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Thorns and Roses on the Preparation for Licensure Examination of Preservice Mathematics Teachers

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ABSTRACT

This Qualitative research was conducted in February 2023 among the Bachelor of Secondary Education Mathematics Major in a newly converted University in the Province of Iloilo. It aimed to determine the thorns and roses or the challenges and coping Mechanisms of 4th year Bachelor of Secondary Education Mathematics Major in Preparation for the licensure examination for teachers, a very important examination to be a licensed teacher in the Philippines and could help the students have a stable job after college. Data needed were gathered through interview. Thematic Analysis was used to analyze the data. The study revealed that there are 4 challenges the participants encountered during their preparation for the LET examination such as Family Status, Environment which incorporated for noisy surrounding, and Number of Concept to study and Low self-confidence. To cope with these challenges the respondents utilized social media platforms such as facebook as a review material and study material. The result shows that the respondents' wants to enroll in a review center after they graduate to further enhance their learning. They faced many challenges and these may cause problem in there preparation for the licensure examination if it's not controlled. Out of these problems, the school could provide program that would help them prepare more in the Licensure exam

INTRODUCTION

High quality education is one of the top priorities of the Philippine government. Teachers, as individual outside the classroom, dealt with different problems, yet still expected to display disposition during class hours. They also display positive disposition when they are in the classroom showing their good performance despite personal issues (Go, Golbin, Velos and Bate 2020). Statistically, Filipino teachers' emotional intelligence and their problem compartmentalization ability were positively and significantly correlated to their teaching performance.

Republic act No. 7836, an act to enhance the supervision and regulation of the practice of teaching in the Philippines and administering a Licensure Examination for Teacher was enacted to ensure a minimum degree of competence for teachers. Based on 2019 Result which the Math and English major exhibits high performance in the General and Professional Education subjects compared to the other programs, and the math majors attained the highest performance in Major subjects among other programs. The Achievement of a Higher Education Institution's graduate on the licensure examination is a prominent means of measuring its success (Pachejo and Allaga, 2016).

Mathematics is a fundamental part of human knowledge and a core component of the current technology revolution (Ernest 2015). Many researchers agree about the importance of changing teachers' beliefs and yet there is disagreement about what changes beliefs and practice. Some would argue that because beliefs influence one's perception of the world, beliefs must change before one can perceive the changes that must occur (Pajares 2016). Also having shallow content and pedagogy knowledge in mathematics and lack of time reflection can be a problem in your preparation.

To deal with these problems future educators should have a proper learning mathematical content knowledge to teach for conceptual understanding and a share of multiple perspectives in build a conceptual understanding from discussions of

students' ideas about math; this could build a competence and self-confidence.

Learners may also encounter failures for the reason that even if they study hard and listen to the teacher and cooperate with the class, they still not get how to solve the other problem (Skaalvi 2018). Facing your challenges and coping with it is the best way to improve your performance.

Based on the situation stated above, this research was conducted to know the challenges and coping mechanisms of the 4th year Bachelor of Secondary Education Mathematics Major in preparation in the LET Examination.

METHODS

The purpose of this study is to determine the challenges and coping mechanisms of the fourth year Bachelor of Secondary Education Mathematics Major in a certain University in the Province of Iloilo, Philippines in preparation for the Licensure Examination for Teachers.

This study uses Qualitative research design particularly narrative inquiry, a qualitative research method used to collect detailed and personal information from an individual. The primary purpose for a narrative inquiry study is participants provide the researcher with their life experiences through thick rich stories (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). In this approach, the interviewer asks open-ended questions to encourage the interviewee to tell their story in their own words. The goal of the narrative inquiry is to gain an understanding of the interviewee's experiences, perspectives, and emotions, as well as the context in which they occurred.

Narrative inquiry is a research method that has gained increasing importance in social sciences, particularly in the field of education. This method is used to explore and understand the experiences and stories of individuals with the aim of gaining an in-depth understanding of their subjective experiences (Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. 2015).

Before the actual gathering of data, the researcher asked permission from the Dean of the College of Education and the respondents. A letter was also personally handed into the Dean.

The researcher explained to the respondents the purpose of the study including the detail of the interview such as: the ethical consideration, recording of the answer in a tape, and the number of questions they should answer.

Then the researcher followed the procedure in a narrative interviews and thematic analysis which involves several steps. First, the researcher identifies the research question and the participants. The researcher then obtained consent from the participants and ensure that they understand the purpose of the study. Next, the researcher conducted the narrative inquiry in a face-to-face interview.

During the interview, the researcher encouraged the participants to share their experiences and to elaborate their thoughts and feelings. After the interviews are completed, the researcher transcribed the interview and conducted a thematic analysis. This involved identifying patterns or themes within the data and exploring how these themes relate to the research question. Finally, the researcher wrote the results of the study, including the key themes identified in the data and how these themes relate to the research question.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Studying is an essential part of any student's academic journey, and while it may seem like a straightforward task, there are many challenges that can arise. These challenges can range from personal and physical obstacles to academic and social challenges.

Theme 1 Distractions during the Licensure Examination for Teacher Preparation

Distractions during the Licensure Examination for Teacher Preparation

The following are the challenges faced by the respondents of this study and how they cope with these identified challenges.

Teacher education plays a crucial role in preparation of teachers, not only enhancing their understanding and skill but also increasing the

likelihood of their staying in the profession (Darling-Hammond, 2015; Roth, 2016). Hagger and McIntyre (2016) state that in initial teacher education “it is always necessary to be selective, to prioritize”. While Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2015) advocate attending to “knowledge deemed essential to beginning teachers”; they go on to highlight core areas such as learning, development, assessment, and classroom management.

Respondents in this study stated that while studying, problem occurs such as vast amount of topic to study and the environment of their study area have many distractions.

The respondents stated that they are distracted by the following: family status, environment and the number of concept to study

Family Status

Family is one of the most significant distractions students face in their academic journey. According to a study by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), students who come from low-income families are more likely to perform poorly in school than those from higher-income families (OECD, 2019). This is because students from low-income families are more likely to have to work part-time jobs to help support their family financially, which can lead to stress and fatigue, making it difficult to focus on their studies.

Alice stated that “For me first is that I have a family and the challenges I face is that my bata ako so kung mag review ako ga sinabad siya gaka stress ako kag te indi ako gawa ka focus sa kung anu na review ko” (For me, first is that I have a family and the challenges I face is that I have a child so during my review he/she stressed me and I can't focus on my review.)

While Alice is interrupted by his child while reviewing, Deane is struggling to find time to review since her working.

Deane stated that “Wala na ako time mag review kay gaubra ako sa call center para makabulig ako sang garastusan sa balay amu na stocked knowledge lang akon na asahan magtake ka exam” (I don't have time to review

since I'm working as a call center agent to help pay our house expenses that is why I am only rely on my stocked knowledge.)

With a similar situation with Deane, Carol is also a working student and encountered similar problem.

Carol stated that "Gaubra man ako sa call center sa amu na nga rason kay para maka bulig man ako sa akun pamilya, amu na challenge gid sa akun mag review in a way nga kulang time kag damo gid distraction sa palibot." (I am also working as a call center agent for the same reason that I can help my family that is why it is a challenge for me to review in a way that I have less time for review and there is a lot of distraction anywhere.)

Environment

The environment also significantly impacts their academic performance. A study by the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) found that students who study in noisy or cluttered environments are more likely to have difficulty focusing on their studies and retaining information (UCLA, 2018). This is because the brain is easily distracted by external stimuli, and a cluttered or noisy environment can be overwhelming, making it difficult to concentrate on the task at hands.

Frichie stated that "The noise of the surrounding, because of that I can't focus and sometimes I experience headache and I can't concentrate in studying."

Corresponded with Frichie's noise problem Biatrice experienced the same problem as well.

Biatrice stated that "Kagahod ka palibot sang balay namun kay lapit kami sa banwa kag sa highway damo salakyan nga ga agi amu na tama ka gahod kag indi ako ka tuon mayad." (Our surrounding of our house is noisy because we are near the town proper and the highway; the car noise is so loud and I can't study well because of that.).

Identical with Biatrice and Frichie's problem, Carol also experienced how difficult to study in a noisy environment.

Carol stated that "Ka budlay mangita lugar nga tulon-an kapin pa kung magahod ang palibot ka balay ga ka stress ako kag di ka tuon mayu" (It's a

struggle to find a peaceful place to study if the surrounding of your house is noisy it stress me and I can't study well.)

The Number of Concepts to Study

The number of concepts that students have to study can also be a significant distraction. According to a study by the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), students who are overloaded with information are more likely to suffer from stress and anxiety, which can negatively impact their academic performance (UCSF, 2019). This is because an overwhelming amount of information can lead to cognitive overload, making it difficult to process and retain information efficiently.

Erich stated that "For me the challenge guro is ang kadamuon bala sang mga dapat ireview kag wala ko kabalo kung diin ma start" (For me the challenge is that the number of things to review and I don't know where to start.)

Similar to Erich problem Frichie struggled to study a gross number of lessons.

Frichie stated that "Sa ka damo-damo bala ka topic nga dapat tulon-an kag ang mga topic nga ginhapawan lang klase amu na ang challenge para sa akon paano kuna tun an." (A lot of topic to be studied and those topics that we discuss shallowly that is the challenge for me in how I can study it effectively.)

In the other hand Biatrice problem is quite different to them, which is how can she absorb a large amount of knowledge simultaneously.

Biatrice stated that "Ang challenge for me is that paano ko ma digest ang mga topics kay ka damo sa major, general education kag professional education" (The challenge for me is that how can I digest the topics from the major, general education and professional education.)

In conclusion, distractions faced by the respondents of the study such as family, environment, and the number of concepts to study can have a significant impact on a student's academic performance. However, by being aware of these distractions and taking steps to mitigate their effects, students can enhance their ability to focus

and improve their academic performance. Therefore, it is essential for students to prioritize their mental health and wellness to ensure that they can navigate these distractions effectively and achieve academic success.

Theme 2 Low Self-Confidence of Pre-service Teacher for Licensure Examination

Low self-confidence can affect an individual's performance on the licensure examination, according to the study of American Psychological Association (2017). It can cause test anxiety, which can lead to poor concentration, memory problems, and difficulty with problem-solving. Lack of preparation, on the other hand, can result in a lack of knowledge and skills needed to pass the examination. It is, therefore, essential for individuals to prepare adequately for the licensure examination to boost their confidence and increase their chances of passing.

Respondents in this study stated that they're not fully prepared since two years of their study is online because of the pandemic. They also added that a lot of topic during that time is not discussed deeply and some were not touch.

All of the respondents stated that they are not fully prepared and need more time to study and review.

Deane stated that "To be honest, out of a hundred percent, I'm only fifty percent ready. Because of the pandemic, we missed a lot of things. There are topics that haven't discussed that maybe can use in the future. I still have a lot of things to discover to say that I am 100% ready in my major exam."

Same as Deane who is unsure, Fritchie is also not confident to her own mastery.

Fritchie stated that "Siguro di pa ko ready mga seventy – thirty percent kay syempre kay iban ta nga professor wala ga klase na taw an ta lang ka notes kag indi man tanan na dicuss". (For me I'm not ready Seventy-thirty percent because some of the professor did not even discuss and give us only notes to study and not all topics have been touch.).

Matching with Deane and Fritchie statements, Carol is also doubtful to her skill.

Carol stated that "If I will be rating in percent, I think I am sixty percent ready for my major exam. I think my knowledge right now wasn't enough to proceed in licensure. I need a lot of time and lesson to learn first and also help of a teacher before I can say that I am ready to take the exam."

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected pre-service teachers' confidence levels in taking exams. The switch to remote learning and online exams has caused additional stress and anxiety for pre-service teachers, leading to a decrease in confidence. However, there are ways to increase confidence levels and support pre-service teachers during this challenging time. It is important to prioritize the mental health and well-being of pre-service teachers to ensure their success in their future careers.

Low self-confidence in taking the exam means that you either lack of study time preparation or you get overwhelmed by amount of things that you should've study. In order for your to fully prepare yourself before the exam you should create your own study time schedule to organize your study time and slowly chip out the large amount of topic you need to study.

Theme 3 Utilizing Social Media as a Review Material

Social media platform such as Facebook and Twitter can be used as effective review materials for licensure exams, According to a study by Kirchner and Karpinski(2015). The study found that student who used social media to review for exam performs better than those who did not. This is because social media platforms provide a platform for collaborative learning where students can exchange ideas and discuss complex topics.

In this study, respondents mentioned that using online platform as one of their review materials is more convenient. They also added that the questions that been used by those software is also those questions that been used in previous examination.

Four out of six respondents agree that they're using online platform as a review material, but they also added that after that, they write it on a separate notebook.

Biatrice stated that “Even though may ginhatag ako gamay nga preparation which is gapamasa-masa ako sa mga pages like Gurong pinoy sa Facebook mahambal ko gid ya nga there are some items nga wala ko gid na review” (Even though I give small amount of preparation which is reading questions in Facebook Pages, I can say that there are some items that I didn’t review at all.).

Similar to Biatrice, Carol was also utilizing Facebook as a review material.

Carol stated that “Nagprepare ko that time like nagsulod ko sa mga pages kag group sa facebook tapos ginasulat ko na sa separated ko nga notebook” (I prepare that time like joining Facebook pages and groups then I wrote it in a separated notebook.).

Similarly Alice is using Facebook as a self-review material.

Alice stated that “For me my preparation for the exam is self-review which is watching video in Facebook which is helpful for me as I taking an exam”

Social media platforms as review materials for licensure examinations have become increasingly popular among students and professionals alike. These platforms provide access to a wide range of resources and information, making them effective tools for exam preparation. However, it is important to note that not all information on social media platforms is accurate or reliable. It is crucial for students and professionals to verify the information they obtain from social media platforms before using it as a review tool.

Theme 4 Getting More Help Before Licensure Examination for Teacher

There are many reasons why getting extra help can be beneficial for aspiring teachers. Extra help can provide access to resources and study materials that are not readily available to all teachers. For example, some programs offer practice tests, study guides, and online resources that can help teachers prepare for the exam. It can also provide additional guidance and support that is not available in a classroom setting. However, the reality is that passing the licensure exam is not

always easy. Many factors come into play, such as the complexity of the exam, the level of preparedness of the examinee, and the lack of knowledge about the exam itself. Fortunately, Review centers have been established to help aspiring practitioners improve their chances of passing the licensure exam.

A review center is an institution that provides review courses and other related services to help examinees prepare for the licensure exam. These centers offer a variety of services such as review classes, mock exams, and personalized coaching. The aim of these services is to help examinees improve their knowledge, hone their skills, and develop the right mind-set to pass the exam. (McKeachie, W., & Svinicki, M.(2017). McKeachie’s teaching Tips. Cengage Learning)

All the respondents in this study are planning to enrol in a review center after they graduate and also some of them is planning to join the free review of the school to enhance their learning.

All the respondents in this interview stated that they are planning to enrol in a review center outside the school.

Deane stated that “Yes of course, dako man daa nga bulig kung diri my bulig pa sila saakun kulang pa ina so I think dapat ma review man ako sa guwa para madugangan pagid and mga knowledge nga makuha.” (Yes of course, it’s a big help to me that we have a review here and I think I should review outside the school to improve my knowledge that I gain.).

With the same initiative like Deane, Biatrice planned to enrol in a review center.

Biatrice stated that “Yes, I’m planning to have a review outside the campus aside this campus nga my review kita, gusto ko mag review pagid because para ang mga learnings nga makuha ko is damo and ma intact ko siya sa akon mind because permi ako ga balik balik sa review and also sa akon man kaugalingon ma self-review man ako” (Yes, Im planning to have a review outside the campus aside this campus that we reviewing, I want to review because it can help me to improve my learning and

my knowledge will become intact since I'm repeating it every time and also I will do my self-review.).

Carol agreed to both Deane and Biatrice statements that enrolling in a review center was a great help.

Carol stated that "Yes, ako gusto ko man mag review outside sa atun nga campus kay the more nga teacher nga ga teach the more man ang malearn ko" (Yes, I want to review outside the campus because the more teacher that teaches me the more learning I get.).

In conclusion, getting extra help before taking the licensure examination for teaching can be a valuable strategy for improving one's chances of success. By providing additional guidance, resources, and support, extra help can help teachers to identify areas of weakness, develop strategies to improve their performance, and stay motivated and accountable.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that family status, environment, the number of concepts to study, and low self-confidence are significant challenges faced by students preparing for the LET Examination. However, by implementing effective coping mechanisms and seeking additional support, students can overcome these challenges and improve their chances of success.

The administration and professors should provide support and resources to help students balance their family responsibilities and academic pursuits. By creating a conducive study environment within the university premises can help students concentrate and retain information better. Professors should ensure comprehensive coverage of topics and provide ample opportunities for in-depth discussions to enhance students' confidence and knowledge. Encouraging students to join review centers and providing access to reliable review materials can further support their preparation for the examination and promoting mental health and wellness programs within the

university can help students manage stress and anxiety effectively.

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