

Attribution-Awareness-Acceptance: A Phenomenological Sketch of LET Non-Passers' Comportment

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ABSTRACT

High-stakes examinations, such as the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET), are used to make significant decisions. Aspiring teachers must first obtain their license to teach before they can advance their career as a teacher. This phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of LET non-passers with the view of acquiring an undistorted description and profound understanding of the ways the condition appear thereby contributing to the increased awareness and sensitivity to their unique experiences. Using Husserl's descriptive phenomenological investigation approach and Colaizzi's strategy of data analysis, LET non-passers' accounts were explored. The findings revealed three (3) emerging themes/phases of experiences- Attribution (of the cause to certain factors), Awareness (of the feelings) and Acceptance (of the situation). The unique experiences of the test takers contribute to the different pace in trudging from one phase to the other. It is therefore imperative that utmost regard is extended to them as they undergo these phases in their lives.

Keywords

acceptance, attribution, awareness, Licensure Examination for Teachers, non-passers, standardized test

Introduction

High-stakes examinations are used to make major decisions such as graduation, promotion, or qualification to a position. In the Philippines, passing a standardized test is a basic requirement for teacher's certification and graduates hope to get their professional license as one of the entry requirements in a teaching position. However, not all who took the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) passed the examination set by the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC).

As observed in any examination there is an element of pressure to do well from both internal and external entities. Frustration and eventual lose of interest in aspects of life that used to be important may be felt by those who failed twice or more in an academic life. To some, overwhelming feelings of sadness, emptiness, and worthlessness interfere with their work and relationships. Pleasure and joy are overpowered by feelings of distress and disappointments especially when they are labeled as 'unsuccessful.' Cornell (2004), Iqbal and Gupta (2015) believed that one's motivation becomes low and sleeping patterns are disrupted which can result to an intense feeling of distraught and a possible negative processing of information especially when one fails more than twice in the licensure examination.

Any test taker would naturally feel sick to his stomach before checking the results and with the negative consequence, hope is obliterated. When

not appropriately dealt with, a person's behavior patterns may also typically change such as spending more time indoors and not socializing as much as he used to. It becomes a real challenge for the family members and friends to think of practical ways to comfort dispirited loved ones because how he thinks affects his emotions. When one is so down, he commonly considers situations in an overly negative manner, and this has a negative impact on his mood.

For the past years, the number of LET non-passers have increased. Test results show that each year the passing percentage of the retakers is far below the average national passing percentage. The negative impact of repetitive non-passing of the licensure examination pose a great concern because ones' personal and interpersonal relations may be all affected. Non-passers are more likely to turn to maladaptive coping behaviors. Compared to any other population, they hesitate to seek help from the mental struggles that they experience. This is supported by Jones (2010) who stressed that the health, safety, and happiness of persons rely on recognition and care. It is in knowing their condition that one can take appropriate steps.

It has been advocated that an immense understanding of personal experiences would be helpful in increasing awareness, improving treatment and building relationships. However, to date, there has no study yet that explored the lived experiences of non-passers of licensure

examination for teachers. Negative feelings have been chosen as the focus of this study because the researchers believe that there has been limited in-depth research on the values of the non-passers' experiences and their whole being. Obtaining a careful description and profound understanding of conditions as experienced by the non-passers can provide necessary assistance in dealing with this 'at-risk' population. Hence, the purpose of this study is to explore the lived experiences of BLEPT non-passers with the view of providing a clear, undistorted description of the ways the condition appears thereby contributing to the increased awareness and sensitivity to their unique experiences.

Moilanen (1993) noted that the students' current depressive states were consistently found to be related to negative thoughts. As subjective evidence is assembled in this study based on the informants' views, it is imperative to consider the philosophical assumptions as well the interpretive framework that supports the study. Consequently, the value of this research will not be compromised as the most appropriate approach is taken into account.

Anchored on Husserl's descriptive phenomenology and the philosophical tenets of social constructivism that go with it, the researchers attempted to understand through the informants' descriptions of their attitudes, feelings, and self-perceptions after having failed in the LET for more than once. The meanings are embedded in their statements to uncover common themes. By this, it presupposes that the researchers tried to get as close as possible to the informants bracketing or setting aside any bias, judgments or preconceived notions.

By understanding of the world in which the non-passers live and work and by looking for the complexity of viewpoints, in-depth knowledge and meaning of their experiences was drawn. Husserl (1982) in Reiners (2012) contended that the experience of perception, thought, memory, imagination, and emotion, involve one's directed awareness (termed as 'intentionality') or consciousness of themselves as they cope with their disappointments and failures.

Literature Review

Defined as lack of success, failures, whether big or small, have some weight to a person. Usually,

though, we reserve the word failure for the more significant things-the times when we have let others down, and, more importantly, ourselves. One's confidence is shaken when we try to do something significant and fail at the end. Failure, as a hefty emotional toll, can leave a mark, but Collingwood (2018) believed it must not have to. One has to let those negative feelings out of his system such that regrouping and tackling become viable. It is moving past failure and not holding oneself back that makes one get better.

Johnson (2012) used the term 'positive reframing'- that is, the ability of a person in trying to see things in a more positive light and looking for something good in what happened. Positive reframing is not about turning a negative into a positive but, instead, being able to see reality in a more helpful light. Reframing is a way of changing the way you look at something and, thus, improving your experience of it. Such act of reframing can relieve stress and help you create a more positive life before you start making any changes in your circumstances.

While it is easy tell LET non-passers to do positive reframing, it is but a common feeling for a person to be anxious upon knowing that he/she still did not pass the examination. Anxiety, like stress, is one of the most common and studied emotions in psychology, and probably is most likely to be overcome. Gould and Krane in Haglind (2012) described two states of anxiety – state anxiety and trait anxiety. When describing state anxiety, the authors state that "State anxiety is associated with depressed or heightened arousal and is defined as a transitory state, or a "right now" feeling of apprehension and tension in a given specific situation." Trait anxiety is described as "how one feels, or a relatively stable predisposition to perceive a wide of situations as threatening and responding to these with state anxiety."

When one is anxious and stressed, he/she experiences 'feeling down.' Lazarus (2000) states that anxiety is probably one of the most critical emotions in human life. Anxiety is the emotion that is aroused when a threat arises. The second emotion is stress. Stress is probably one of the most fundamental feelings when doing research on coping and in particular on dealing with success and failure. As defined, in the beginning, stress is an imbalance between demands and capability. McGrath (1970) in Haglind (2012)

describes stress and its nature and the stress process. McGrath identifies four stages in the stress process; situation, perception, response, and behavior. Situation describes the case the individual is experiencing a certain degree of emotional bursts. Perception explains how the individual perceives the situation. A response is how the individual reacts to the situation. Last is the behavior stage. This stage describes the behavior that is the sum of the three first stages. Moreover, Lazarus and Folkman (1984) in Haglind (2012) describe two different kinds of stress- threat and challenge. A threat is perceived as a negative emotion, and a challenge is viewed as a positive emotion. Although threat and challenge are two different reactions to the same emotion and only the individual perception makes them different.

In the academe, Christensson (2010) pointed out that students in higher education are under constant evaluation. After graduation, they feel they have to prove themselves capable in their chosen profession by passing the licensure examination. Hence, a great sense of humiliation and expression of self-defeat can come from failing an important test or exam. Surely, non-passing would mean that one can no longer have that pride which he so covets. Non-passing might lead to being hurt and defensive when people automatically assume that he is not as smart as everyone thinks because he did not pass the test.

People develop confidence in the skills and ability of many graduates by recognizing latter's competence through successful completion of certification or licensure examinations. Failure to pass the Licensure Examination for Teachers just gives us the idea that such graduate of a four-year course in education is not qualified to teach. Not passing the board examination for more than once, can result in a person's depression. In most cases, it has been observed that the percentage of failure is much higher than that of the passers. Non-passing heightened the takers' depression, more specifically for those who have failed for the second time. In the same vein, Jevannel (2013) cited that it is never an easy thing to deal with disappointments when one fails an examination. Non-passing is hard to accept especially when the person has done almost everything he can to pass. It feels like he has been cheated by his fate because he did not pass the exam which could grant him a better life.

Indeed, failing an examination can be one of the devastating experiences for a person especially when he was not expecting to fail. Negative feelings and emotions can influence their views towards life and living and utmost understanding of what they went through is essential.

Research Design and Methodology

In this research, a phenomenological investigation was used to explore the lived experience of 10 non-passers of the Licensure Examination for Teachers to understand the universal essence of the experience. This study is qualitative and descriptive. The researchers employed Husserl's descriptive phenomenology to learn more about the experiences of these respondents and to capture and describe their experiences after they failed in the LET. According to Creswell (2007), as cited in Stuart-Carruthers (2014), qualitative studies are used when one needs to understand a particular problem or issue that has been explored. It is a method that one uses when he/she wants to "empower individuals to share their stories, hear their voices, and minimize the power relationships that often exist between a researcher and the participants."

In this study, the researchers bracketed or set aside their assumptions, personal biases, and presuppositions. Bracketing ensures the validity of data collection and analysis and maintains the objectivity of the phenomenon. The primary data gathering method is in-depth interviews with the informants. The purpose of a phenomenological interview is to describe the meaning of a phenomenon that these informants share. The interviews are recorded, transcribed and analyzed using Colaizzi process for phenomenological data analysis. Direct quotes from the respondents are used to illustrate the categories and connections. Through meaning condensation and data saturation, patterns/themes emerged as bases for awareness and in-depth understanding of the experiences of these scholars.

Data Analysis using Colaizzi's (1978) Strategy

Semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were conducted using an interview guide. Participants were encouraged to talk freely and to tell stories using their own words. Each interview lasted from 45 minutes to one-hour. The researchers

conducted all of these. At the end of each interview, the researchers reminded the participants about the researchers' need for a second contact with them either via telephone calls or face to face to discuss the study findings and to make sure that the study findings reflect their own experiences. Initially, there was no accurate number of research informants that was involved in the study, but to ensure that adequate information has been collected, the researchers looked at data saturation. The researchers determined the level of data saturation. The researchers follow the different steps proposed by Colaizzi for phenomenological data analysis.

Key Informants and Sampling Techniques

This study utilized purposive sampling which is widely used in qualitative researches wherein the researchers chose respondents who have the experience and knowledge of the topic, and snowball technique was used wherein respondents are asked after the interview to suggest other individuals be sampled (Hajimia, 2014). The inclusion criteria for purposive sampling were as follows: a.) lives in Cebu Province, b.) have not passed the LET twice or more, and c.) voluntarily consented to be a part of the study. This study excluded those who failed and took the LET only once.

Instrument

The researchers were the primary data collection instrument in this phenomenological research. As the initiators of the interview, the researchers played an active role in making decisions about the progress of the interview. The researchers used an interview guide during these series of semi-structured face to face interviews with the informants. The whole conversation was recorded using an audio-recorder, and the researchers abstracted data from the material after the interview is over. In doing so, the researchers analyzed the information that was recorded and translated the interviewee's responses into meaningful descriptions (De Vos 2002).

The researchers showed sensitivity to the uniqueness of each participant throughout the interview. The topic during the conversation could re-open the wounds of the participant's experiences, and thus was approached with an

empathetic understanding (Holloway & Wheeler 1996) which means that the interviewers observed the following attributes as stated by Holloway & Wheeler (1996): good listener, non-judgmental, friendly, open and honest, and flexible. The collected data were then prepared for analysis using Colaizzi process for phenomenological data analysis and then interpreted.

Open-ended questions were utilized. Aside from determining symptoms of depression, questions drew on the subjects' feelings, physical changes, thoughts and behavior patterns for non-passing the licensure examination. Analytical categories emerged from the narratives of the informants which were transcribed and recorded.

Ethical Considerations

The researchers have a moral obligation to strictly consider the rights of the participants who were expected to provide this knowledge (Speziale & Carpenter 2003). The researchers were aware that it is essential to be able to establish trust among these informants/participants and respect them as independent individuals that are capable of making sound decisions. Due to the sensitive nature of this study, possible risks were continuously examined to increase sensitivity and awareness to the informants/participants and not to expose them. The ethical measures in this study include consent, confidentiality and anonymity, privacy, and the right to withdraw from the study (Speziale & Carpenter 2003).

Approval to conduct the study was obtained from these informants. On the other hand, each informant is already over 18 years of age and was provided with an informed consent form, which they signed when they agreed to participate in the study. This form contained information about the purpose and nature of the study.

Furthermore, anonymity, confidentiality, and privacy among informants were also ensured. They were not linked to the data, and their identity were known only by the researchers themselves. The informants were referred to by their coded ID in the study and audio recordings during the face to face interviews were destroyed. Lastly, the participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time if they wished to. This right was explained to them prior to engagement in the study, before the interview (Holloway 2000).

As the informants disclosed their feelings and self-perceptions towards non-passing the LET, the researchers had set aside their engagement, as opposed to Heidegger's interpretive 'hermeneutic' approach, to guide them in their findings, that is, the emergent themes.

Results and Discussions

The findings revealed three (3) emerging themes/phases of experiences- *Attribution* (of the cause to certain factors), *Awareness* (of the feelings) and *Acceptance* (of the situation).

Attribution

There are perceived causes of one's success and failures. The essence of reality and acknowledgment of the causes are made known only by the informants who failed more than twice in the LET. The informants attributed their non-passing to their insufficient preparation, test difficulty and divine will.

Based on the significant statements deduced from the interview, the informants of the study attribute non-passing the LET to divine intervention (believing that teaching was not really meant for them), insufficient preparation (they were not able to pass the exam because they have not prepared well for it), test difficulty (the exam is just too complicated). They attribute non-passing to external factors more than internal. The projection has been integrated to understand the cause of non-passing. This worldview forms part and parcel of the way they perceive things, in this case, the passing of LET. The transference of blame for non-passing the test is manifested as they singled out insufficient preparation, test difficulty, and divine intervention. In this case, one aspect of humanness, reacting with transference, is shown when an emotional reaction is evoked as a result of an unpleasant situation in life.

Realizing the importance of a 'review,' the informants believed that their lack of preparation was one of the reasons for not passing the test. Demands in their workplace, the responsibility towards their children and extended family, not having enough money to register in a review center, and at times taking the test for granted or just simply laziness are identified as the causes for insufficient preparation. The following informants' responses provide the detail of how

attribution, in the form of transference of blame, is recognized as one of the significant reactions towards non-passing the LET.

"I did not have the time to review. I even missed the opportunity to attend the final coaching." (I02, L16-17).

"...At first I did not review, then, the second time I took the test, I still did not review. It was only on the 3rd time that I decided to enroll in a review class but I found it boring. Some friends told me the review was useless, so I quit." (I03-L14-17)

"I can not focus really because I am busy with my work. That is probably the reason why I did not make it. I was not that serious and it made the experience less painful." (I07-L7-12)

"... did not have quality time to review, not even self review.. It is really difficult especially when you are married and have kids." (I06-L48-50), (I07,L148-150)

"...I took the chance. At times I reviewed, then I slept as I reviewed. Even if I had not read that much I took the test, I tried all the possibilities of taking the examination without any review at all." (I02, L 43-45))

"I think it is normal and I understand because I am an accounting major. I did not take the four-year education course. I only earned units in education that qualifies me to take the test. So it is really hard for me to pass the test, but I will try and try again."(I04, L 138-141))

"I am busy with my work, I did not have a review at all so maybe that could be the reason why I did not pass the test or three times now." (I07,L4-5)

Majority of the informants believed that examination questions were indeed very difficult. They found out that most questions had never been discussed during college or even during the review and they thought that items were purposely made difficult so few could make it. Hunter and Barker in Demetriou (2011) opined that when one is in transference, he is not being present but is stuck in the past, thus, acting in reactivity than in authenticity. In their recollections, it was revealed that:

“There are questions in MAPEH like how many times should a hair be combed and how long should we brush our teeth. The most difficult part is the test in the area of specialization/major. The exam questions include identifying the composers, eg. Sitsiritsit, and the year it was composed... then there are so many songs in the world. The coverage in MAPEH is wide-ranging. You have Music with all the composers, year of composition, then PE with all the rules in every ballgame and Health and Arts topics. There are four components to study. For me, those who passed are really lucky. I always think that it is by chance that they pass.” (I-03)

“...I had my review but nothing came out during the test. I do not know where the items come from.” (I-07)

“I had many reviewers, but the items are really difficult. (I-03)

Apart from owing non-passing to insufficient preparation and test difficulty, the informants also believed that ‘passing the LET’ is not for them yet. Passing is a divine providence, that everything happens for a reason.

“Everything is up God. I slept early and went to church before I proceeded to the testing center. I finished the test ahead of time, I found it a bit easy especially in the major subjects. I asked for divine intervention and every time I learned that again I did not pass, I just told myself that God has not given it to me yet.” (I-02)

“As I took the test, I asked God to grant my prayer. Only God knows...He said we just have to do our best and He will do the rest. I thought I could make it but maybe it was not really for me to pass.” (I-03)

“...I did everything like praying and calling all the saints. I even went to Simala and Carmelite Sisters.” (I-05)

“...Not my time yet. I know when I pray I should also study. But God knows I have also my family and children and my work. It is up to Him for He knows my needs. (I-07)

The informant’s narratives provide support to the personalization of their world and the unique way of rationalizing their experiences of non-passing the LET. This is their version of reality and it is not for others to know the essence of their reality. Such interfacing in the world is totally dependent on one’s senses since interaction is affected by one’s previous experience and perceptions of these experiences such as in the case of non-passing the licensure examination.

Whilst the informants have cited attributions for non-passing, Heider and Rotter in Zellner (n.d.) traced external as well as internal causes of success and failure. These include skill (ability), luck (chance), effort and task difficulty. Considerably, Weiner in Demetriou, (2011). purported that two of these factors are internal to the person (ability and effort) and the other two are external (luck and task difficulty). Both types of perceived causes are exemplified in the informants' responses when asked about the reason for non-passing in the Licensure Examination, thus, the emergence of the theme-Attribution. Attribution theorists investigate the perception of causality, or the judgment of why a particular incident occurred.

Closely akin to the Attribution Theory of Weiner, the concept of factors affecting one's achievement is evident as the informants disclosed their reasons of not passing the LET. There is a significant relationship between the informants' self-concept and the test result and the causal attributions of non-passing determine their affective reaction to their failure. As espoused by Weiner in his theory of attribution, achievement and failure are traceable to either controllable or non-controllable factors. When one scores high, he/she readily attributes that to controllable, internal factors, such as abilities and effort. On the other hand, when the results are not favorable, one forms the concept that such is the result of uncontrollable, external factors of luck and task difficulty. The self-concept that was formed after the result leads to the transference of blame.

Prevarication is one thing a person may never learn to outgrow completely. Seltzer (2013) maintained that projecting our mistakes, or misdeeds, onto something else is a psychological defense. It is of man's nature to strive for survival and to avoid pain. As such, one may resort not to fully accept responsibility by displacing his perceptions to other, in this case, to other external

factors like test difficulty and divine intervention. Whitbourne (2011) termed this as emotional displacement, that which makes it much easier to live with ourselves because we can point to something or someone else as responsible for our misery. This form of psychological defenses permits us to avoid upsetting, shameful or anxiety-laden feelings. This will lead to our non-development of the emotional resources necessary to combat any shortcomings, failures, and losses along the way or even the strength to cope with all of them.

Psychologists defined projection as a defense mechanism that people subconsciously employ to cope with painful feelings or emotions. In this study, the informants projected and attributed their undesirable feelings and emotions of non-passing the LET onto external factors rather than admitting that they are held responsible for the test result. Attribution is a way of defending oneself against unpleasant emotions. The blame was not at all on them.

Awareness

Awareness or emotional awareness means knowing what feelings are present in one's self at a given moment. It is the ability to recognize or identify one's emotions and being able to differentiate between them and identify the causes of such feelings. It is conceptualized as a cognitive skill that varies between individuals in the degree to which it has developed (Lane et al., 2011).

People differ from one another in their typical level of emotional awareness. It is also manifested in the informants' self-awareness of what they feel right after they know that they did not pass the LET. According to psychologists, self-awareness of one's emotions have different levels namely: Knowing the feeling is present; Acknowledging the feeling; Identifying the feeling; Accepting the feeling; Reflecting on the feeling and Forecasting feelings. These levels were also seen based on the several responses of the informants in this study.

The first level of emotional awareness is knowing when feelings are present in one's self. One becomes "aware" of the feeling when one first thinks about it or realizes that one feels something at that moment. It is manifested when some of the informants mentioned about having mixed emotions and not being able to understand what it is that he is feeling at that moment.

"At first, I can't sleep and I had so many questions that I do not know what I really feel."

(I-01)

"...I had mixed feelings after I failed the LET the first time." (I-02, 04,05)

"...I didn't understand what I feel at first." I-03,

This awareness that a "feeling" is present is then followed by one's acknowledgment of that "feeling." At first, one may not know what the feeling exactly is, but if it is acknowledged, then one has taken the next step. Nature has given people a sophisticated guidance system in one's feelings. The negative feelings, for example, call people's attention to things which are not healthy for them. These negative feelings are somewhat a way to inform people that they are out of balance. If one feels lonely, for example, one needs more connection with other people.

"... I had a heavy feeling. (I-02)

"I just cried hard. ..It was hurting." (I-01,02, 03)

"I felt frustrated and sad and lost my motivation." (I-05, 06)

The literature on emotional intelligence points out that "feelings" direct people to what is essential to think. Through thought, these feelings can point to the causes of the negative emotions and possible solutions. But if one fails to acknowledge his or her negative feelings, he or she will not be able to focus his or her attention on the problem that needs to be solved. Many people try to stop themselves from feeling their negative emotions, however, this is not the case among the informants.

After acknowledging that they (the informants) have felt something knowing that they have not passed the LET, they cried. They admitted that they were hurt at first. The more specific one is in identifying his or her feelings, the more accurate he or she can be in determining the unmet emotional need and taking appropriate corrective action. Like anything else, the more people practice identifying emotions, the better they get at quickly selecting the correct name for the feeling. Each time they identify an emotion and

assign a label to it, the brain's cognitive and emotional systems work together to remember the emotion, the circumstances and the name for the emotion (Lane, et al., 2011). By beginning to think about one's feeling, he or she is also taking the next step towards solving the problem. When one's thoughts are clear, this helps him/her feel more in control and empowered.

The informants, after being able to acknowledge the bad feelings they have and after crying it out, they then were able to identify what it is are they feeling – sadness, anger, frustration, shame or guilt. This is the next level of awareness – "accepting the feeling."

"I felt the insecurities." (I-01, 02)

"I felt pain and pitied myself." (I-03)

"...I was frustrated, sad, and I lost my motivation." (I-05, 06)

"I asked why it happened to me." (I-04)

Similarly, once people have felt, acknowledged and identified their feelings, the next step in emotional awareness and in benefitting from the natural value of emotions is to accept the feeling. Sometimes one might think that he or she shouldn't feel the way he or she does. Such thoughts are the result of beliefs which have been programmed into people by other people.

Reflecting on one's feelings could come at two different levels of emotional awareness. First, at a low level of emotional awareness people might only reflect on their feelings after the fact. One might lay awake at night, for example, and think about an event during the day and her or his feelings about that event. It might help lead one to identify one's feelings sooner in the future. "Reflecting on the feeling" is the next level of awareness which is also reflected in the informants' responses.

"I pondered on why my scores got lower when it wasn't my first time to take the exam anymore, compared to those fresh graduates who immediately passed." (I-07)

"I couldn't sleep at first. I kept questioning why others passed and not me." (I-01)

Moreover, the more people are aware of their feelings, the better chance they have of predicting how they will feel in the future. It can be thought of as "forecasting one's feelings" – the last level. One can improve this ability by considering how he or she will feel if he or she choose one course of action as opposed to another.

"...I tried to justify the negative feelings I have to stop the pain. But deep inside, I really have wished to pass." (I-03)

"I just focused my thinking on the fact that I almost passed the board." (I-01)

"I get sad but I can't do anything about it, I already did my best." (I-02)

The ability to forecast feelings extends to other people as well. In other words, when one becomes more aware of his or her feelings and develop a more exceptional ability to predict these feelings, it is more likely he or she will be able to predict how someone else will feel. It naturally leads to being more considerate of others. Simply put, as one gets in touch with his or her feelings he or she will realize that what does not feel right about him/her probably won't feel right to others.

The informants of this study were able to undergo the different levels of self-awareness of emotions mentioned above. Indeed, going through and getting over an experience, especially a negative one, takes time. These informants were able to go back to their previous experience and recall the emotions they have had. They let the researchers journey with them as they share their story of overcoming an adverse event in their life which is - not passing the LET.

Acceptance

Acceptance is the willingness of a person to tolerate a difficult or unpleasant situation that they are currently experiencing or to agree with the idea that is currently happening which is somehow unusual as to making it hard to accept it (Oxford, 2018). Through enough ample time to deal with the fact that they did not pass the examination, the informants reach the point of accepting the reality that they really did not make it through, hence numerous experience supported the result of acceptance, such as help through prayer from divine intervention, time to recover

and accept the situation, awareness that there are also those who did not pass, support from family, and optimism.

“Yes, I told the Lord that maybe its really not for me, there’s nothing I can do. If I’ll just take it that I’ll insist to what you give me Lord that its really not for me then I’m unfortunate. Then I really accepted it. ...Nothing. Whatever you give to me Lord I will accept it. If I’ll be removed of service from DepEd because of that, I will accept it, something like that.” (I-01)

“I’m not saying that I’m losing hope. In everything God has a reason.” (I-01)

“They’re more bitter than me. Mine is to thin positive, I’m just thinking that God has prepared something for me that I can say “Patience is a virtue” at least I will no longer self-pity, I’m now forgetting that the board exam? It’s no longer for me. For me to whatever happened and to whatever gave me in the long run I just said that I will accept it. Anyways I am very happy now.” (I-01),

“...But maybe God won’t give it to me for now, its not yet for me.” (I-03)

“I never got it maybe God won’t give it to me. Like I have no choice to to take it positively just for our Lord.” (I-05)

“Maybe next time I will but if God will never give it to me then let it be but I never regret about what happened because I’m still having my job.” (I-07)

The responses of the informants imply that faith or guidance from divine intervention keeps them going, to accept and continue striving in getting the better result next time, not only talking about the result of the exam but also to almost any endeavours they face in their life, seemingly the foundation of their lives is based on their religion and beliefs.

Accepting the situation (Saltzman 2017) connects to the respondents answer that there's nothing that they can do to change it, understanding that it's beyond their control so but they have to embrace the reality that it is not for them. Giving credits to the effort of giving all they have during the exam also helps in soothing them. The informants have

highlighted that they did their review and did everything they could to answer the exam. Other informant diverted their attention towards other responsibilities with their families and thought about success in their family instead. Other reasons for acceptance also involve knowing that they have different responsibilities and functions in their current jobs or family. Some even say that they're not alone in the road of failure, that they're not the only one who didn't pass. All these reasons gave them a sense of acceptance of what had happened.

“And then I was encouraged that next time, next time until I reached the point that I’m giving up, maybe it’s never for me. They were worried. Even I was also worried but there’s nothing I could do, not anymore, I did everything like really did my best, I reviewed.” (I-01)

“Maybe it’s not for me, there are other takers, my sibling is also having 12th attempt in the exam.” (I-03)

“Yes, I understand. I really can’t force that I will get it because I’m not even Education graduate. I’m not Education I’m an accounting graduate and its never my line and at least I’m really thankful to the fact that I get the job because that principal really hired me.” I-04)

“My thinking is very positive. It’s really okay, and I think it’s not yet time.” (I-04)

“Yes, I divert it to my children instead, so there my child studying in Cebu Normal University, I really told her that she needs to pass her exam, I really went with her when taking the entrance exam.” (I-06)

“It’s normal that it won’t be given yet...Yes, I really said to myself how is this happening that I study but still nothing, then I said it’s not really for me if given then it will be given if not then I’m fine with it because I still have my job though...Well, it’s nothing to me, really, I just told my family that maybe it’s yet meant for me, but don’t give up hope because we’re still alive” (I-07)

“That’s normal, it’s nothing for me, for me it’s not yet my time.” (I-01)

Despite the burden of failure, optimism or the power positive thinking contributes to the unending pursuit of greatness among these test takers. Optimistic of not only passing the exam someday but there are still many things in life that they need to enjoy and cherish. This positive side of things helps them recover and move on despite the downfall. For them, happiness comes in many forms. In every despair they learn to accept and continue with being hopeful.

Moreover, the informants believe that they can redeem themselves someday that there is always a second chance and a second take. They are hopeful that the next try will not disappoint them. On the other side of the coin, few of them have given up even with second, third, or fourth chance yet nothing, but good thing they accepted that they are not meant to become licensed teachers.

Recommendations

Appropriate and timely support of institutions, family members, and other significant persons helps non-passers to have a positive transition between and through the phases of attribution, awareness, and acceptance. School initiatives and support system mechanisms may be considered to assist the non-passers.

Funding Acknowledgement Statement

This paper is a university-funded research.

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Conclusion

It is an unconscious and human tendency to attribute failure, in all its forms, to some external factors. This emotional displacement makes it easier for non-passers to live with themselves charging others (people or circumstance) as responsible for what has happened to them. From the direct attribution comes the awareness that life has been made more beautiful with all its challenges and that there are more reasons to be glad than sad. With such a realization, a more profound sense of acceptance culminates the 'not so good' experience. However, due to the unique experiences of every person, the pace in trudging from one phase to the other takes a different time.

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