, teachers and friends.</i>	4.7	1.5	<i>EH</i>
<i>9. I am open to criticism and willing to improve myself for my betterment.</i>	4.6	3	<i>EH</i>
<i>10.I get very excited about learning with my new group mates and enjoy my time with them.</i>	4.2	6.5	<i>EH</i>
<b>Total Weighted Mean</b>	<b>4.27</b>		<b><i>EH</i></b>

<i>Legend:</i>	<b>Scale</b>	<b>Verbal Interpretation</b>
	4.2 – 5.0	<i>Exceptionally High</i>
	3.4 – 4.19	<i>Very High</i>
	2.6 – 3.39	<i>High</i>
	1.8 – 2.59	<i>Low</i>
	1.0 – 1.79	<i>Very Low</i>

Table 1.2 shows the students’ personal preparedness along commitment/goal settings. The indicators “I believe in dedication and perseverance to achieve my goals and visions” and “I am willing to work hard to meet my personal goals” both got the highest weighted mean of 4.5 and interpreted as exceptionally high. It means students very highly believed in dedication, perseverance as well as personal accountability to achieve their visions in life. The third in rank is “I set goals that are realistic and achievable” with 4.4 weighted interpreted as exceptionally high. It suggests that the students consider realistic goals in achieving their plans.

The last two rated parameters are “I do not mind working for long hours to complete my studies/preparations, 3.8, rank 10 and both “I persist when the work is boring or challenging” and “I am up to date with my assignments” with a weighted mean of 3.7, ranked 11.5 and verbally interpreted as very high respectively. It can be gauged from these results that the respondents’

view of long hours of work and persisting when the task becomes difficult, as well as consistency in working on assignments, are not exceptionally motivating to them. It also means they do not fully commit to fulfilling difficult tasks.

*Table 1.2. Self-Motivation Along Commitment/Goal Settings*

<b>Commitment/Goal Settings</b>			
1. <i>I am willing to work hard to meet my personal goals</i>	4.5	1.5	<i>EH</i>
2. <i>I do my preparations with commitment because I try to be perfect</i>	3.9	8	<i>VH</i>
3. <i>I do not mind working for long hours to complete my studies/preparations</i>	3.8	10	<i>VH</i>
4. <i>I will not compromise the quality of my work, though it takes a lot of time and energy.</i>	4.0	8	<i>VH</i>
5. <i>I go to LET preparation activities on time</i>	4.1	5.5	<i>VH</i>
6. <i>I believe in dedication and perseverance to achieve my goals and visions</i>	4.5	1.5	<i>EH</i>
7. <i>I believe in dedication and perseverance to achieve my goals and visions.</i>	4.1	5.5	<i>VH</i>
8. <i>I set goals that are realistic and achievable.</i>	4.4	3	<i>EH</i>
9. <i>I set high standards for myself in school.</i>	3.9	8	<i>VH</i>
10. <i>I persist when the work is boring or challenging.</i>	3.7	11.5	<i>VH</i>
11. <i>I am up to date with my assignments.</i>	3.7	11.5	<i>VH</i>
12. <i>My course work relates to my future plans.</i>	4.3	4	<i>EH</i>
<b>Total Weighted Mean</b>	<b>4.026</b>		<i>VH</i>

Table 1.3 shows the parameter motivation along initiative. The indicator “I will not hesitate to extend my support to my classmates even though it’s not within my scope” got the highest score of 4.6, rank 1. It is followed by “I help others without expecting something in return” got

4.5, rank 2, both are verbally interpreted as exceptionally high. This result shows that the students value their peers and are very much willing to extend help when needed. It also suggests that the respondents are friendly and has a high spirit of volunteerism

The last two rated parameters are “I try to see the future directions of my department/batch mates and equip myself to meet the needs” and “ I am very quick to identify and take advantage of opportunities” both with a weighted mean of 4.1, ranked 7.5 and “ I volunteer to help my classmates preparations without any internal motive, 3.8 ranked 9, interpreted as very high respectively. It could be implied that the respondents do not fully anticipate for the future and how the department or batchmates can assist them. It is also implied that they are focused on self-study and would not totally volunteer to help classmates prepare for the exam.

Table 1.3. *Self-Motivation Along Initiative*

<b>Initiative</b>			
1. <i>I am constantly on the lookout for new information and knowledge.</i>	4.3	4.5	<i>EH</i>
2. <i>I will not hesitate to extend my support to my classmates even though it's not within my scope</i>	4.6	1	<i>EH</i>
3. <i>I try to see the future directions of my department/batch mates and equip myself to meet the needs</i>	4.1	7.5	<i>VH</i>
4. <i>I get enthusiastic when I am a part of a challenging tasks</i>	4.2	4.5	<i>EH</i>
5. <i>If my classmates ask me for help, I will go out of my way to help him/her</i>	4.3	4.5	<i>EH</i>
6. <i>I am very quick to identify and take advantage of opportunities</i>	4.1	7.5	<i>VH</i>
7. <i>I am all set to improve my techniques in my LET preparation</i>	4.3	4.5	<i>EH</i>
8. <i>I volunteer to help my classmates preparations without any internal motive</i>	3.8	9	<i>VH</i>
9. <i>I help others without expecting something in return</i>	4.4	2	<i>EH</i>
<b>Total Weighted Mean</b>	<b>4.21</b>		<b><i>EH</i></b>

Table 1.4. *Optimistic (Positive Attitude)*

<b>Optimistic (Positive Attitude)</b>			
1. <i>I feel confident about my note-taking methods.</i>	4.4	3	<i>EH</i>
2. <i>I attend review sessions when offered.</i>	4.2	5	<i>EH</i>
3. <i>Even when I feel like giving up, I push myself to work and complete what I have started</i>	4.5	2	<i>EH</i>
4. <i>I train myself to be focused at work and do not give in criticism or wasted talks</i>	4.3	4	<i>EH</i>
5. <i>I do not expect my classmates/teachers help to complete my work</i>	4.1	7	<i>VH</i>
6. <i>I periodically self-evaluate my work against set standards</i>	4.1	7	<i>VH</i>
7. <i>I do not expect others to help me</i>	3.9	9	<i>VH</i>
8. <i>I do not take to my heart any conflict or arguments raised by my classmates/teachers.</i>	3.8	10	<i>VH</i>
9. <i>I like to progress with my work despite unsupportive or disobliging classmates/team members.</i>	4.1	7	<i>VH</i>
10. <i>I do not get discouraged by failures and believe that there is always a next time.</i>	4.9	1	<i>EH</i>
<b>Total Weighted Mean</b>	<b>4.12</b>		<b><i>VH</i></b>

In table 1.4 shows the optimistic or being positive indicators. The indicator “I do not get discouraged by failures and believe that there is always a next time” got the highest score of 4.9, rank 1, interpreted as exceptionally high. This implies that students are very positive in life that they will not allow disappointment to stop them. The second is “Even when I feel like giving up, I push myself to work and complete what I have started” which got 4.5, rank 2, exceptionally high. It means that students have already developed an attitude of determination and diligence in achieving their goals. The last two rated are “I do not expect others to help me”, 3.9, ranked 9; and “I do not take to my heart any conflict or arguments raised by my classmates/teachers”, 3.8, ranked 10, interpreted as very high respectively. These results suggest that although the students have already had a very high optimism, it wouldn’t be a guarantee that they will not be needing any help from their classmates or be affected by issues that might concern them.

*Table 1.5 Summary Table*

<b>Parameters</b>	<b>Weighted Mean</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
<i>Personal Drive</i>	4.27	1	<i>EH</i>
<i>Commitment/Goal Settings</i>	4.026	4	<i>VH</i>
<i>Initiative</i>	4.21	2	<i>EH</i>
<i>Optimism (Positive Attitude)</i>	4.12	3	<i>VH</i>
<b><i>Overall Weighted Mean</i></b>	<b>4.12</b>		<b><i>VH</i></b>

The summary table 1.5 shows that among the self-motivation parameters, the personal drive has the highest weighted mean of 4.27, exceptionally high. It suggests that they are fully aware of their personal accountability to be successful. The lowest parameter rated is their commitment and goal settings with a weighted mean of 4.026, rank 4, very high. This implies that students have set goals for their reviews and exams as their short term goals without having really taken into full account the future of his/her career. This result contradicts the result of Yusuff (2018) study that personalized goal setting and study planning appeared to significantly improve continuous engagement with learning, focus on academic goals, and academic performance.

*Table 2. Study Skills and Habits*

<b>Parameters</b>	<b>Weighted Mean</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
<i>Health Habits</i>	3.24	10	<i>H</i>
<i>Attitude</i>	3.82	5	<i>VH</i>
<i>Concentration</i>	3.9	3	<i>VH</i>
<i>Academic Experience</i>	3.86	4	<i>VH</i>
<i>Preparation and Follow-Up</i>	3.65	7.5	<i>H</i>
<i>Comprehension</i>	3.93	2	<i>VH</i>



<i>Selecting Main Idea</i>	3.66	6	VH
<i>Use of Resources</i>	4.13	1	VH
<i>Examination Preparation</i>	3.65	7.5	H
<i>Examination Writing and Test Taking</i>	3.3	9	H
<b><i>Overall Weighted Mean</i></b>	<b>3.7</b>		<b>VH</b>

Table 2 shows the students' study skills and habits. The result revealed that the highest practice they employed is the "use of resources" with a weighted mean of 4.13, rank 1 interpreted as very high. Specific parameters show that the students are highly inclined to internet usage or online resources for their study resources. They would also resort to a review session when it is offered. The second highest is "comprehension", 3.93, rank 2, very high. Specific data reveals that students personally relate to information they are learning so as to comprehend the topic. Connecting ideas from one lecture to another and translating the ideas into their own words were found to be helpful as an aid to comprehension.

The two lowest are "Examination Writing and Test Taking", with a weighted mean of 3.3, rank 9 and "Health Habits", 3.24, rank 10, verbally interpreted high respectively. This result suggests that the examination writing and test-taking skills of the respondents are not fully or very highly developed. Specific skills that are specifically asked like "read the paragraph first and then the questions that follow; identifying keywords or phrases that help in understanding the questions belong to the lowest level of their study skill practices. Data also revealed that respondents rated least in this area is their lower skill in reading and understanding test instruction/direction. It is implied that students have attention issues in taking examinations or other relevant tasks. In line with this, Weimer (2014) posited that this scenario confirms well-established findings that students are more engaged and attentive when they are doing not just one but various learning activities.

The health habits were rated the least. It suggests that students are not fully cognizant of the benefits of observing healthy habits in their preparation period. Proper or regular eating, exercise, and sleep may not be observed. This result echoes the findings of Al-Amari et al (2015) that the majority of college students conduct only a moderately healthy lifestyle and their perception of effects of a healthy lifestyle on their health is needing much attention.

*Table 3. Time Management*

<b>Parameters</b>	<b>Weighted Mean</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
<i>1. I find it easy to stick to a study schedule.</i>	3.8	6	VH
<i>2. When I decide to study, I can start and keep going</i>	4.0	1	VH
<i>3. I spread out my study time, to avoid cramming.</i>	3.7	10.5	VH
<i>4. I have enough time in my week to study.</i>	3.6	13.5	VH
<i>5. I spend more time on difficult courses.</i>	3.8	6	VH
<i>6. My online time is under control: it doesn't interfere with other things.</i>	3.7	10.5	VH
<i>7. I leave things to the last minute.</i>	3.7	10.5	VH
<i>8. I work on the highest priority tasks throughout the day.</i>	3.8	3	VH
<i>9. I leave space in my schedule to deal with the unexpected.</i>	3.6	13.5	VH
<i>10. I use goal setting to determine my most important activities</i>	3.9	2.5	VH
<i>11. I put off tasks that are difficult or I don't like.</i>	3.4	15	VH
<i>12. I spend more time trying to find new things</i>	3.8	3	VH
<i>13. For each activity, I ask myself "Is this the best use of my time right now?"</i>	3.9	2.5	H
<i>14. I procrastinate (delay) my task if I want to</i>	3.7	10.5	H
<i>15. Interruptions (email, Facebook, visitors, or</i>	3.8	3	H

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*telephone calls) usually disrupt my work or studies.*

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**Overall Weighted Mean**

**3.7**

**H**

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The first two highest rated were “When I decide to study, I can start and keep going” with a weighted mean of 4.0, rank 1 ,and verbally interpreted as very high. It implies that the respondents can manage to start their studies and are determined to continue doing it. Next in rank is “I use goal setting to determine my most important activities” and “For each activity, I ask myself "Is this the best use of my time right now" both with a weighted mean of 3.9, rank 2.5, and verbally interpreted as very high respectively. It suggests that the respondents are aware of setting goals in studying and the value of using their time. The last two rated parameters were “I leave space in my schedule to deal with the unexpected” and “I have enough time in my week to study” both with a weighted mean of 3.6, rank 13.5, and verbally interpreted very high. The lowest in rank is “I put off tasks that are difficult or I don't like, 3.4, rank 15, very high. These results suggest that the students are not fully prepared for eventualities such as family or school factors. Difficult tasks are also not given full attention. These tasks however might be directly relevant to their review tasks. This further implies that they tend to delay their works for not fully understanding the significance of their preparation. This scenario is tantamount to the findings of Svartdal et al (2018). The study concludes that a better understanding of why behavioral delays occur in early phases of action implementation is of importance in understanding and preventing procrastination.

## CONCLUSION

Respondents’ self- motivation is exceptionally high in taking ownership of their own problems and not blaming others. Their exceptionally high self- motivation is derived from getting positive feedback from classmates, teachers, and friends. When a topic is boring or challenging and when assignments need to be updated, respondents show a lack of determination to study when longer hours are required, Students are very highly dependent on the use of text, internet, or library for their study resources. Comprehension level is very high if they can personally relate to the information they are learning. Respondents struggle to understand or to follow directions in test-taking. Once they decide to study, they can keep going; they do it because they usually cram in their studies. In addition, respondents do not anticipate the difficult things they might face; they usually resort to “que sera sera or what will be will be ” belief. They put off the challenging stuff which they thought was not interesting for them to do and they are already exhausted and depressed at the end of the week.

As such, it is highly recommended that teachers and students must undergo positive psychology training with the assistance of the guidance office or with the professionals. The college may conduct a resiliency program to boost the respondents coping skills. Teacher coaching must be observed to improve test-taking skills. The school must upgrade internet service and extend internet usage for students. Strengthen comprehension drills in the lower year levels to scaffold/established test-taking skills of students. Enhance/Provide a strong time management program for education students. A one-day recreational activity must be added to the weekly academic/review preparation.

Moreover, health is a big factor of one examinee, it is also important that they must observe their healthy diet on the way to their examination day to make sure they are mentally, emotionally and physically prepared. Observing a healthy diet must be part of the LET review program.

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