

## Examining Pre-Service Teachers' Readiness for Licensure Exams: A Descriptive Study of Support Systems, Self-Determination, and Pedagogical and Content Knowledge

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### Abstract

*The success of teacher education institutions (TEIs) is often measured by the passing rate of their students on licensure examinations, as these exams are a crucial step for pre-service teachers to become licensed professionals. It is important for TEIs to ensure that their students are adequately prepared for licensure exams to enable them to begin their careers as teachers. This study aimed to assess the readiness of pre-service teachers for licensure exams in terms of the support systems, self-determination, and subject-matter and pedagogical knowledge they possess. A sequential exploratory mixed method was employed involving 82 graduating students to gather data for this study. The results of this research can inform the development of strategies and interventions to improve the readiness of pre-service teachers for licensure exams and ultimately enhance the success rate of TEIs.*

**Keywords:** *licensure examination for teachers, teacher education institutions, pedagogical and content knowledge, self-determination, support system.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) have the responsibility of preparing their students with the necessary skills and knowledge to enter the workforce upon graduation, including providing relevant training, instilling teaching values and virtues, and developing students into effective and efficient teachers who can contribute to nation-building. They also have the task of preparing students to become full-fledged professional teachers through competency-based, knowledge-based, and ICT-led instruction, as well as implementing various teaching strategies (Albite, 2019; Bilbao, Corpuz, Llagas, and Salandanan, 2018).

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, the Philippine school system has fully adopted online learning. In response to this shift, the Philippine government has mandated that all Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) implement new approaches to learning, such as online courses and modular-based instruction (CHED Advisory No. 6 s., 2020). As a result, students have taken online courses in their second and third years, including practice teaching, where they have applied the skills and knowledge acquired from their instructors through virtual classes.

The Philippine government placed a high premium on providing students with a high-quality education and allocates a significant portion of the national budget to education. To ensure that students receive a high level of education, it is essential for educators to pass the licensure exam for teachers, which is administered by the Philippine

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Regulations Commission (PRC). According to the Philippine Professionalization Act of 1994, anyone wanting to practice teaching in the Philippines must pass a written examination and obtain a valid certificate of registration and professional license. This requirement is also outlined in the Revised Policies and Guidelines for Undergraduate Teacher Education Curriculum.

Pre-service teachers must pass the teacher licensure exam in order to apply their education in the classroom and join the teacher rosters in their schools. According to the Magna Carta for Public School Teachers, obtaining a teaching license not only ensures job security and rights, honor, and privileges for teachers, but also gives them an advantage in the workforce over unlicensed teachers (Darling-Hammond, Berry and Thomson, 2001)

Licensed teachers who pass the licensure exam are considered to have teacher quality, as defined by the standards set for the profession and validated by student learning outcomes (Boyd, Goldhaber, Lankford, Wyckoff, 2007). However, passing the licensure exam requires extensive preparation, including critical and analytical thinking skills, effective question answering techniques, and strong recall of concepts and theories. In a recent online report dated August 4, 2022, the Profession Regulation Commission (PRC) announced that 50% of the elementary and secondary teacher candidates who took the licensure exam were successful. Specifically, 50.54% of the 8,667 elementary teacher candidates out of a total of 17,149 examinees passed the exam, and 50.48% of the 10,193 secondary teacher candidates out of a total of 20,191 examinees passed, which only holds true that there are around 50% who did not make it.

To pass the licensure exam, a graduate must score an average of at least 75% with no score lower than 50% in any subject. The exam covers topics in General Education (20%), Professional Education (40%), and Area of Specialization (40%). While the concepts and theories covered in the exam can be studied in high school and during undergraduate studies, many graduate-examinees, however, choose to enroll in review centers to receive additional preparation for answering questions on the exam (PRC Board News, 2022).

In the Philippines, Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) undergo program accreditation through the Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities to ensure that their programs meet industry standards and guidelines set by the Commission on Higher Education (Corpuz, n.d). This helps TEIs to comply with standards and policies and perform at high levels, as demonstrated by their success on the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET). However, the shift to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic may have impacted the quality of education and preparedness of students for the LET. Pre-service teachers may need to put in extra effort to study and gain the necessary content and pedagogical knowledge to pass the exam and obtain their valid certificate of registration and professional license.

Hence, it is under this premise that this study intended to assess the readiness of pre-service teachers for licensure examinations by examining the support systems, self-determination, and subject-matter and pedagogical knowledge they possess. It is important for Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) to ensure that their students are adequately prepared for licensure exams in order to enable them to begin their careers as teachers. The results of this research can inform the development of strategies and interventions to improve the readiness of pre-service teachers for licensure exams and ultimately enhance the success rate of TEIs. By understanding the factors that contribute to pre-service teachers' exam readiness, TEIs can take steps to support their students in achieving a passing score on the licensure exam and becoming licensed professionals.

## 2. METHODS

### 2.1 Sample

From the total of 92 graduating students from Class 2022, eighty-four (84) or 89.13% participated in the study by completing a questionnaire. All the fourth-year students majoring in Home Economics and those majoring in Information and Communication Technology were the target respondents of this study who had fulfilled the required number of teaching hours for their Practice Teaching course at their respective cooperating schools. Participation in the survey was voluntary and confidential.

### 2.2 Instrument

The present study employed a sequential explanatory design of mixed method research which involves both quantitative and qualitative methods in two phases. This type of design involves collecting and analyzing quantitative data first, and then using the findings from the quantitative phase to inform the collection and analysis of qualitative data. Therefore, the first phase focused on the demographic information from the respondents, such as age, sex, and field of specialization. Part II contained a self-report of content knowledge in various courses covered in the licensure exam. Part III assessed the respondents' readiness to take the licensure exam in terms of support system (e.g., seeking advice from professionals who have taken the exam and seeking support from encouraging peers), self-determination (e.g., confidence in one's abilities and reliance on prayer and hard work), and content and pedagogical knowledge (e.g., academic engagement and understanding of teaching approaches, methods, and strategies).

The goal of the open-ended questions is to gather insights from pre-service teachers about their readiness to take the licensure examination. The first research question is asking about their preparations prior to the examination, the second question is asking about their plans after graduation, the third question is asking about additional competencies that they feel are necessary for success in the 21st century education system, and the fourth question is asking about the characteristics of a prepared student for the licensure examination. These questions are designed to gather qualitative data about the pre-service teachers' experiences and views on the topic, which can provide valuable insights and context for understanding their readiness for the licensure examination.

The questionnaire for this study was administered electronically using Google Forms, and that it was tested for reliability through a pilot study with 30 participants from the same institution. The questionnaire consisted of three parts, with the first part collecting demographic information, the second part assessing the respondents' content knowledge, and the third part evaluating their readiness for the licensure examination in terms of support system, self-determination, and content and pedagogical knowledge. The questionnaire had a high level of consistency, as indicated by a Cronbach Alpha score of 0.928. This design allows the researchers to gather both quantitative and qualitative data about the pre-service teachers' readiness for the licensure examination and their views on the topic.

### 2.3 Research Participants

The researchers used a purposive or judgmental sample in this study, which involves selecting a specific group of participants based on their perceived relevance to the research question. In this case, the researcher chose to study all of the enrolled students in the Bachelor of Technology and Livelihood Education program at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines-Quezon City Branch. This particular branch of the university was selected because the researchers were interested in studying only the BTLED fourth year students, and the sample was not intended to be representative of the larger population.

## 2.4 Data Analysis

The researchers used a sequential exploratory mixed method approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data, to achieve the research objectives of this study. They collected data using an electronic questionnaire administered through Google Forms and then used Excel to compute the weighted mean and standard deviation of the responses. The mean scores for each indicator were then interpreted using a predetermined scale, with scores ranging from 3.51 to 4.00 indicating "excellent" or "strongly agree," scores from 2.51 to 3.50 indicating "good" or "agree," scores from 1.51 to 2.50 indicating "fair" or "disagree," and scores from 1.00 to 1.50 indicating "poor" or "strongly disagree." This approach allows the researchers to analyze both the numerical data from the questionnaire responses and the written comments provided by the participants to gain a comprehensive understanding of the pre-service teachers' readiness for the licensure examination.

In the context of the present study, thematic analysis may be particularly useful for analyzing responses to open-ended questions, as it allows the researchers to identify patterns and themes within the data that may not be apparent through other methods of analysis. By using thematic analysis to organize and make sense of the data from these questions and may be able to gain a better understanding of the experiences and perspectives of the participants. Thematic analysis is a method of analyzing qualitative data that involves identifying, coding, and interpreting patterns or themes within the data. As described by Braun and Clarke (2016), this method involves several steps, including familiarizing oneself with the data, generating codes, searching for themes, reviewing and refining the identified themes, defining and naming the themes, and producing a report that summarizes the results of the analysis. When conducting thematic analysis, researchers often use techniques such as coding, clustering, and memoing to help organize and make sense of the data.

Before the questionnaire was distributed, the researchers sought ethics clearance from the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) and had been provided with a certification to proceed with the study.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the self-report content knowledge survey suggest that the respondents have a strong understanding of the concepts, theories, and principles covered in their general education courses, professional education courses, and their area of specialization. In order to pass the licensure examination, a teacher must have an average of at least 75% across all components, indicating a thorough comprehension of the topics and principles covered in these courses.

According to Shulman (1992), content knowledge refers to the body of knowledge and information that teachers teach to their students. It is important for teachers to have a strong understanding of this content in order to effectively educate and support the learning of their students. The results of the self-report content knowledge survey suggest that the respondents possess the necessary knowledge and understanding of the material they are responsible for teaching.

### 3.1 Self – Report Content Knowledge for General Education

The respondents in the study assessed their content knowledge in general education courses including English, Filipino, Mathematics, Science, and Social Science. The results showed that they generally had a good level of understanding of the material covered in these courses, with Filipino ( $M=3.10$ ,  $SD=0.67$ ) and English ( $M=3.00$ ,  $SD=0.60$ ) ranking the highest and Science ( $M=2.84$ ,  $SD=0.65$ ) and Social Science ( $M=2.69$ ,  $SD=0.62$ ) following closely behind. The only subject in which the respondents

reported a lower level of understanding was Mathematics ( $M=2.42$ ,  $SD=0.81$ ), which was rated as fair.

These results are consistent with the findings of Aquino and Balilla (2015), who also found that respondents had a good rating for general education courses. It is important for teachers to have a strong understanding of the subjects they teach in order to effectively educate and support the learning of their students. The results of this study suggest that the respondents have a good level of content knowledge in the general education courses they were surveyed on.

### 3.2 Self-Report Content Knowledge for Professional Education

Table 1. Professional Education

Professional Education	M	SD
The Teaching Profession	2.84	0.64
The Teacher and the Community, School Culture, and Organizational Leadership	2.70	0.71
Technology for Teaching and Learning 1 and 2	2.93	0.71
Curriculum Development and Evaluation	2.65	0.75
Facilitating Learner-Centered Teaching	2.80	0.71
The Child and Adolescent Learner and Learning Principles	2.81	0.65
Assessment in Learning 1 and 2	2.70	0.69
Building and Enhancing Literacy Across the Curriculum	2.66	0.63
Foundation of Special and Inclusive Education	2.69	0.71
<b>General Weighted Mean</b>	<b>2.75</b>	<b>0.10</b>

Scale: 1.00 – 1.50 Poor; 1.51 – 2.50 Fair; 2.51 – 3.50 Good; 3.51 – 4.00 Excellent

Table 1 presents the self-report content knowledge of the respondents in courses related to professional education, which is a component of the licensure examination for teachers. The results show that the respondents had a good overall understanding of the material covered in these courses, with a general weighted mean of 2.75 ( $SD=0.10$ ).

The course Technology for Teaching and Learning 1 and 2 ( $M=2.93$ ,  $SD=0.71$ ) ranked the highest among the professional education courses, indicating that the respondents had a strong understanding of how to integrate technology into their teaching. This is likely due to the fact that all of the respondents had experience conducting online classes during their teaching practicum.

The course The Teaching Profession ( $M=2.84$ ,  $SD=0.74$ ) ranked second, which is not surprising given that this course covers important principles and philosophical and legal underpinnings of teaching as a profession. The courses Child and Adolescent Learner and Learning Principles ( $M=2.81$ ,  $SD=0.65$ ) and Facilitating Learner-Centered Teaching ( $M=2.80$ ,  $SD=0.71$ ) also ranked highly, as they focus on student-centered practices and important topics related to student development, behavior, and attitudes.

The courses The Teacher and the Community, School Culture, and Organizational Leadership ( $M=2.70$ ,  $SD=0.71$ ) and Assessment in Learning 1 and 2 ( $M=2.70$ ,  $SD=0.69$ ) had the same weighted mean, indicating that the respondents had a good understanding of the material covered in these courses. The former course covers topics such as the history of education, teachers serving as principals, and community involvement in schools, while the latter is offered during the first semester of the respondents' fourth year, which may have helped them retain the information.

Finally, the courses Foundation of Special and Inclusive Education ( $M=2.69$ ,  $SD=0.71$ ), Building and Enhancing Literacy Across the Curriculum ( $M=2.66$ ,  $SD=0.63$ ), and Curriculum Development and Evaluation ( $M=2.65$ ,  $SD=0.75$ ) also had good ratings, although these courses were offered during the respondents' second year, which may have made it more difficult for them to retain the information. Overall, these results suggest

that the respondents have learned the concepts and theories covered in these professional education courses, which are essential for them to pass the licensure examination.

### 3.2 Self-Report Content Knowledge for Area of Specialization

Table 2. Areas of Specialization

Area of Specialization (TLE)	M	SD
Basic Drafting	2.53	0.83
Business Math	2.35	0.80
Basic Electricity	2.30	0.82
Basic Plumbing	2.22	0.76
Basic Cosmetology	2.41	0.84
Foods	3.02	0.71
Carpentry	2.35	0.78
Basic Electronics	2.43	0.78
Entrepreneurship	2.87	0.65
<b>General Weighted Mean</b>	<b>2.50</b>	<b>0.06</b>

Legend: 1.00 – 1.50 Poor; 1.51 – 2.50 Fair; 2.51 – 3.50 Good; 3.51 – 4.00 Excellent

Table 2 presents the self-report content knowledge of the respondents in their area of specialization as they prepare for the licensure examination for teachers. The results show that the respondents had a fair level of understanding of the material covered in these courses, with a general weighted mean of 2.50 (SD=0.06).

The respondents rated themselves as having good content knowledge in the subjects of Foods (M=3.02, SD=0.71), Entrepreneurship (M=2.87, SD=0.65), and Basic Drafting (M=2.53, SD=0.83). These subjects were all taken during the respondents' second year in school, and as they focus on individual instruction and student-centered learning strategies such as "learning by doing," it is likely that the respondents were able to acquire the skills needed to master these subjects.

In contrast, the respondents rated themselves as having fair content knowledge in Basic Electronics (M=2.43, SD=0.78), Basic Cosmetology (M=2.41, SD=0.84), Business Math (M=2.35, SD=0.80), Carpentry (M=2.30, SD=0.78), Basic Electricity (M=2.30, SD=0.82), and Basic Plumbing (M=2.22, SD=0.76). These subjects were not offered in the respondents' college curriculum, and it is possible that the topics and lessons covered in these courses have been overlooked.

However, it is worth noting that some of the respondents were appointed to manage and teach these subjects during their teaching practicum in their respective schools. This experience may have helped them to master the subject matter in the disciplines they were responsible for teaching. Overall, these results suggest that the respondents have a fair level of content knowledge in their area of specialization, although they may have stronger understanding in some subjects than others.

### 3.3 Degree of Readiness of Pre-Service Teachers to Take Licensure Examination According to Support System

Table 3 Support System

I am ready to take the licensure exam because ...	M	SD
I seek advice from professionals who took the examination and reflected on the tips they shared.	3.24	0.67
I always spend out with people who encourage and drive me to work hard in my academics.	3.23	0.59
My family provides me with financial assistance I need to prepare for the examination.	2.98	0.81
My classmates give me confidence as we all strive to pass the LET.	3.24	0.72
My cooperating teacher wished me success in passing the LET.	3.45	0.59

General Weighted Mean	3.23	0.08
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Scale: 1.00 – 1.50 Strongly Disagree; 1.51 – 2.50 Disagree; 2.51 – 3.50 Agree; 3.51 – 4.00 Strongly Agree

Table 3 discusses the degree of readiness of pre-service teachers to take the licensure examination in terms of their support system. The results show that the respondents agreed that they received support from a variety of sources, including their cooperating teachers (M=3.45, SD=0.59), classmates (M=3.24, SD=0.72), and professionals who gave them advice (M=3.24, SD=0.67). They also agreed that they spent time with people who motivated them to work hard academically (M=3.23, SD=0.59) and that their families were willing to support them financially as they prepared for the licensure examination (M=2.94, SD=0.81).

In general, the respondents reported that they had a solid support network as they pursued their careers as licensed professionals in teaching. This is consistent with the findings of studies by Kaur (2016) and Vogan et al. (2014), which show that having strong support from those around them increases the likelihood of success in reaching goals. Overall, these results suggest that the respondents feel well-prepared and supported as they prepare to take the licensure examination.

### 3.4 Degree of Readiness of Pre-Service Teachers to Take Licensure Examination According to Self-Determination

Table 4 Self-Determination

I am ready to take the licensure exam because ...	M	SD
I am confident in my abilities and do not push myself under pressure from people's expectations.	3.12	0.63
I identified personal and academic areas for improvement	3.23	0.61
I have faith and believe that prayers will help me in exam along with challenging work.	3.31	0.62
I have been inspired by my former teachers to pursue teaching and pass the licensure examination	3.29	0.59
I am persevered to achieve my career goals to become a licensed professional teacher	3.30	0.58
General Weighted Mean	3.25	0.02

Scale: 1.00 – 1.50 Strongly Disagree; 1.51 – 2.50 Disagree; 2.51 – 3.50 Agree; 3.51 – 4.00 Strongly Agree

Table 4 presents the degree of readiness of pre-service teachers to take the licensure examination in terms of their self-determination. The results show that the respondents believed that faith, prayers, and hard work would help them earn their license (M=3.31, SD=0.62), and that they were determined to achieve their goal of becoming a licensed professional teacher (M=3.30, SD=0.59). They were also inspired by their former teachers to pursue the same career (M=3.29, SD=0.59) and were aware of their personal and academic improvement (M=3.23, SD=0.61). In addition, they were confident in their abilities and did not allow others' expectations to affect them (M=3.12, SD=0.63).

Self-determination is an important factor in preparing pre-service teachers to become licensed professionals because it involves an awareness of one's abilities and limitations as well as a belief in one's competence and effectiveness (Lewis et al., 2014). Students who are self-determined are better able to manage their lives, make decisions for themselves, and evaluate their goals and aspirations (Eisenmann, 2007). As a result, they are more in control of their education and are better prepared to succeed as licensed professionals. The results of this study suggest that the respondents have high levels of self-determination, which will likely help them as they prepare to take the licensure examination.

### 3.5 Degree of Readiness of Pre-Service Teachers to Take Licensure Examination According to Content and Pedagogical Knowledge

Table 5 Content and Pedagogical Knowledge

I am ready to take the licensure exam because ...	WM	VI
I am academically engaged to comprehend all topics presented in class.	3.00	Agree
I have shown skills in the positive use of ICT to facilitate teaching and learning process	3.25	Agree
My teachers provided learning modules and instructional materials needed to learn content	3.08	Agree
I have strong educational foundations of various approaches, methods, and strategies necessary for LET	2.94	Agree
I have acquired the art of providing constructive feedback to improve learner's performance	3.12	Agree
I tried answering random test questionnaires found online.	3.14	Agree
I have installed applications containing LET questions in my mobile devices	2.70	Agree
I am familiar with existing laws and mandates that protects teachers for the betterment of the teaching profession (e.g. Magna Carta for Public School Teachers, Code of Ethics of Professional Teachers, Commonwealth Act No. 578)	2.99	Agree
I demonstrate classroom management techniques and hands-on activities available in learning environments	3.11	Agree
I applied various teaching strategies during my practice teaching suited to diverse learners	3.16	Agree
I have identified learning outcomes that are aligned with learning competencies	3.08	Agree
I understand legal bases, policies and procedures to foster harmonious relationship with the wider school community (e.g. RA8525 Adopt-a-School-Program Act, RA9155 Governance of Basic Education Act, Education Act of 1982)	2.87	Agree
I developed a teaching philosophy that is learner centered.	3.18	Agree
I have integrated 21st Century literacies in my lesson plan. (e.g. media literacy, digital literacy, social literacy, multicultural literacy)	3.30	Agree
I have facilitated a positive school culture and school climate while teaching my students.	3.27	Agree
<b>General Weighted Mean</b>	<b>3.08</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Legend: 1.00 – 1.50 Strongly Disagree; 1.51 – 2.50 Disagree; 2.51 – 3.50 Agree; 3.51 – 4.00 Strongly Agree

Table 5 presents the degree of readiness of pre-service teachers to take the licensure examination according to their content and pedagogical knowledge. The results show that the respondents agreed that they had the knowledge and skills needed to become licensed professional teachers, with a general weighted mean of 3.08.

Specifically, the respondents reported that they had integrated 21st century literacies into their lesson plans during their teaching practicum (M=3.30), and had facilitated a positive school culture and climate while teaching (M=3.27). They also rated several other indicators as "agree," with weighted means ranging from 2.94 to 3.25. The only indicator that ranked lower was their ability to practice answering licensure



examination-related questions by installing applications on their mobile devices (M=2.70).

Overall, these results suggest that the respondents feel well-prepared in terms of their content and pedagogical knowledge as they prepare to take the licensure examination. They have received training from their professors and cooperating teachers, and have demonstrated their ability to create and implement effective lesson plans and promote a positive school culture. Although they may have some room for improvement in their ability to practice answering licensure examination-related questions, they feel confident in their knowledge and skills as they prepare to become licensed professional teachers.

### 3.6 Open-Ended Questions

Themes	Sub-Themes	Codes
RQ1 How Covid-19 hindered preparations prior to the examination	Following Health protocols and online classes	Health and safety protocols Online classes No f2f review
	Limited access to resources and financial difficulties	Limitations and restrictions due to covid-19 Limited access to everything Limited available LET review Discouraged to enroll in review centers
	Time management and field experience	Limited time Expectations in the field Less exposure
	Lack of focus and distractions, Stress and Anxiety	Can't or lack of focus or concentration Felt that I didn't learned enough that I can use in passing LET
	Mode of learning and lack of interaction with instructors	Limited strategies Difficult to form group - Less interactions with instructors - Explore and apply knowledge Insufficient materials - because of insufficient meetings, I felt not to grasp deeply the lessons
RQ2 Plans after graduation	2.1 pursue teaching career	- yes of having plans to pursue teaching career
	2.2 take the licensure examination while working	- take the LET immediately - pursue teaching and take the LET
	2.4 further study either MA or TESDA training	- take up more trainings - enroll master's degree
RQ3 additional competencies that they feel are necessary for success in the 21st century education	3.1 Technology and digital literacy	- computer proficiency - digital competencies - technical skills - technological skills - digital literacy

system	3.2 adaptability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- flexibility to adapt to changes and unforeseen circumstances</li> <li>- being technologically adept</li> <li>- work with others</li> <li>- perform the role of educators in the classroom</li> <li>- need to have a functional and efficient home workspace in order to work remotely</li> </ul>
	3.3 critical thinking and problem solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- critical thinking</li> <li>- problem solving skills</li> </ul>
	3.4 communication and information literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- effective communication</li> <li>- ability to find and evaluate information</li> </ul>
RQ4 characteristics of a prepared student for the licensure examination	4.1 confidence and determination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- confidence, calm and confident</li> <li>- determined</li> </ul>
	4.2 knowledge and subject mastery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- knowledgeable</li> <li>- can recall specialized courses' lessons in random situations</li> <li>- comprehensiveness and preparations</li> </ul>
	4.3 mental and emotional preparedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- clear mind</li> <li>- calm disposition</li> <li>- physical and emotionally prepared</li> <li>- spiritually prepared</li> <li>- well-rested</li> <li>- working under pressure</li> </ul>
	4.5 Ethical and enthusiastic about teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- having a strong ethical foundation</li> <li>- being passionate about teaching as a career</li> </ul>
	4.6 Time management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- study habits</li> <li>- effectively managing time</li> </ul>

#### Theme 1: How Covid-19 hindered preparations prior to the examination

Sub-theme 1.1: Following Health protocols and online classes. This sub-theme reveals that Covid-19 pandemic hindered preparations prior to the examination due to health protocols and implementation of online classes. It is very much obvious from the common keywords shared and expressed by the participants as to the following: Health and safety protocols, Online classes and No f2f review.

The sub-theme suggests that the pandemic and the resulting health protocols and shift to online classes have hindered preparations for the examination. This is supported by the findings of the UNESCO, World Bank, and OECD reports, which all highlight the impact of the pandemic on education and the challenges and opportunities of implementing health protocols in schools. The sub-theme also highlights the importance of technology and financial support in enabling schools to adapt to the changes brought about by the pandemic and the need for support for teachers and students in adapting to these changes.

Sub-theme 1.2: Limited access to resources and financial difficulties. The sub-theme suggests that the pandemic has caused limited access to resources and financial difficulties, which has hindered preparations for the examination as evidently shown from the responses such as: Limitations and restrictions due to covid-19, Limited access to everything, limited available LET review, and Discouraged to enroll in review centers due to financial difficulties.

This is supported by the findings of the UNESCO, World Bank, and OECD reports, which all highlight the impact of the pandemic on education and the challenges and opportunities of implementing health protocols in schools. These reports also mention the importance of technology and financial support in enabling schools to adapt to the changes brought about by the pandemic and the need for support for teachers and students in adapting to these changes. It is likely that the limited access to resources and financial difficulties experienced by students during the pandemic are related to the challenges and opportunities mentioned in these reports.

Sub-theme 1.3: Time management and field experience. These sub-themes suggest that the respondents/participants in the study may have difficulties with effectively managing their time and may have limited field experience, which may be impacting their preparations for the licensure examination. These sub-themes may be relevant to consider in the context of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education and the challenges and opportunities of implementing health protocols in schools, as mentioned in the previous references

Sub-theme 1.4: Lack of focus and distractions, Stress and anxiety. Based on the responses provided, it appears that participants have experienced challenges with maintaining focus and staying on track while preparing for your examination. This may be impacting their ability to effectively study and prepare for the exam. Some of the specific issues mentioned include difficulty with focus and concentration, and a sense of unease or lack of confidence in learning. These factors may be contributing to their difficulty in preparing for the exam.

Concentration is important when preparing for an exam because it allows you to focus on the material you are studying and retain information more effectively. According to a study published in the journal "Advances in Health Sciences Education," "concentration is a key factor in successful learning and is necessary for the acquisition and retention of knowledge" (Boström, 2018). The study also suggests that "concentration can be improved through various methods, such as setting specific learning goals, creating a suitable learning environment, and using strategies such as summarization and visualization" (Boström, 2018)

Sub-theme 1.5: Mode of learning and lack of interaction with instructors. While, it is true that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the way that education is being delivered. Many schools and universities have moved to online or hybrid learning models, which can be a challenge for both students and instructors. Some students may find it more difficult to focus and stay motivated when learning remotely, and may miss the in-person interaction with instructors and classmates. It can also be more difficult for instructors to engage with students and provide support in an online environment.

One of the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic has been the shift to remote or online learning for many students and teachers. This shift has presented a number of challenges, including a lack of in-person interaction and support from instructors.

According to a report by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the shift to online learning can be particularly challenging for students who lack access to adequate technology or internet connectivity, or who have difficulties learning independently. The report also notes that the lack of in-person interaction with instructors can be a barrier to learning for some students, as it can be more difficult for instructors to provide support and feedback in an online environment.

Other challenges of online learning include a lack of structure and motivation, difficulty with time management and organization, and challenges with staying engaged and motivated. These challenges can be especially difficult for students who are already struggling with learning, or who have learning disabilities or other special needs.

Overall, the shift to remote or online learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic has presented a number of challenges for students and teachers, including a lack of in-person interaction and support from instructors.

#### Theme 2: Plans after graduation

Sub-theme 2.1: pursue teaching career. Pursuing a teaching career after graduation can be a rewarding and fulfilling choice for many individuals. Teaching allows individuals to share their knowledge and passion for a subject with others, and to have a direct impact on the lives and education of their students. This is evidently seen from the participants' affirmative responses.

Sub-theme 2.2: take the licensure examination while working. Obtain a teaching license is one of the requirements of the teaching profession which typically involves passing a written exam and meeting other requirements.

Sub-theme 2.3 further study either MA or TESDA training. Professional development is important for teachers at all stages of their career, not just after they have graduated. It can help them stay up to date on best practices in education, learn new techniques and technologies, and improve their skills. TESDA (Technical Education and Skills Development Authority) is a government agency in the Philippines that offers trainings and certification programs in various technical and vocational fields. Enrolling in a master's degree program is another way for teachers to pursue professional development and advance in their careers. Some common master's degree programs for teachers include education administration, curriculum and instruction, and educational technology. Pursuing advanced education can also open up opportunities for leadership roles, such as school principal or district-level administrator.

#### Theme 3: Competencies that they feel are necessary for success in the 21st century education system

Sub-theme 3.1: Technology and Digital Literacy. Technology and digital literacy are increasingly important in today's world. The use of computers, the internet, and other digital tools has become essential in many aspects of life, including education, work, and communication.

One key reason for the importance of technology and digital literacy is the increasing reliance on technology in the workplace. Many jobs now require employees to be proficient in using computers and other digital tools, and those who are not comfortable with technology may be at a disadvantage in the job market. In addition, technology is constantly evolving, and it is important for individuals to stay up to date and be able to learn and adapt to new technologies as they emerge.

Another reason for the importance of technology and digital literacy is the role it plays in education. Many schools now use computers, tablets, and other digital tools in the classroom, and students who are not comfortable with these technologies may struggle to keep up with their peers. In addition, being able to use technology effectively can help students become more engaged in their learning and better prepared for the future.

Hence, it is understood from the responses that importance of computer proficiency, digital competencies, technical skills, technological skills and digital literacy are present.

Sub-theme 3.2: Adaptability. This sub-theme Adaptability, or the ability to quickly and effectively change or adjust to new situations, is considered to be an important competency in the 21st century. This is because the world is constantly changing, and individuals and organizations that are able to adapt are more likely to be successful.

There are several reasons why adaptability is considered to be important in the 21st century. First, the rate of change in the world is increasing. Technology is advancing rapidly, and new ideas and innovations are emerging all the time. Those who are able to adapt to these changes are more likely to be successful.

Second, the nature of work is changing. Many jobs are becoming more complex and require individuals to be able to learn new skills and adapt to new technologies. In addition, the rise of the gig economy and the increasing prevalence of remote work means that individuals may need to be able to adapt to new working environments and styles more frequently.

Finally, adaptability is important because it allows individuals to be flexible and open to new ideas. This can be beneficial in both personal and professional contexts, as it allows individuals to be open to new opportunities and experiences and to be more resilient in the face of challenges which is evidently seen from their responses as they answer “flexibility to adapt to changes and unforeseen circumstances”, “being technologically adept”, “working with others” and “perform the roles of educators”.

Sub-theme 3.3: Critical Thinking and Problem Solving Skills. The sub-theme critical thinking and problem solving skills are important for personal growth and development. By evaluating and analyzing information and situations, individuals can learn from their experiences and make better choices in the future. As such, these skills are important because they help individuals to analyze and evaluation information and situations, and to develop logical and creative solutions to problems. These skills are valuable in a wide range of contexts, including education, work and personal life.

Sub-theme 3.4: Communication and information literacy. Communication and information literacy are important in the 21st century because they allow individuals to effectively exchange ideas and information and to access and use knowledge. Finally, communication and information literacy are important for personal and professional growth and development. By being able to access and use information effectively, individuals can learn and grow, and they can also share their knowledge with others.

Theme 4: Characteristics of a prepared student to take the licensure exam.

Sub-theme 4.1: Confidence and Determination. Sub-theme “confidence and determination” are important qualities to have when preparing to take an exam. Having confidence in oneself can help alleviate anxiety and stress, and it can also help to boost motivation and focus. Determination, or the ability to persist in the face of challenges, is also important because it can help individuals to stay motivated and to persevere even when things gets tough.

These are expressed through the following statements “confidence, calm and confident and determined”. According to a study published in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, individuals who have higher levels of self-confidence are more likely to persist in the face of challenges and to achieve their goals

Sub-theme 4.2: Knowledge and Subject Mastery. These sub-theme are being expressed from the responses as “knowledgeable, can recall specialized courses’ lessons in random situations, comprehensiveness and preparations”. Having a strong understanding and mastery of the subject matter is important for students who are preparing to take an exam. This is because a deep knowledge of the material is necessary for success on the exam. When students have a thorough understanding of the concepts and ideas being tested, they are better able to apply that knowledge to the exam questions and to demonstrate their understanding.

It's important to note that achieving mastery of the subject matter requires time and effort, and it may not happen overnight. However, with dedication and hard work,

students can build a strong foundation of knowledge that will serve them well on the exam and beyond.

Sub-theme 4.3: Mental and Emotional Preparedness. This sub-theme “Mental and emotional preparedness” are considered important characteristics when preparing for an exam because they can help students to manage stress and anxiety and to focus on the task at hand. According to a study published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, individuals who have high levels of self-control and self-regulation are more likely to perform well on tasks that require sustained attention and effort (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4410038/>).

This was expressed through the following statements “clear mind, calm disposition, physical and emotionally prepared, spiritually prepared, well-rested and can work under pressure”.

Sub-theme 4.4: Ethical and Enthusiastic about teaching. This sub-theme “Ethical and enthusiastic attitudes towards teaching” can be important characteristics for a student who is preparing to take an exam. Being ethical means behaving in a manner that is consistent with professional standards and values, and this can be important for building trust and credibility with students and colleagues. Enthusiasm, or a strong interest and positive attitude towards teaching, can also be important because it can help to create a positive learning environment and to motivate and engage students (<https://www.edutopia.org/article/importance-ethics-education>)

This was expressed by the participants using the following statements “having a strong ethical foundation and being passionate about teaching as a career”

Sub-theme 4.5: Time management. The sub-theme time management was expressed through the following statements “study habits, and effectively managing time”.

Time management is an important characteristic for a student preparing to take a licensure exam because it allows them to effectively plan and use their time to study and prepare for the exam. Good time management skills can help students to break down the exam preparation process into manageable tasks, to prioritize their studies, and to avoid last-minute cramming. According to a study published in the *Journal of Education for Business*, students who have strong time management skills are more likely to be successful in their academic pursuits (<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/08832323.2014.964967>). Developing good time management skills can therefore be an important factor in success on a licensure exam.

#### **4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The present study aimed to assess the readiness of pre-service teachers for the licensure examination (LET). The study gathered self-report data on the students' content knowledge in the areas of general education, professional education, and specialization, as well as their perceptions of their own preparedness and the support they received. The findings indicated that most students planned to enroll in a review center in preparation for the LET and that they perceived confidence, self-determination, academic preparedness, and discipline as important characteristics of a prepared student. The students also reported that the shift to online learning due to COVID-19 had impacted their preparation for the LET, citing reduced quality of learning, limited opportunities, and lack of available learning materials as challenges. In terms of their own content knowledge, the students reported having good knowledge in general education and professional education, but only fair knowledge in their area of specialization. However, they also reported feeling sufficiently prepared for the examination in terms of the

support they received and their own self-determination. Based on these findings, the study recommends that the institution consider holding an internal LET evaluation to boost the students' confidence and focus on the area of specialization in the review. It also suggests that the program curriculum be reviewed to align with the exam's content.

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