



Research Article

BELIEFS AND PRACTICES IN TAKING LICENSURE EXAMINATION FOR TEACHERS AS SPECTRUM OF TEACHERS' MORAL PRINCIPLES: A CASE PROBE

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 13th July, 2018

Received in revised form 11th August, 2018

Accepted 8th September, 2018

Published online 28th October, 2018

Key words:

Beliefs, Practices, Licensure Examination for Teachers, Moral Principles

ABSTRACT

The study employed Appreciative Inquiry framework to have an in-depth investigation in the personal lives of the participants and to draw connections between their beliefs and practices in taking Licensure Examination for Teachers and how these superstitions reflect and affect their moral principles. Specifically, it aimed to 1) determine the superstitious beliefs followed by the examinees before, during, and after taking the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET); 2) determine the positive and negative impact of these superstitions in the aspect of taking LET; and, 3) identify the effects of these superstitions in the characters and principles of the teachers. Semi-structured interview and focus group discussion were used and the data-sources were triangulated to come-up with a stronger analysis. Audit trail and member checking were followed to ensure that there were no biases in the interpretation of the data and to establish the validity of the results. Findings revealed that the student examinees followed different superstitious beliefs before, during and after the exam which have positive and negative effects. The motive of avoiding failure in the examination predominates over the motive of achieving success. The positive and negative effects of superstitions vary from one person's experience to another. Moreover, the assertion and personal disposition to pass the exam became the product of student examinees' projection. The superstitious notions were initiated to discard the student examinees' fears and to safeguard their emotional sphere against negative feelings and any untoward possibilities. Meanwhile, in the development of moral principle, the student examinees' family, peers and the society are important factors in the establishment of their belief system which later on reflects the moral principles they uphold.

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INTRODUCTION

Filipinos are well known in terms of strong faith and belief to the supernatural being. They have special ways of making things possible. This could be traced in the roots of their glorious history, rich culture, and religion. If caught in difficult situations, God becomes their last resort. Others would have their ways if they would like something to happen. This established belief system is true to people's culture. Even long before, Filipinos already have their belief system and practices if they want something to happen or even when praising God. If one wished to have a good harvest, there will be offerings to Gods and Goddesses of harvest (Mendez, 2012). Rituals and other means to praise their Gods are conducted to ask special favor. In return, festivities are made to celebrate the favor granted. In modern times, these beliefs and practices are still observed. Amidst modernization and continuous shift of time, the remnants of the past still live to most of the Filipinos

particularly on their beliefs and practices in asking for special favor. For instance, if one will travel in far places, you will see a person making a sign of the cross, a practice ingrained to Filipinos to ask for protection and safe travel from God. The Warays will offer the blood of a chicken or pig upon the construction of an edifice in the belief that it will make the infrastructure become sturdier (Romero, 2010). While for Bicolanos, they believe that once you build a two-storey house, the stairs must follow the oro-moro-plata or the thirteen steps because they believe that it will bring good fortunes. These superstitions were passed on from one generation to another and still being practiced nowadays amidst the advent of modern technologies.

According to Phillips (2007), superstition is an acceptable term in a contemplative type of philosophy, which let our understandings of the world become relative. It is a product of fear of the unknown rooted from lack of confidence and ignorance of truth. It is also described as the obsessive belief to signs, omens, and charms. There are superstitions that provide a miracle which is often referred to as supernatural. This is believed to bring luck or otherwise. It can predict future events by means of the specific unrelated prior events. Damisch

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(2016) said that superstitious, though may distort reality has its advantages. It offers a sense of control and a sense of meaning, two psychological benefits that logic and science cannot always provide. People usually resort to such rituals when they are uneasy, uncomfortable or if they want to perform well. Though superstitious notions may not have a hundred percentage assurances of its effects, people tied their belief to this because it gives them the reason to hold on to something. People delved in superstitious beliefs because it serves as the product of performance and expectations and it creates an impact of likelihood and subsequent satisfaction to those who believe to it (Block and Kramer, 2008). Common people tend to superstition because the result of wisdom and truth are usually difficult and troublesome. To Zald (2014), superstitions refer to the idea that a particular situation is affected by an outside force. This outside force can be a behavior that can attract either the good luck or bad luck. As superstitious beliefs do not have a point of assurance, it may result to positive outcomes or may cause also losses. As it is based on non-causal relationships, the notion of the term varies relatively.

As time went by, superstitions remain prosperous in the country. In the study conducted by Pew Research Center Global Attitudes and Trends (2013), the Philippines ranked 4th among the South-East Asian countries which have a strong faith in superstitions. Its influence is observable in the different fields and is widely practiced both in rural and urban areas. Even students still believe in superstitions which are translated in taking examinations. In the study of Gonzales (2009), he said that student examinees in professional board examinations observe beliefs and practices in taking the exam. His study revealed that these beliefs helped the students reinforce and boost their confidence in passing.

These superstitions do not end to the beliefs and practices alone. It represents a much greater field because it can be attributed to how people build up their principles and values in life. In the study of Reyes (2004), he emphasized that people do not live their lives in moral or ethical isolation but grow up within particular societal and cultural traditions. These traditions are deeply anchored on the beliefs and practices instilled by the society to people which also determine if in what group they belong (Reiss, 1999). As defined by Althof and Berkowitz(2006), morals are human behavior that guides actions whereas morality is the accepted standards drawn from men and ethics describes the theoretical, systematic, and rational reflection upon that human behavior are activated. These moral activities are linked and can be reflected in the beliefs and attitudes that guide human behavior (Rennie, 2007). These morals uphold by a particular person are strongly attached to society, spirituality, and culture (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, 1991). As morals are unique to every person, Renzo (2005) said that it can be shaped by the society where an individual deals with. The belief of a person, whether it is based on truths or baseless notions has a direct link to the morals he also upholds; hence, moral principles are built, supported and sustained by the beliefs and practices observed and followed by individuals as they go along with life. Whatever the undertakings a person is involved with, the beliefs and practices he manifested will reflect the moral principles he possessed.

Because of the foregoing, the researcher is enthralled to draw the connections between the beliefs and practices followed by

the student examinees in taking LET, specifically the superstitions they used and how these beliefs and practices reflect their moral principles as classroom teachers.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study delved in making connections between the beliefs and practices in taking Licensure Examination for Teachers by the student examinees and how these superstitions reflect and affect their moral principles as teachers. Specifically, this research aimed to 1) determine the superstitious beliefs followed by the examinees before, during, and after taking the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET); 2) determine the positive and negative impact of these superstitions in the aspect of taking LET; and, 3) identify the effects of these superstitions in the characters and principles of the teachers.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

This exploratory case study employed Appreciative Inquiry in answering the following questions: Written consent was secured to ensure that the research abided in the ethical standards. As an exploratory case study, this research explored the beliefs and practices followed by the student examinees in taking the LET. Yin (1984) defines exploratory case study as an investigatory research that delves on the exploration of phenomenon within its real-life context; it excavates lived-experiences within the boundaries between phenomenon and context; it tries to explain subject under study that is not clearly evident using multiple sources of evidence. Moreover, Appreciative Inquiry was used as a framework to have an in-depth investigation into the personal lives of the participants. As defined by Anicas (2016), Appreciative Inquiry is a co-evolutionary search of the best-lived experiences to highlight the life-giving forces of respondents/subject of the study. Storytelling and personal narratives coming from the participants served as the primary sources of data. A semi-structured interview was the primary instrument to gather the necessary information about the participants. A separate interview was conducted to their colleagues and they were asked questions to excavate necessary information about the personalities of the participants, especially queries that highlighted the moral principles that each participant upholds. Furthermore, a Focus-Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted to the students of the participants to get information as to how they conduct lessons and deal with their students. These three data-sources were triangulated to come-up with a stronger analysis of the data. Audit trail and member checking were used to ensure that there were no biases in the interpretation of the data and to establish the validity of the results. The data were analyzed using template analysis style and the basic approach of comprehending, synthesizing, theorizing and re-contextualizing to identify common themes and integrating thematic pieces.

Research Participants

The participants of the study were the teachers within one to five years in the service and already passed the Licensure Examination for Teachers. Because of the nature of the research design, only five participants were purposively selected based on their willingness to share their experiences in taking the said exam. Their colleagues and students served also as informants to excavate necessary information about the participants. A written consent was secured to the participants

and informants appertaining to their involvement in the research. Through this, the assurance that the study abided in the ethical standards of research was observed.

Research Instruments

The research instruments primarily included the semi-structured interview and focus group discussion. A semi-structured interview was used to solicit in-depth information coming from the participants. Doyle (2017) defined the semi-structured interview as a kind of natural dialogue in which the interviewer is not bound to follow not a formalized list of questions and open-ended questions are given to draw an in-depth discussion with the interviewee and get a more raw and authentic answers. Moreover, the semi-structured interview allowed the participants to share their personal narratives about the beliefs and practices they observed in taking the LET. It was also used to gather information from their colleagues. A focus group discussion was conducted to the students of the participants to get information on how they conduct lessons with their students. These three data-sources were triangulated to come-up with a stronger analysis of the data. Audit trail and member checking were used to ensure that there were no biases in the interpretation of the data and to establish the validity of the results.

through recordings. Appreciative inquiry was used in framing the questions that were raised to the interviewees. These questions were crafted for the purpose of excavating information regarding their experiences and observed beliefs and practices in taking the LET. A separate interview was conducted to their colleagues and a focus group discussion was given to their students. Its purpose was to gather relevant information appertaining to the participants. The three data sources were triangulated. Then, analysis and interpretation of the data followed.

Data Analysis

With the qualitative nature of this study, the data were analyzed using in-depth analysis grounded by Appreciative Inquiry Framework. The tenets of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) and the adoption of Marquez’s Model (2011) in analyzing case study were used in the analysis of the data. Marquez’s Model observes six stages which are cyclical in nature. It starts with 1): analyzing the raw data; 2) Profiling of the data/Sorting-out; 3)Forming Thematic Index; 4) Searching the thematic index; 5) Arriving at extended description; and 6; Synthesis of the Extended Description.

Table 1 Superstitious beliefs followed by the Student Examinees before, during, and after taking the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET)

Parti-cipants	Before thethe examination	During the examination	After the examination
#1	“...before the examination, nag puntaakosaiba’tibang churches from Sipocot to Naga City, and there I asked for His divine providence...”	“...funny as it is, pero I wore red underwear, mostly kasingnakapasaang sabi it brings good fortune daw...”	“...while waiting for the results, still I keep my faith intact...”
#2	“...aside sapagreview, I kept on visiting the church and yung pencils naginamitko ay blessed ng pari...I also asked guidance ni God kasi I know nasyalang namamakakatulonsa akin paramatawaidkoang exam...”	“...during exam naman, nauoakong maayos at hindinalumingon-lingon at siguron and undin yung pagdarasal...I also brought with me yung rosary naigay pa nilola”	“...after, sinipakoyung upuan at sinabikong hindina akobabalikdito...it changed also my dealings with my students, kasi bait-baitanako nun, good karamaikanga attracts good results also...”
#3	“...basta nga naalakonon, before ako mag take ng LET, nag simbalangako at humingintulog kay God...Walanamanakomng particular nabagay nasinunod bago mag exam, bukod sa review, prayers lang talaga and faith kay God...”	“...sinunod ko yung sinabini mama namagsuot daw ng red na underwear at maglagay ng pisosapatos kasi siwerte daw yun at pampaaalis ng kaba... pero ang nakapatanggal talagang kabako noon ay yung nakakita akong white butterfly saloob ng room, parang gumaanyung pakiramdam ko at anggaanlang sa feeling habang nagsasagot akong mga questions...”	“...mas lalo akom hng aging pala-simba...mas pressure palakasimaghinatang result kesa during exam mismo...nagirinakong mabait samgaestudyant eko, and samgakapatidko, which is something unusual daw sabinila mama (laughs)...”
#4	“...so yun nga before, delivering a petition mass aside from it yun nangayung pupuntakamunasamgasimba hanparamakapag-ask for help...”	“...angginamit kong mga lapis ay yung ginamit ng friend kosa LET, passer din sya...while answering, what I have in mind is to finish the exam no matter what, paghindekoalamang sagot, sabikokay God, bahalanasya (laughs)...”	“...pagkatapos ng exam pumunta or bumalik nalang din akos asimbahan to ask for something nalang, kung anobayung magiging resultang exam I’ll just be accepting it...”
#5	“...lagi ako nun nagsisimba...a day before exam, nilagay ko yung picture ni Mother of Perpetual Help sa reviewer kotapos nilagay sa aila limngunanko...pina tasahankorinyung mga pencils naginamit kodoonsa prof naminna nag review saaminsa LET...”	“...dala-dalako sabulsa ko yung rosary napina-blessed ni mama durig Penafrancia...paghindikoalamang sagot, binubulong konalanga rosary na i-guide akonamakapasaparin...”	“...bait-baitanako samga students ko, bawal magalit (laughs)...hindi din akotumigil mag samba habang hinhihintayang results...”

Research Procedure

Foremost, the researcher gave an informed consent letter to the research participants and to the informants. Then the researcher conducted the interview and the focus group discussion. The five students were asked to share their personal narratives about their experiences in taking the LET through storytelling. The researcher documented the data

Through appreciative inquiry, participants were able to share their experiences in taking the Licensure Examination for Teachers. Moreover, the questions were framed based on the goal or information that the research would like to get. All the gathered data were transcribed and coded. The information was analyzed using template analysis style and the basic approach of comprehending, synthesizing, theorizing and re-

contextualizing to identify common themes and integrating thematic pieces.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The superstitious beliefs are highly related to the supernatural thinking and its magical notion in the social consciousness of people was prevalent even long before the development of humankind. Magical thought is the belief that one has the ability to control and affect a certain phenomenon by means of using supernatural means (Zad, 2014). Moreover, this type of belief system is motivated by the idea that a person's thoughts and ways of thinking bring effects that cannot be accounted for by the logic or science. As a product of magical thinking, its essential elements are usually in the forms of signs, rituals, and incantations that prevent misfortunes, failure, or bad luck, and can positively generate success and profit (Farley, 2015). To evade the bad luck and gain positive results, the superstitious person engages in such activities.

Superstitious notions are widely observed among college students even nowadays; most prevalent are the beliefs relating to the ordeal of taking the exams. Students used superstitious belief to perceive the idea of passing the exams in a way that finds connections of cause and effect where there are no

Anicas (2016) to gather relevant information from the participants, the results were as followed.

The results disclosed the different superstitious beliefs and practices followed by the student examinees in taking the exam. Each one of them has shared his/her experiences upon practicing superstitions and how it gives them the confidence that they will pass the examination. Before taking the LET, a common practice was observed. All the student examinees asked guidance from God for them to pass the exam. This Christian tradition in asking the favor to pass a certain examination has been found one common practice that made student examinees be positive in taking the LET. In the study conducted by Gonzales (2008), he revealed that people who observed superstitions were the ones who have a strong Christian faith. Christianity, according to him, shapes the way on how people perceive and construct reality. His idea is supported by Buendia (2009) who emphasized that faith to God is a behavior that is very much a part of Filipinos' day to day experiences. Filipinos strong belief to God brings a feeling of security and safety amidst troubles and tribulations in life. Moreover, this belief system brings positive outlook and mindset that any situation, no matter how difficult will turn-out good.

Table 2 Positive and Negative Effects of Superstitious beliefs to Student Examinees

Positive Effects	Negative Effects
<p>1. Source of Motivation</p> <p>-siguro, because of those beliefs, I was motivated to do extra effort...I guess, it helped me to review more because it motivated me to work harder</p> <p>-...si mama ang nag sabisa akin nakailanganko daw mag suotng red undies, well to think nameronakongpampaswerteikanga, I was positive in answering the exam thinking that I will pass</p> <p>- I must admit, the exam was hard and I think yung beliefs and practices served as booster ko to do well...lucky charm baikanga</p> <p>2. Source of Hope and Strength</p> <p>-Ng pag-take kong LET, sabikobahalanasi God, sabingadiba do your part and let God do the rest. I did my part, kaya si God naangbahala. I just brought my rosary that time and solemnly pray while answering the questions nahindikotalagaalam (laughs)</p> <p>- Nahirapanakosa major and I wasn't really sure if mapapasakoang LET, peronoong may nakitaakong white butterfly saloobng examination room, I was relieve...parang may it brought good vibes telling me that everything will be ok..</p> <p>- After the test, I was confident namapapasakoang LET...I claimed it, the funny thing is, I was using the pencil used by my friend ngpagkuhanyang LET (laughs)...siguro, swertetalagaangpaggamitng pencil nay un, it was handed daw kasisakanyang examinee din napumasa din sa LET, that means naikatlonaakonagumamitng pencil nay un (laughs)</p> <p>3. Motives of achieving success and self-assertion</p> <p>-Afterng exam, di natalagaakolumingonsa room (laughs)...and I claimed napapasaakosa LET</p> <p>-I was holding my rosary all throughout the exam, so I know that I was guided and that I will pass the LET in the end...</p> <p>-Yung pisanasapatosko, paranumpektokasiyungkabakonabawas which helped me to have a clear mind and have a focus in taking the exam</p> <p>-Though alamkongwala naming relationship yungpagsuotkong red na undies sa exam, in the end ginawakoparin...walana,angmasama kung i-try diba (laughs)...I guess it helped me to also look forward for a positive result...</p>	<p>1. Limits and Regulates Behaviour</p> <p>-Noongpakataposng exam, kailanganmagingmabaitkasalahat (laughs)...kaya kahitgalitnaako, di pwedengmagalitsaesudyantekasibaka di akopumasa (laughs)</p> <p>-I was afraid nabumagsak, kaya lingo-lingoakonagsisimba at nagpapamisa noon...I was even teased by my friends nabakamalampasna daw akosalangit (laughs)...but now, di naganunngdati, daminakasinggawainsa school</p> <p>2. Objectifying Luck and Future Results</p> <p>-Sabikasinila, angpagsuot daw ng red na undies during exam ay swerte, kaya nagsuotako...walanamanmasama kung i-try</p> <p>-Makakapasa daw kapagginamitmoangmagamitng mga nag-exam at nakapasanasa LET...kaya naghanapakong lapis naginamitnangnakapasasa LET</p> <p>-Paghindikoalamangagot, ying rosary nalanganghinahawakankoparatulunganakomakapag decide ngsagot</p> <p>-...when I saw the butterfly, it gave me a positive vibes namakakapasaako</p> <p>3. Creation of False Reality and the "bahalana" mentality</p> <p>-...sabinilakapagnagsimbakangwalanghinto until angarawng LET, God will favour and help you to pass the LET...I did that</p> <p>-The exam was not easy, most of the questions ay walasanireviewko kaya sabiko, bahalanasi God kung anongmaging result ng exam...</p> <p>-angsabikonalangasariliko that time, I already did my best, if makapasaako, I'll be happy, if not, God has his plans</p>

objectively discernible relations between the idea of passing and the actual event of taking the exams. Amidst this, superstitious beliefs serve as a driving force to an individual to act in accordance with his thoughts, in whatever endeavor he is involved with (Sebastian, 2015). However, these beliefs have positive and negative effects. This idea is what transcribed in the study. Applying the tenets of Appreciative Inquiry by

Consequently, in the study conducted by Navarro (2007) about the faith and religious beliefs of the Filipinos, he stressed out that Filipinos deep faith in God is due to their innate religious belief which enables them to understand and openly embrace reality in the context of God's will plan. Filipinos' lives are closely linked with religion (Jocano, 2000). It is tangible and

indispensable part of everyday life; thus, prayer becomes an important part of Filipinos' lives.

Meanwhile, the superstitious beliefs followed during the time of taking the LET were: 1) wearing of red underwear, 2) carrying the rosary in the pocket, 3) putting a coin in the shoe, and 4) not looking back at the venue of the exam. These beliefs were followed by the student examinees in the hope that it will bring them good fortune. According to one of the participants, she wore red underwear because it was the advice given to her by a friend who also took and passed the exam. This was also the same reason given by another participant why she used the pencils given to her by a passer who also took the same examination. One participant said that if you look back to the examination venue, it will bring a bad luck and you might take again the exam in the same place; hence, to prevent this one should no longer look at the examination room. These superstitions also showed how the student examinees attached meaning to objects and material things. According to Mendizabal (2013), Filipinos are fond of objectifying the idea of luck, faith, and fortune. Objects have meaning and the language that these objects represent must be understood by people.

Superstitious beliefs were also observed even after the exam. The answers of the participants coincide in the idea that after taking the LET, they need to do good in order to attract positive results. One participant said that she needed to be kind because it might bring bad luck if she acted otherwise. Other participants said that they became steadfast in waiting for the result and they did not stop praying not until the result was revealed. This way of thinking shows that the participants believed in the idea of karma. According to Smith (2003) karma creates a corresponding energy that comes back to people in some form or another. He said that it is manifested on how people treat others; see their own role in the world; use resources; and develop their characters. Bertiz (2011) underscored that in order to get the things that people want they need to embody those things. This belief of being good to attract good result after taking the exam is true to the law of attraction which states that whatever a person gives out is also what he/she will receive, whether it is positive or negative.

The data showed the positive and negative effects of superstitious beliefs to the student examinees. As students get into superstitious notions, they are guided by the desire to foresee possible outcomes and the possible troubles as well. The examinees were prompted by curiosity about the future results and by the desire to pass the exam. In taking examinations, Lorenzo (2005) said that students would like to have an outlook of their fate in the form of signs as to the probable outcomes of their undertaking, and also they are motivated by idea to prepare themselves appropriately for a favorable or an unfavorable outcome. The same scenario was observed in the participants as they shared their experiences in taking the LET. Positive and negative effects of these beliefs resurfaced as they shared their narratives. Their answers were transcribed and coded and applying axial coding, there were three themes develop for the positive effects. These are 1) Source of Motivation, 2) Source of Hope and Strength, and 3) Motives for achieving success and self-assertion. A participant said that the beliefs he followed helped him to be motivated in reviewing for the exam. Another said that believing in superstitious beliefs can do no harm, to her it served as a booster to think positive and claim that she will pass the exam.

Superstitious beliefs also served as a source of hope and strength. A participant said that whenever the questions were difficult to answer, his last resort was his rosary. Another participant said that he prayed solemnly so that she will have a clear mind to answer the difficult questions. Lastly, the positive effect of superstitious beliefs is that it served as a motive of achieving success and self-assertion. After taking the exam, the participants said that they were confident to pass the LET. According to them, the superstitious they followed helped them to look forward to a positive result of the exam. The result of the present study is in consonance with the study made by Rein, et al. (2010) wherein he said that superstitious belief allows an individual to assess the different manifestations of his/ her activity. The individuals' actions are translated into ways and manners that are essential in order to achieve the optimal result. Moreover, Chan (2006) emphasized that superstitious ritual activity entails the perception and understanding of objective reality or the surrounding world and of one's subjective inner world. It only means that superstitious notions help to comprehend scenarios that are situated in a negative emotional sphere like bad luck and failure and help the individual feels at ease. He also asserted that due to its predictive function, it can make person hopes and predicts positive events that are in store in the future.

These narratives from the participants only showed how the superstitious beliefs helped them in taking the LET. Aware that there was no connection between these beliefs and the aspect of taking the exam, they still followed and used it as they took the LET. The findings coalesced in the study conducted by Mira (2013) titled "Faith Narratives: A Tale of Filipinos' Religiosity" wherein she revealed the power of a belief system that Filipinos have. She said that students who are taking exams observed and followed rituals for them to pass. She posited that this is attributed to the ways of thinking passed down by the student's great-grandparents down to their generation. Moreover, Cayetano (2010) said that superstitious beliefs hold a magical power that can motivate a person to give his /her best in whatever endeavor he/she is involved with. This connection cannot be explained by science or logic, yet is understood, accepted and followed by people. Furthermore, superstitious behavior has been found to increase the possibility of good result as it was found to increase performance (Damisch et al., 2010). Damisch et al. (2010) asserted that "good luck" creates a positive perception on the part of a person; thus, motivates him to do and give his best which eventually lead to the increase of performance. This manner activates superstitious notions through the idea of luck and the increase of performance leads to have better results.

However, these beliefs also brought negative effects. Based on the student examinees' narrative, three major themes were identified, namely: 1) Limits and Regulates Behaviour, 2) Objectifying Luck and Future Results, and 3) Creation of False Reality and the "bahalana" mentality. As a form to limit and regulate behavior, the student examinees were limited to do things in the belief that once they do not conform to what people think is right, they will fail in the exam. Though for some, this might sound positive and beneficial, the result is otherwise. Pines (2005) said that free will is what sets humans achieve their maximum potentials. It is within the ability to do things freely that makes humans unique and different from other creatures and to limit one's actions due to outside force entails failing to functionalize this gift.

As the superstitious beliefs limit and regulate human behavior, it draws the demarcation line for the student examinees to be watchful in their behavior which later leads them to create a false reality. The creation of false reality happens when student examinees think that superstitious belief can transcend their desire into something real. Such belief becomes bothersome because the expectations that are not realized will lead to disappointments. Moreover, a negative notion was observed as the student examinees related the idea of luck and good fortunes to objects. Objectifying luck and good fortunes is a negative phenomenon attributed to lack of confidence, low self-esteem, and fear of the unknown (Wales, 2002). This is in parallel with the study of Mora (2001) where she stressed out that the need for safety turns out to be objectified in superstitious notions. According to her, it happens when a person tries to evade anxiety, doubt and fear in order to gain tranquillity. Thu (2005) corroborated this idea when she said that the possibility of achieving satisfaction by means of constructive methods is laid on superstitions instilled by those persons closest to him. The objectification of luck and future results serve as a negative reinforcement and the belief in signs and other forms are fostered by the individual's thinking that these omens have a direct link with the events it predicted; hence, the process becomes part of a person's life amidst its uncertain results.

Consequently, the findings of the present study are in parallel with that of Jones (2009) wherein he revealed that superstitions have its negative function which is a controlling one. According to him, when an individual acts on superstitions, he is changing and regulating his own behavior which later controls his behavior and act based on his own make-believed standard caused by fear. In the study of Jocano (2005) regarding the anthologies of the faithful, he pointed that the "bahalana" mentality shows a defeatist resignation which is treated negatively as a reservoir of psychic energy, a form of psychological prop negation that there are things that cannot be realized during hard times and the best thing to do is let the situation rules over what cannot be controlled. He asserted that this type of mentality occurs during the times of uncertainty.

As a whole, the superstitious beliefs have a two-fold path: positive and negative effects. The motive of avoiding failure in the examination predominates over the motive of achieving success. The positive effects of superstitious beliefs also served as its negative effects and its impact varies from a person's experience to another. Moreover, it is reasonable to conclude that superstitious beliefs are often based on irrational and unexplainable fears. Thus, assertion and personal disposition to pass the exam became the product of student examinees' projection. The superstitious beliefs were fuelled by the aim to discard the student examinees' fears of unknown and to safeguard their emotional sphere against negative feelings and any untoward possibilities.

Effects of Superstitious beliefs to the Development of Moral Principles

Superstitions, as part of one's culture, represent the ways of thinking and living of a person in the community where he is part of. The formation of this belief system is wired to how a person develops and forms his character. Realo (2002) pointed

out that a person's view about the world, how he perceives what is happening to his surrounding, is a by-product on how he was molded by outside forces. These forces according to him pertaining to the immediate circle that surrounds the person. They are the family, peers and the community that helped develop a person's perception of the world. Reyes (2011) stressed out that belief system, as a personal reflection of one's character, can help determine one's personality. She said that one acts according to what a person believes in; hence, in order to understand why a person shows a particular behavior, one needs to consider his/her ways of thinking. Reyes (2011) emphasized that people live their lives in moral or ethical growth as they deal with societal and cultural traditions. Morals are human behaviors and morality is its practical activity and these moral activities are linked and can be reflected beliefs and attitudes that guide human behavior (Rennie, 2007). These morals upheld by a particular person are strongly attached to the society and culture (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, 1991). Whatever a person holds to himself, either one that is factual or baseless beliefs has a direct link to the morals he also upholds; hence, moral principles are built, supported and sustained by the beliefs and practices observed and followed by individuals as they go along with life. Whatever the undertakings a person is involved with, the beliefs and practices he manifested will reflect the moral principles he possessed.

According to Beck and Forstmeier (2007), humans learn through observing their surroundings; thus, they are susceptible in superstitious notions. When learning superstitions, humans think that any outcome is random to the odds and that the outcome was more than chance (Beck & Forstmeier, 2007). They explained that an individual analyzes situations similar to statistical process. For instance, if a person gained a positive result in his performance and he attributed this outcome to something unrelated to the performance, this would then create the superstition. The findings of the study showed the different superstitious beliefs observed and followed by the student examinees in taking the Licensure Examination for Teachers. It is important to note that these beliefs are not just a product of imagination but it upholds a social function which reflects the moral principle and character formation of these future teachers (Davies, 2009).

In the findings, the most prevalent answer was the belief in the supernatural. As a Catholic country known for its strong religiosity, Filipinos' belief in God is an established norm grounded by faith. Even long before, Filipinos day to day activities are always attributed to God and whatever endeavors one is involved with, it requires a special favor from Him. Apparently, those who took the examination have a common answer saying that when they took the exam, they prayed and asked for divine providence. Others brought rosary in the belief that it will help them in answering difficult questions. These beliefs reflect one moral principle of the examinees and that is being religious. According to Mayhem (2014), religiosity as a moral behavior guides a person to do what is right and avoid evil based on the standard set by the idea of what is acceptable from not, a natural law whose universality is known to everyone. This moral principle by the student examinees is also observed on how they interact and deal with their students. Based on the answers given by their students,

they said that their teachers do not start and end the lesson without praying. This simple act, as common practice in every Filipino classroom, shows how the student examinees put into practice their religious beliefs. Moreover, based on the narratives given by the students, they said that their teacher is fond of integrating values in their lessons.

The students even stressed out that these lessons are not just those that can be found on the books but rather lessons and values that can be applied in day-to-day living. Consequently, the co-teachers of the student examinees shared their stories about the personalities of their colleagues. One informant said that teacher Jayne*** came from a religious family and every time that they will talk about a certain issue, teacher Jayne will always involve her Christian faith and beliefs. Another informant said that teacher Maica*** acts older than her age. Amidst the fact that she is only 21, her beliefs and principles are that of a grown woman and she integrates this way of thinking on how she handles school issues. When teacher Joe*** was described by his co-teachers, they said that he is fun to be with. Amidst being a jolly teacher, he is fond of quoting bible verses to remind his co-teachers and students about the importance of God in every endeavor.

With these, it showed how the superstitious beliefs in the supernatural of the student examinees reflected their ways of thinking and dealing with their students and colleagues. As Beck and Forstmeier (2006) explained, people comprehend things based on the people who surround them help them construct their reality. This kind of thinking is based on the upbringing and background of the person. Hence, one could say that it is within this perspective around superstitious beliefs that each participant attributed some aspect of their teaching performance to their superstitious behavior.

In the field of moral education, Campbell (2008) said that morality can be attributed to a person's beliefs and ways of thinking. According to him, it is a shared feeling and beliefs develop by an individual with others and that this belief system makes him be committed to his personal responsibilities and actions. Murray (2012) pointed out that the aspect of moral agency is a dual state which encompasses the teacher as a moral person involved in professional teaching through ethical dealings with his students, moral conduct, and as an educator who shares the same core values and principles to his students, enabling them to strive and uphold the same practice. This kind of moral obligation can be traced back to a person's personal belief system (Shen, 2011). Thus, to understand how a teacher behaves and interacts with his students and colleagues, one must look into the belief system that he/she has.

In the development of moral principle, the immediate circle of the student examinees is a crucial factor to consider. Though superstitious beliefs can be viewed as personal, it is also socially constructed. The belief system of the student examinees as an attribution to the development of their moral principle is necessary for considering the people who surround them. This circle includes their family, peers and the society they are involved with. Kahn (2000) said that the Western theories of moral meaning are based on the individual and the society he is involved with. The conception of philosophy of an individual is rooted in the question of whether morality is primarily a group experience or an individual phenomenon. Stuart (2007) believes that moral truth is socially constructed

which is both created and formed through personal experience and social immersion. Hence, in understanding the belief system carried by a person, one should also consider those that are shared by his immediate circle. In the development of superstitions and belief system, it is important to remember that the people who surround an individual help in constructing such beliefs. Thus, the superstitious beliefs as a form to show the development of moral principles of the student examinees are not solely reserved to individual alone but it is also socially constructed.

CONCLUSION

Superstition appears to be a more complicated concept than merely a perception that an unrelated behavior can improve performance. An individual who utilizes a superstitious belief appears to go through a process of determining when the behavior is recognized as superstitiously powerful. The student examinees who took the Licensure Examination for Teachers observed and followed different superstitious beliefs before, during and after the exam. It was found out that these beliefs have its positive and negative effects. The motive of avoiding failure in the examination predominates over the motive of achieving success. The positive effects of superstitious beliefs also served as its negative effects and its impact varies from a person's experience to another. As superstitious beliefs are often based on irrational and unexplainable fears, the assertion and personal disposition to pass the exam became the product of student examinees' projection. The superstitious notions were initiated to discard the student examinees' fears and to safeguard their emotional sphere against negative feelings and any untoward possibilities. Meanwhile, in the development of moral principle, the immediate circle of the student examinees is a crucial factor to consider. As superstitious beliefs are viewed as personal, it is also socially constructed. The family, peers and the society are important factors in the establishment of the belief system of a person which later on reflects the moral principles a person upholds. These superstitious beliefs as a projection of their moral principles were translated into actions and on how they deal and interact with their students and co-teachers.

Limitations and Future Directions

As an exploratory case study used as the research design, the current study is bound to have five research participants representing the views of in-service teachers who took the Licensure Examination for Teachers. In-depth analysis of their experiences was transcribed and coded in order to understand the current phenomenon. However, the data, as an exploratory representation of the teachers' experiences about superstitious beliefs did not answer other issues and concerns in taking the LET. Moreover, considering that the participants were one to five years in the service, they have varying beliefs compared to the seasoned teachers who have lengthier experience in the field. Hence, other researchers who would like to venture in the same study may use other research designs that will call for a large number of participants. Furthermore, variations of research participants may be considered in order to have a representative sample. Exploration of superstitious beliefs may also be considered in other professions and other forms of examinations. Meanwhile, the connection between superstitious beliefs and the development of moral principles may be explored as well in other fields.

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How to cite this article:

Darrel M. Ocampo and Douglas Angel A. Aragon II (2018) 'Beliefs And Practices In Taking Licensure Examination For Teachers As Spectrum of Teachers' Moral Principles: A Case Probe', *International Journal of Current Advanced Research*, 07(10), pp. 16043-16050. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.24327/ijcar.2018.16050.2946>
