

Pre-Service Teachers' Anxiety And Preparation Prior To Board Examination

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Abstract: This descriptive study examined the anxiety level in the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) and the extent of preparation for the exam of pre-service teachers. The respondents of the study composed of 109 Teacher Education graduates, taking review class at Iloilo Science in Technology University ISAT U Miagao Campus, Miagao, Iloilo. They were identified using purposive sampling. A validated researcher-made instrument on LET Anxiety and Extent of Preparation for LET was employed. Mean, SD, Mann Whitney U, and Kruskal Wallis were utilized as statistical techniques. The study was conducted two to three months before the schedule of the board exam, to find out the LET anxiety level and their extent of preparation for the board exam. Results revealed that pre-service teachers had a high LET anxiety level. BEEd respondents were more anxious of the LET than the BSEd pre-service teachers. As a whole, they had a moderate extent of LET preparation. BEEd pre-service teachers had a higher extent of LET preparation than the BSEd pre-service teachers. Respondents had a greater extent of LET preparation for General Education subjects than for Professional Education and Major subjects. No significant difference existed in the pre-service teachers' level of LET anxiety, however, a significant difference existed in their extent of LET preparation. Pre-service teachers' anxiety level was not correlated with their extent of preparation for the LET.

Keywords: anxiety, preparation, Licensure Examination, pre-service teachers.

I. INTRODUCTION

Anxiety on a test is a normal feeling among the students. It is an emotional and behavioral disorder caused by the activation of sympathetic nervous system. In the domain of education, high level of anxiety is often experienced by students (Revina, 2014).

As test takers, they worry about whether they do good or not in a test. Some may feel anxious on the worst result of the exam which is failure. Although test is part of students' life, anxiety is present, the level of which depends on a person. Some manifest higher level anxiety although preparation has been done.

For pre-service teachers, taking the board exam such the Licensure Examination for Teacher (LET) is expected. This exam is a passport for a permanent teaching position. In order to pass the exam, Teacher education graduates take review classes. This gives them confidence having reviewed for the exam. When the board exam is nearing, a feeling of worry starts to bother the test takers. They are anxious about the result of the exam. Different negative thoughts arise, disturbing the person.

This idea motivated the researchers to conduct the study to find out the anxiety level of the pre-service teachers as well as their extent of preparation two to three months before the LET. The result of the study will give idea on how to help teachers graduates overcome or minimize anxiety level and enhance their extent of preparation, hence this study.

This study is supported by Aaron Beck's Cognitive Behavioral Theory which describes the role of cognition (knowing) in determining and predicting the behavioral pattern of individuals who tend to form self-concepts that affect the behavior they display. These concepts can be positive or negative and can be affected by a person's environment. James-Lange's Theory of Emotion also connects to this study which proposes that emotions happen as a result of experiences, rather than being the cause of them. According to the theory, when an event stimulates a person (arousal), the autonomic nervous system (ANS) reacts by creating physiological manifestations such as faster heartbeat, more perspiration, increased muscular tension, and more.

Statement of the Problem:

The study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the LET anxiety level of pre-service teachers as an entire group and when classified into curriculum, course, and subjects?
2. What is their extent of LET preparation as an entire group and when classified into curriculum, course, and subjects?
3. Is there a significant difference in the level of LET anxiety of pre-service teachers when classified into curriculum, course, and subjects?
4. Is there a significant difference in the extent of LET preparation of pre-service teachers when classified into curriculum, course, and subjects?
5. Is there a significant correlation between LET anxiety level and extent of preparation of the pre-service teachers?

Hypotheses:

1. There is no significant difference in the level of LET anxiety of pre-service teachers when classified into curriculum, course, and subjects.
2. There is no significant difference in the extent of LET preparation of pre-service teachers when classified into curriculum, course, and subjects.
3. There is no significant correlation between LET anxiety level and extent of preparation of the pre-service teachers.

II. RELATED STUDIES

The following findings support the results of the current study:

Revina (2014) found that majority of the students experienced moderate level of anxiety which was increased by pressure from both school and parents, the lengthy format of the board exams, and heavy subject contents. Grades 10 and 12 had higher level of depression anxiety and stress than Grade 9 and 11.

Nagpal et al., (2015) revealed that psychological factors were found to be strongly correlated with anxiety followed by lifestyle and academic factors. The major psychosocial factor contributing to exam anxiety in the study is parental expectations as reported by the students. Major lifestyle stressors reported were lack of physical activity and extracurricular activities, studying all night before exams, distractions, disturbed sleep, dietary factors, and health problems. Lack of physical activity and extracurricular activities was the major lifestyle stressor. The major academic stressors were extensive course load, lack of time to revise and lack of systematic studying and time management.

Hashmat (2008) reported that extensive course loads, lack of physical exercise, and long duration of exams were the important factors which contributed to the moderate level of exam anxiety of medical students. Most of the students had no knowledge of exam-taking and anxiety-reduction techniques.

Parks-Stamm (2010) found that as test anxiety increased, the effectiveness of temptation-inhibiting implementation intentions increased, whereas task facilitating implementation intentions increasingly harmed performance as test anxiety increased. In addition, the consequences of these plans differed significantly for those high in test anxiety. High anxiety was detrimental to students' performance only when task-facilitating implementation intentions were employed; task-facilitating implementation intentions led to significantly poorer performances in terms of problems completed when test anxiety was high.

Thergaonkar (2007) reported that a statistically negative correlation existed between test anxiety and democratic attitude and acceptance of parents. Statistically significant negative correlations were also observed between the worry and emotionality components of test anxiety and democratic attitudes of mothers as well as fathers. Worry rather than the emotionality component of test anxiety had a statistically significant negative correlation with acceptance of parents. There was no statistically significant correlation between test anxiety and attitudes and expectation of mothers towards their child's academics and gender stereotyped perceptions of mothers regarding academics.

Schonwetter (1995) indicated that gender test anxiety differently influence student learning and learning related outcomes. Low test anxious males showed higher achievement outcomes, perceived more success over their performance and felt more confident than higher test anxious males or females test anxious males.

Malhotra (2015) found that the level of exam anxiety is significantly more in case of girls of senior secondary schools as compared to boys of senior secondary schools. As girls are seen more responsible than boys and this kind of expectation leads to the increase in exam anxiety levels because girls essentially are afraid to fail; each testing situation is seen as another possible chance of failure. Urban senior school students experience more anxiety as compared to senior school students belonging to rural locality.

Hall (2005) revealed that test anxious individuals were similar to socially phobic individuals in personality characteristics, in subjective ratings of anxiety as well as in the prevalence of feared situations. However, despite these similarities test anxious individuals did not show significant functional impairment during the behavioral assessment task as evaluated through level of performance, number of negative cognitions, and psychophysiological reactivity. The study concluded that test anxiety cannot be considered a type of specific social phobia.

Natarajan (2015) stressed that having mild level of anxiety while students enter into a university is a turning point in a student's life. Findings showed that no association existed between level of anxiety and selected demographic profile as gender, type of family, medium of study, residence, private tuition, and mode of stay.

III. METHODOLOGY

Research Design:

This study utilized the descriptive- survey method of research in determining the level of anxiety on the Licensure Examination of Teachers of pre-service teachers at Iloilo Science and Technology University Miagao Campus. Their extent of LET preparation was also explored.

Respondents of the Study:

The respondents of the study were the 109 pre-service teachers or the newly Teacher Education graduates who attended LET review classes at ISAT University Miagao Campus. They were identified using purposive sampling technique.

Data Gathering Instrument:

The study used the validated researcher-constructed instrument on Licensure Examination for Teachers Anxiety and Extent of LET Preparation.

Data Gathering Procedures:

The study underwent In-house review for the improvement of the proposal. After the questionnaire was validated, it was administered among the target respondents who were the Teacher Education graduates reviewing for the Licensure Examination for Teachers. The data were subjected to appropriate SPSS then interpreted.

Data Processing Techniques:

The data gathered in this study were treated statistically. For descriptive analysis, means and standard deviation were used. Kruskal Wallis, Mann Whitney U, and Spearman rho r were used in determining if significant difference or correlation existed between or among variables, set at .05 alpha level.

IV. RESULTS

Descriptive Data Analysis:

The following tables present the respondents' anxiety level and extent of preparation prior to the board exam.

Table 1. Pre-service Teachers' LET Anxiety Level as an Entire Group and as to Curriculum, Course, and Subjects

	n	M	Description	SD
Entire Group	109	2.30	High	.311
Curriculum				
BEEd	59	2.33	High	.305
BSEd	50	2.28	High	.318
Course				
English	12	2.25	High	.358
Filipino	7	2.34	High	.178
Math	11	2.32	High	.481
Soc. Sci.	5	2.22	High	.321
TLE	16	2.26	High	.193
Subject				
Gen. Ed.	32	2.24	High	.272
Prof. Ed.	70	2.34	High	.334
Major	7	2.30	High	.311

Table 1 shows the respondents' level of anxiety in Licensure Examination for Teachers.

The data revealed that the pre-service teachers had a high LET anxiety level, (M=2.30; SD= .311). When grouped according to curriculum, BEEd pre-service teachers, (M= 2.33; SD= .305) had a higher LET anxiety level than the BSEd pre-service teachers, (M= 2.28; SD= .318).

In terms of course, Filipino majors had the highest LET anxiety level, (M=2.34; SD= .178), compared to other fields of specialization as English, (M=2.25; SD= .358), Math, (M= 2.32; SD= .481), Social Studies, (M= 2.22; SD= .321), and TLE, (M=2.26; SD= .193). Social Studies majors had the lowest LET anxiety level.

In terms of subject, pre-service teachers had a higher LET anxiety level on Professional Education subject (M= 2.34; SD= .334) than on General Education (M= 2.24; SD= .272) and Major, (M= 2.30; SD= .311) subjects.

Table 2. Pre-service Teachers' Extent of Preparation for LET as an Entire Group and as to Curriculum, Course, and Subject

	n	M	Description	SD
Entire Group	109	3.10	Moderate	.554
Curriculum				
BEEd	59	3.20	Moderate	.568
BSEd	50	2.99	Moderate	.519
Course				
English	12	3.11	Moderate	.342
Filipino	7	2.70	Moderate	.427
Math	11	2.32	Moderate	.627
Soc. Sci.	5	2.22	Moderate	.633
TLE	16	2.26	Moderate	.468
Subjects				
Gen. Ed.	32	3.15	Moderate	.538
Prof. Ed.	70	3.10	Moderate	.585
Major	7	2.92	Moderate	.191

Table 2 shows the respondents' extent of preparation in Licensure Examination for Teachers. The data revealed that the pre-service teachers had a moderate extent of LET preparation, (M=3.10; SD= .554).

When grouped according to curriculum, BEEd pre-service teachers,(M= 3.20; SD= .568) had a higher extent of LET preparation than the BSEd pre-service teachers, (M= 2.99; SD= .519).

In terms of course, English majors had the highest extent of LET preparation, (M=3.11; SD= .342), compared to other fields of specialization as Filipino, (M=2.70; SD= .427), Math, (M= 2.32; SD= .627), Social Studies, (M= 2.22; SD= .663), and TLE, (M=2.26; SD= .468)). Social Studies majors had the lowest extent of LET preparation.

In terms of subject, pre-service teachers had a higher extent of LET preparation for General Education subject (M= 3.15; SD= .538) than for Profession Education (M= 3.10; SD= .585) and Major, (M= 2.92; SD= .191) subjects.

Inferential Data Analysis:

The following tables present the Pre-service Teachers' Test Results for the Differences in the level of LET anxiety.

Table 3. Mann Whitney U Test Results for the Differences in the Level of LET Anxiety of Pre-service Teachers as to Curriculum

Curriculum	n	Mean	U	df	p-Value	Remarks
BEEd	59	2.33	-981	2	.326	Not Sig.
BSEd	50	2.28				

Table 3 shows the pre-service teachers' test results for the differences in their level of LET anxiety as to curriculum.

Data revealed that no significant difference existed in the pre-service teachers' level of LETT anxiety, U [2]= -981, p=.326. The null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the level of LET anxiety of pre-service teachers as to curriculum, was not rejected.

Table 4. Kruskal Wallis Test Results for the Differences in the Level of LET Anxiety of Pre-service Teachers as to Course

Course	n	Mean	χ^2	df	p-value	Remarks
English	12	2.25	1.246	4	.870	Not Sig.
Filipino	7	2.34				
Math	11	2.32				
Soc. Sci.	5	2.22				
TLE	16	2.26				

Table 4 shows test results for the differences in the level of LET anxiety of pre-service teachers as to course.

Results revealed that no significant difference existed in the level of LET anxiety of pre-service teachers as to course, X^2 [4]=1.246,p=.870. The null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the level of LET anxiety of pre-service teachers as to course, was not rejected.

Table 5. Kruskal Wallis Test Results for the Differences in the Level of LET Anxiety of Pre-service Teachers as to Subject

Subject	n	Mean	χ^2	df	p-value	Remarks
Gen. Ed.	32	2.24	2.931	2	.231	Not Sig.
Prof. Ed.	70	2.34				
Major	7	2.30				

Table 5 shows the pre-service teachers' test results for the difference in the level of LET anxiety as to subject.

The data revealed that no significant difference existed in the level of LET anxiety of pre-service teachers as to subject, $\chi^2[2]=2.931$, $p= .231$. The null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the level of LET anxiety of pre-service teachers as to subject, was not rejected.

Table 6. Mann Whitney U Test Results for the Differences in the Pre-service Teachers' Extent of LET Preparation as to Curriculum

Curriculum	n	Mean	U	df	p-Value	Remarks
BEEd	59	2.33	-2.374	2	.018	Significant
BSEd	50	2.28				

Table 6 shows the test results for the difference in the extent of LET preparation of pre-service teachers as to curriculum.

The table revealed that a significant difference existed in the extent of LET preparation of pre-service teachers, $U[2]= -2.374$, $p=.018$. The null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the extent of LET preparation of pre-service teachers as to curriculum, was rejected.

Table 7. Kruskal Wallis Test Results for the Differences in the Pre-service Teachers' Extent of LET Preparation as to Course

Course	n	Mean	χ^2	df	p-value	Remarks
English	12	3.11	9.119	4	.058	Not Sig.
Filipino	7	2.70				
Math	11	2.71				
Soc. Sci.	5	3.31				
TLE	16	2.26				

Table 7 shows the test results for the differences in the extent of LET preparation of pre-service teachers as course.

The data revealed that no significant difference existed in the extent of LET preparation of pre-service teachers as to course, $\chi^2[4]=9.119$, $p= .058$. The null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the extent of LET preparation of pre-service teachers as to course, was not rejected.

Table 8. Kruskal Wallis Test Results for the Differences in the Pre-service Teachers' Extent of LET Preparation as to subjects

Subjects	n	Mean	χ^2	df	p-value	Remarks
Gen. Ed.	32	3.15	1.703	2	.427	Not Sig.
Prof. Ed.	70	3.10				
Major	7	2.92				

Table 8 shows test results for the differences in the extent of LET preparation of pre-service teachers as to subjects.

Results revealed that no significant difference existed in the extent of LET preparation of pre-service teachers as to subjects. The null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the extent of LET preparation of pre-service teachers as subjects, was not rejected.

Table 9. Spearman's rho Test Result for Correlation Between Pre-service Teachers' Anxiety Level and Extent of Preparation for LET

	n	Mean	SD	rho	p-value	Description
Anxiety	109	2.30	.311	1.000	.565	Not Sig.
Preparation	109	3.10	.554			

Table 9 shows that there was no significant correlation between the pre-service teachers' anxiety level and their extent of preparation for LET. The p-value of .565 is lesser than .05 alpha level, hence, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant correlation between anxiety level and extent of preparation for LET, was not rejected.

V. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. Pre-service teachers had a high LET anxiety level as an entire group. When grouped according to curriculum, BEEd pre-service teachers had a higher LET anxiety level than the BSEd pre-service teachers.
In terms of course, Filipino majors had the highest LET anxiety level while Social Studies majors had the lowest LET anxiety level.
In terms of subject, pre-service teachers had a higher LET anxiety level on Professional Education subject than on General Education and Major subjects.
2. Pre-service teachers had a moderate extent of LET preparation. When grouped according to curriculum, BEEd pre-service teachers had a higher extent of LET preparation than the BSEd pre-service teachers.
In terms of course, English majors had the highest extent of LET preparation while Social Studies majors had the lowest extent of LET preparation.
In terms of subject, pre-service teachers had a higher extent of LET preparation for General Education subject than for Profession Education and Major subjects.
3. No significant difference existed in the pre-service teachers' level of LET anxiety as to curriculum, course, and subject.
4. A significant difference existed in the extent of LET preparation of pre-service teachers as to curriculum.
5. No significant difference existed in the extent of LET preparation of pre-service teachers as to curriculum, course, and subject.
6. No significant correlation existed between anxiety level and extent of preparation for the LET.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Three months before the LET, pre-service teachers are highly anxious regardless of curriculum, course, and subjects. They seem to be not ready for the exam.
2. Being anxious about the LET has no effect on pre-service teachers' extent of preparation.
3. Pre-service teachers exert more effort in reviewing General Education subjects than Professional Education and Major subjects.
4. BEEd and BSEd pre-service teachers differ in their extent of LET preparation, however, they have similar extent of LET preparation as to course and subjects.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are advanced:

1. The administration, in coordination with the faculty, may determine various factors that contribute to exam anxiety and may organize anxiety-reduction program for the pre-service teachers.
2. Guidance and Counseling Department may design a program that can help pre-service teachers as board exam takers overcome their anxiety and enhance the extent of preparation for this exam.
3. Teachers and parents, with the support of the administration should work together to reduce the level of anxiety on board exams and enhance coping strategy that promote a healthy lifestyle among pre-service teachers.
4. Students may organize a peer counseling group that can strengthen confidence in test taking and enhance the extent of preparation for the LET. They should consider proper time management in order to improve this extent of preparation for the exam.

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