

The Perceptions of Accountancy Students on the Passing Rate of the Licensure Examination for Certified Public Accountants

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to investigate the perceptions of 3rd-year accountancy students concerning the passing rates of the Licensure Examination for Certified Public Accountants (LECPA).

Design/methodology/approach: This study utilized a qualitative research design with a multiple case study approach, the researchers employed in-depth interviews, observations, and data mining to explore students' decisions to persist in pursuing CPA licensure or reconsider their career paths.

Research Findings: The results of the study indicated that some participants exhibited strong determination fueled by personal commitment, while others expressed hesitancy due to concerns about exam difficulty and the risk of failure. These insights emphasize the importance of robust support systems for aspiring Certified Public Accountants.

Contribution/Originality/Novelty: The findings contribute valuable insights for academic institutions and educators to tailor effective support systems and interventions, advancing the understanding of career choices, educational motivation, and dynamics within the field of accountancy for 3rd-year students.

Abstrak

Tujuan Penelitian: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui persepsi mahasiswa akuntansi tahun ke-3 mengenai tingkat kelulusan Ujian Lisensi Akuntan Publik Bersertifikat (LECPA).

Desain / metodologi / pendekatan: Penelitian ini memanfaatkan desain penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus ganda, para peneliti menggunakan wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan penggalian data untuk mengeksplorasi keputusan siswa untuk tetap mengejar lisensi CPA atau mempertimbangkan kembali jalur karir mereka.

Temuan Penelitian: Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa beberapa peserta menunjukkan tekad yang kuat yang dipicu oleh komitmen pribadi, sementara yang lain menyatakan keraguan karena kekhawatiran akan kesulitan ujian dan risiko kegagalan. Wawasan ini menekankan pentingnya sistem pendukung yang kuat bagi calon Akuntan Publik Bersertifikat.

Kontribusi / Orisinalitas / Kebaruan: Temuan ini memberikan kontribusi wawasan berharga bagi institusi akademis dan pendidik untuk menyesuaikan sistem pendukung dan intervensi yang efektif, memajukan pemahaman tentang pilihan karir, motivasi pendidikan, dan dinamika dalam bidang akuntansi untuk siswa tahun ke-3.

INTRODUCTION

Students' achievement in board examinations is used to assess the excellence of a particular course of study (Timoleon S. Lianza, 2016). The performance of graduates in licensure exams is widely recognized as a measure of higher education quality. The Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) ensures exam standards and grants licenses to competent candidates, emphasizing public safety (Guinayen, 2015). Accounting disciplines require cognitive skills and perseverance, with the CPA board examination seen as a prestigious path to professionalism (Abrugar, 2019). This underscores the importance of tenacity for students pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Accountancy (BSA) degree, eligible for the challenging licensing examination (Cordis & Muzatko, 2020).

Hundreds of aspirants take the license examination for Certified Public Accountants annually in the Philippines. The Certified Public Accountant (CPA) Examination has been in practice in the Philippines since 1932 to evaluate the competence of Bachelor of Science in Accountancy (BSA) graduates to get a professional license in their respective fields. Under Republic Act No. 9298 of the Philippine Accountancy Law, a candidate must achieve a general average of seventy-five percent (75%), with no grade lower than sixty-five percent (65%) in any given subject be qualified as having passed the licensure examination for accountants (Alfraih, & Alharbi, 2017). However, in the most recent 2023 LECPA result, the national passing rate was 30.36% on the May 2023 licensure examination, which remains one of the lowest passing rates among licensure examinations in the Philippines.

According to Abrugar (2019), numerous critics consider it the most challenging and arduous board licensure examination in the country. The Certified Public Accountant (CPA) board examination is considered to be one of the nation's most demanding authorities licensing exams in the Philippines when compared to other administration agencies' licensure assessments, and the creation of outstanding school graduates is based on their pre-board assessments (Bala, 2018). The inadequate passing percentages at local and national levels reflect the difficulty of passing the CPA board exam. Rizal Technological University (RTU) CPA scores may be more consistent. In certain situations, the results exceeded the national proportion. To boost the performance of RTU accounting graduates in the CPA board evaluation, unique and ongoing intervention activities must be devised (Herrero, 2015).

The Licensure Examination of Certified Public Accountants (LECPA), serving as a pivotal evaluation of professional competence, holds significant implications for students' academic and career trajectories. The passing rate serves as a tangible benchmark, influencing students' confidence in their ability to navigate the challenges posed by the licensure examination. Moreover, it contributes to their strategic decision-making processes, impacting choices related to academic engagement, exam preparation, and the pursuit of a professional accounting career. As students engage with the intricacies of the LECPA, their perceptions are likely to be influenced by external factors such as institutional support, instructional methodologies, and societal expectations. By exploring these perceptions, this study aims to uncover the motivations and concerns that underlie accountancy students' responses to the LECPA passing rate.

The study highlights the challenging nature of licensure exams and the importance of intervention programs to enhance students' preparedness. However, a notable research gap emerges regarding a comprehensive exploration of undergraduate students' perceptions of the passing rates, including their attitudes, beliefs, and emotions. Understanding how students interpret

and respond to these passing rates can provide valuable insights for educators and institutions seeking to optimize accounting education and exam preparation strategies.

This study contributes by exploring the perceptions of accountancy students regarding the passing rate of the LECPA. It provides insights into students' expectations, concerns, and potential factors influencing their views. This information can be valuable for educational institutions and policymakers to enhance preparation strategies, curriculum, and support systems, ultimately aiming to improve overall pass rates and the effectiveness of accountancy education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

One of the most commonly acknowledged measures of the quality of higher education institutions in this country is the performance of graduates in taking licensure examinations (Gabasa & Raqueño, 2021). Accounting disciplines are more cognitive, and people should have analytical abilities in addition to perseverance. It demands tenacity because, at the end of the quarter, students must have an acceptable grade and survive the qualifying exams. Individuals with a Bachelor of Science in Accountancy (BSA) degree who meet the qualifications are eligible for the licensing examination (Cordis & Muzatko, 2020).

In various countries, Chartered Professional Examinations managed by National Regulatory Authorities and professional associations play a vital role. Educational programs are structured to align with these exams, emphasizing practical applicability. However, Ellington and Williams (2017) caution that overreliance on certification syllabi may limit broader educational goals, even though integrating certification competence in standard bachelor degrees can enhance postgraduate excellence in chartered examinations.

In Nigeria, Odia and Ogiedu (2018) conducted a comprehensive exploration of factors influencing students' career choices in accounting within Nigerian universities. Their findings highlighted that pivotal variables shaping these choices encompass personal and job-related factors, including students' intrinsic interest in the subject, incentives, job prospects, and the allure of high salaries. Interestingly, the study revealed a gender disparity, noting that male students tend to be more motivated by these factors compared to their female counterparts when opting for a career in accounting. This underscores the importance of understanding and addressing diverse motivations within the student population to tailor effective career guidance and educational support.

Meanwhile, in Jordan, Momany's (2017) investigation focused on the variables affecting success in the Jordanian Certified Public Accountants (JCPA) exam. The research identified the type of university and students' areas of specialization as critical factors influencing the likelihood of passing the unified JCPA exam. In contrast, a study by Abd-Al-Jaleel and Thaher (2019) found no substantial evidence for the impact of academic qualification, experience, gender, or the type of university from which students graduated. These diverse findings underscore the need for context-specific approaches in understanding the factors that contribute to students' success in accounting education and certification exams, reflecting the nuanced dynamics at play across different regions and educational systems.

The University of Southern Mindanao (USM) in Kabacan, North Cotabato, grapples with the challenge of meeting the escalating demand for educational quality, particularly in programs that involve board examinations. As a strategic response, the university's department has implemented various measures, including the administration of tests for board assessments and the establishment of the Competency Enhancement Program (CEP). According to Dayaday (2018),

the CEP encompasses taker assessments, reinforcing fundamental concepts in Mathematical Subjects, Technology, Communications, General Knowledge, and the legal components of courses. This initiative aims to equip students with the necessary knowledge and skills to excel in their actual licensure examinations.

The existing literature emphasizes the significance of board examinations, particularly the Certified Public Accountant (CPA) licensure examination, as a crucial benchmark for assessing the competence of accounting graduates. Studies from various countries, such as Nigeria, Jordan, Japan, Malaysia, Kuwait, and the Philippines, shed light on factors influencing students' career choices, performance in licensure exams, and attitudes toward the accounting profession.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

The researcher used multiple case studies in this qualitative research as it gathered the participants' perceptions in the passing rate of LECPA (Licensure Examination of Certified Public Accountants). Qualitative research is being undertaken because it explains a phenomenon whenever there is a lack of theory. In a multiple case study, there are two stages of analysis—the within-case analysis and the cross-case analysis. For the within-case analysis, each case is first treated as a comprehensive case in and of itself (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Research Environment

The research is conducted in one of the higher educational institutions in Pagadian City. It is located in the beautiful province of Zamboanga del Sur Pagadian City, a western part of Mindanao, Philippines.

Research Participants

The research participants were 14 third year students enrolled in Bachelor of Science in Accountancy. They were chosen purposively as those individuals who are academic and non-academic achiever during the school year 2022-2023. The participants are categorized by their academic achievements and efforts in pursuing accounting program. The research participants are presented in the following:

Case 1

Participant 1, identified as NDL1, is a 21-year-old male from Block A. He started as a BSMA student in his first and second year, he successfully passed the 2 qualifying exam and he is now pursuing the accounting program.

Participant 2, identified as NDL2, is a 20-year-old female from Block A. She is among the students who are reluctant to take the LECPA due to the fear of not passing it.

Participant 3, identified as NDL3, is a 20-year-old female from Block B. She is motivated to take the LECPA despite of the passing rate.

Participant 4, identified as NDL4, is a 21-year-old male from Block B. He is among students who are reluctant to take the LECPA due to the fear of not passing it.

Participant 5, identified as NDL5, is a 21-year-old female from Block B. She is among students who are determined to pass the LECPA despite of the passing rate.

Participant 6, identified as NDL6, is a 20-year-old male from Block B. He is among students who are reluctant to take the LECPA due to the fear of not passing it.

Participant 7, identified as NDL7, is a 22-year-old male from Block A. He is among students who are determined to pass the LECPA despite of the passing rate.

Case 2

Participant 1, identified as DL1, is a 21-year-old female from Block A. She is among students who consistently excel and performs well in departmental examinations.

Participant 2, identified as DL2, is a 20-year-old female from Block B. She is motivated to put more effort in studying after knowing the passing rate.

Participant 3, identified as DL3, is a 21-year-old male from Block A. He is among students who consistently excel and performs well in departmental examinations.

Participant 4, identified as DL4, is a 21-year-old male from Block A. He enjoys gathering files in the internet particularly those related in accounting program.

Participant 5, identified as DL5, is a 21-year-old female third-year student from Block B. She is among students who consistently excel and performs well in departmental examinations.

Participant 6, identified as DL6, is a 20-year-old female from Block A. She is determined to take the LECPA despite of the passing rate.

Participant 7, identified as DL7, is a 21-year-old female from Block B. She is among students who consistently excel and performs well in departmental examinations.

Research Instrument

The primary instruments for this research are the researchers, aided by their semi-structured interview guide. The interview protocol includes questions exploring the perceptions of third year accountancy students towards the passing rate of LECPA. The participants were also asked to share their views on the significance of the passing rate, its influence on their academic journey, and whether it influenced their commitment to pursuing CPA licensure.

Data Gathering Procedure

In this qualitative case study, data collection served the purpose of realizing the research questions' objectives. The process involved interviews, observations, and data mining, with permissions obtained through formal letters from academic authorities. Qualified participants received official letters after institutional approval. The collected data, inclusive of audio-recorded and transcribed interviews, alongside insights from data mining, facilitated a comprehensive understanding of participants' academic backgrounds and achievements.

Data Analysis

The researchers applied inductive and comparative methods for data analysis following Merriam's Qualitative Research framework. After collecting and coding the data for easy retrieval, the process advanced to intensive analysis. Category construction involved reading transcriptions and field notes, noting key information, and categorizing related data to align with research questions. Sorting categories and data involved compiling and sorting responses to identify commonalities among participants. Naming categories drew upon researchers' words, participants' exact expressions, or external sources to encapsulate the phenomenon's meaning, aiming for a manageable number of categories based on frequency, uniqueness, importance, and unexplored areas. Finally, the researchers synthesized a theory that explained the collected data and offered inferences about future activities.

Ethical Consideration

The researchers followed the necessary ethical principles in conducting their research by giving the participants informed consent. The researchers also assured them about data protection. The researchers ensured that the data of the participants remained confidential.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following are the results and discussions on the perceptions of 3rd year accountancy students in the passing rate of LECPA. The data also undergo member checking as a crucial validation method to ensure the accuracy and context fidelity of the gathered data. Additionally, the researchers included data from interviews conducted with one of the school administrators and educators to provide further insight. The categories that emerged from the study were: *Students response to the passing rate of LECPA with regards to their decision-making process, Influences of LECPA passing rate to perceptions of 3rd-year students to the accounting profession and career prospects, Students' perseverance in taking LECPA, Students' Academic needs in taking LECPA and Students' Preparations in taking LECPA.*

Students' Response to the Passing Rate of LECPA with Regards to their Decision-Making Process

Student decision-making involves the cognitive process of making choices related to education, academic pursuits, and personal development, encompassing aspects like selecting a major, choosing courses, setting career goals, and participating in extracurricular activities. According to the participants, the following are the different responses towards the passing rate of LECPA: *Resilient Commitment Amidst Challenges, Motivational Response Amidst Pressure, and Academic Uncertainty and Career Path Decisions.*

Resilient Commitment Amidst Challenges. It refers to the participants' unwavering dedication and determination to pursue their goal of taking the LECPA despite facing difficulties and setbacks. This response is manifested in Table 1.

Table 1. Students resilient commitment amidst challenges

Cases	Supporting Transcripts
Case 1	<p>It lowered my confidence, especially considering that my performance in school is only average but that doesn't mean I am not going to take the LECPA. - NDL1</p> <p>At our current status in third year, I'm experiencing a sense of uncertainty and doubt about my ability to persevere in my program, as it has proven to be quite demanding. Nevertheless, I remain determined to press forward and pursue taking the exam.</p> <p>-NDL7</p>
Case 2	<p>As a person who tends to finish what I've started, I don't think that the passing rate of LECPA would be the sole determinant of my decision in taking the LECPA. However, my confidence is indeed affected by the passing rate of the LECPA. - DL1</p> <p>My ultimate goal since day one is to pass the LECPA, so even though the passing rate is low, it doesn't affect my decision. However, it does affect my confidence because we still have 2 years before taking the LECPA. -DL3</p> <p>The current or future passing rate of the LECPA will not change my decision. -DL4</p> <p>It did not influence my decision since I am certain that I will take the LECPA in the future. -DL5</p>

For now, it does not influence my decision since I am willing to take the risks and pursue taking the LECPA. -DL7

The data reflects a mix of determination and confidence among individuals deciding to pursue the Licensure Examination for Certified Public Accountants (LECPA). Despite acknowledging the LECPA passing rate's influence on confidence, participants emphasize a steadfast commitment to their long-term goal, demonstrating resilience and determination. Regardless of external factors, the decision to pursue the LECPA is grounded in personal commitment, highlighting the role of decision-making in goal-setting for successful professional paths (Baba, 2018).

Motivational Response Amidst Pressure. It refers to the psychological and emotional reaction of individuals, despite feeling the weight of external challenges, find inspiration and determination to overcome those challenges. This sub-category is manifested in Table 2.

Table 2. Students motivational response amidst challenges

Cases	Supporting Transcripts
Case 1	Let us consider the passing rate of LECPA, as it seems to provide us with motivation to strive for excellence in our education and it serves as a motivation for us to excel in our studies despite pressure. -NDL3
Case 2	I have become more motivated because the fact that only a few individuals pass the LECPA made me invest more in my studies to increase my chances of passing the board exam. However, at the same time, I also feel pressure because the passing rate is quite low, indicating that the exam is very challenging but I will still pursue taking the LECPA. -DL2

In both cases, the LECPA passing rate serves as a significant motivator, inspiring students to excel academically. Case 1 sees it as a positive catalyst, fostering motivation for success. In Case 2, there's a nuanced response, recognizing motivation from low pass rates alongside feelings of pressure and doubt. Despite challenges, both cases highlight an unwavering determination to pursue the LECPA, showcasing the pivotal role of motivation in navigating licensure examinations for professional success (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Academic Uncertainty and Career Path Decisions. It refers to situations where individual's express doubts or hesitations about their academic path. This response is manifested in Table 3.

Table 3. Students' academic uncertainty and career path decisions

Cases	Supporting Transcripts
Case 1	There are times when I just want to shift to another program, especially with higher passing rates, so it really influences me and about the LECPA I am also hesitant to take. -NDL1 I am uncertain whether I should take the LECPA because I am afraid that I might fail considering the passing rate. I often doubt myself about whether I should take the LECPA or not. NDL2

I am hesitant to take the exam because I am afraid that I might not be able to handle it. -NDL4

Knowing the passing rate, I considered changing my program while it's still early, but I am now in my 3rd year level, so I've decided to continue this degree but that doesn't mean I am confident enough in taking the LECPA in the future. -NDL6

I considered changing my program after finding out about the passing rate of the LECPA and I am also not sure to the LECPA. -NDL7

The responses reveal a common thread of hesitancy among students contemplating whether to take the LECPA. This hesitancy stems from a combination of factors, including a desire to explore other programs with higher passing rates and a fear of potential failure. The student's express doubts about their capabilities and the challenges posed by the LECPA, leading to a sense of uncertainty and reluctance in making a definitive decision. Despite this hesitation, there is an underlying resilience and determination to confront these uncertainties and proceed with their academic journey (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Influences of LECPA Passing Rate to the Perceptions of 3rd-year Students Accounting Profession and Career Prospects

Students studying accounting often have promising career prospects. The passing rate of LECPA significantly influences students aiming for a career in accounting. It affects their motivation, confidence, study strategies, emotional well-being, and career expectations. When it comes to participants' perceptions of their career prospects, some sub-categories arise. These sub-categories were: *Perceived Difficulty on the Accounting Profession and Uncertain Career Alignment in Accounting Professions*.

Perceived Difficulty on the Accounting Profession. It refers to individuals' subjective assessments and beliefs regarding how challenging or demanding the field of accounting is. It involves participants' opinions on the level of difficulty associated with pursuing a career in accounting, often influenced by factors such as the passing rates in professional exams like the CPA or LECPA. This sub-category is manifested in Table 4.

Table 4. Students perceived difficulty on the accounting profession

Cases	Supporting Transcripts
Case 1	I can say that becoming a CPA is tough since the passing rate indicates the difficulty of the profession. -NDL3
Case 2	Due to the low passing rate of the LECPA, if you compare it to other board examinations, I can definitely say how challenging the accounting profession is. However, my desire to become a CPA remains unaffected. -DL1 I would say, it is a tough profession because the passing rate is low, means that my career path would be a hard one. -DL2 The passing rate of the LECPA gives me the impression that it is indeed a challenging profession. However, I believe there will be more job opportunities for those who become CPAs in the future, and becoming a CPA is truly one of my goals. -DL3

I can say that the accounting profession is not easy; it requires time for studying and effort. However, my desire to become a CPA is not influenced by the passing rate of the LECPA. -DL4

Based on what I've seen on the internet and even from my friends who have taken the LECPA, I can say that the LECPA is indeed challenging. However, that doesn't mean I don't want to become a CPA. -DL5

The passing rates are quite low compared to other Board exams, so that this profession might be challenging. Then, I started doubting myself if I could become a CPA. -DL7

This insight into the interplay between passing rates and students' outlooks on their accounting future unveils the intricate dynamics of career decision-making. Participants' perceptions of the CPA exam's difficulty reflect a shared understanding of the profession's challenges, underscoring determination amid acknowledged hardships (Gamage et. al., 2021). This research underscores the demanding yet rewarding nature of the accounting profession, requiring dedication, resilience, and a commitment to growth.

Uncertain Career Alignment in Accounting Professions. It refers to a state of indecision or lack of clarity regarding one's inclination or commitment to pursue careers directly related to accounting. This influence is manifested in Table 5.

Table 5. Students uncertain career alignment in accounting professions

Cases	Supporting Transcripts
Case 1	For now, I just want to graduate as a BSA without yet thinking about becoming a CPA. -NDL2 For now, I don't really have a passion for accountancy, and I haven't seen myself working in an accounting-related field. But who knows, maybe in the future. I just felt pressured, that's why, for now, I just want to survive the accountancy program. -NDL4

This sub-category delves into motivations of accounting students solely aiming to graduate without pursuing CPA. Passing rates significantly influence their perceptions of the accounting profession. Participants prioritize degree attainment, driven by factors like parental decisions or alternative career preferences. Dela Peña (2022) notes a lack of enthusiasm, participants focused on completing the BSA program without considering CPA. Pragmatic goals center on overcoming program challenges, as observed in distracted interviewees.

Students' Perseverance in Taking LECPA

Students' perseverance in taking the LECPA is not merely a test of their academic prowess but a testament to their resilience, discipline, and commitment. This journey of dedication and determination not only leads to personal growth and professional success but also provides a valuable service to society by producing highly competent CPAs. When it comes to the participant's perseverance in taking the LECPA, there are sub-categories to consider. These sub-categories were: *Increased determination leading to academic success and Resilient Perseverance despite Doubts.*

Increased determination leading to academic success. It refers to the idea that increase a sense of motivation, commitment, and resolve in one's academic pursuits can positively impact overall educational achievements. This sub-category is manifested in Table 6.

Table 6. Increased determination of students leading to academic success

Cases	Supporting Transcripts
Case 1	<p>I am uncertain of my potential to pass the examination, but regardless of the challenges or the low passing rate in the Licensure Examination for Certified Public Accountants, my desire is to become a Certified Public Accountant. Therefore, I am considering enrolling in a review center to enhance my chances of success in the future. -NDL1</p> <p>Knowing that the LECPA passing rate has a big impact on how hard I try to perform well in school and it also gives me motivation to work harder in school. -NDL3</p> <p>I am more motivated to exert effort in my studies to potentially contribute to the improvement of the passing rate in the Licensure Examination for Certified Public Accountants. -NDL4</p> <p>Due to the influence of the passing rate, I found motivation to exert greater effort, such as in taking the departmental exam more seriously. As a result, I am confident that I can successfully pass the exam overall. -NDL5</p> <p>Yes, as I remain in this program, I am driven to strive for excellence. Despite the low passing rate, it does not imply an ending of our efforts. Instead, it serves as a motivational factor for me to pursue and undertake the LECPA in the future. NDL7</p>
Case 2	<p>As someone with a strong desire to become a Certified Public Accountant (CPA), the consideration of the passing rate serves as a motivation for me to strive for excellence in all aspects. -DL1</p> <p>I am more determined to take the LECPA, considering the passing rate. This determination drives me to study diligently while still attending school, as it serves as a preparation for my future. -DL2</p> <p>This has greatly fueled my enthusiasm to continue with this program and eventually enroll in a review center to successfully pass the LECPA, since I know already how difficult the LECPA is. -DL3</p> <p>After knowing the passing rate of LECPA, it made me invest more in my studies that I should double my efforts and commitment to study. - DL6</p> <p>It did not affect my decision to pursue the Certified Public Accountant (CPA) path, as it has been my dream since senior high school. I am motivated to consistently maintain my status on the dean's list, a goal I have aspired to achieve since my first year. -DL7</p>

In both cases, participants exhibit a resilient determination to become CPAs despite acknowledging the challenging LECPA passing rates. The passing rate serves as a motivational

factor, intensifying their commitment to academic excellence and influencing study habits. Participants leverage awareness of the difficulty as a driving force, aligning with findings that stress self-motivation, study skills, and time management as crucial for licensure exam success (Hahn & Fairchild, 2015). This underscores the strong link between determination and academic achievement.

Resilient Perseverance despite Doubts. It refers to the persistent and determined effort individuals exhibit in pursuing their goals, even when faced with uncertainties or hesitations. This sub-category is manifested in Table 7.

Table 7. Resilient perseverance of students despite doubts

Cases	Supporting Transcripts
Case 1	I also doubt if I can persist as a BSA student, but I believe I can still continue and take the LECPA. –NDL2
Case 2	Upon knowing about the passing rate, I found myself questioning my capability and at times, losing motivation to study, as I felt uncertain about my chances of success. However, I still intend to take the examination, perhaps with the belief that I might succeed despite my initial doubts. –DL4

In both cases, participants grapple with internal doubts about their academic pursuits, particularly in the face of challenging LECPA passing rates. Despite uncertainties, they display resilient determination to confront and navigate through challenges, aligning with Claro’s notion that a growth mindset and positive attitude help overcome doubts and achieve goals (Claro et al., 2016).

Students’ Academic Needs in taking LECPA

Addressing the academic needs of students is a multifaceted endeavor that requires collaboration between educators. By embracing personalized learning, investing in quality teachers, ensuring access to resources, and prioritizing students’ emotional well-being, they can create an educational system that truly meets the needs of all students). Addressing the participants’ academic needs involves different sub-categories. These sub-categories were: *Need for Financial Support, Need for Academic Support, Need for Review Materials, Need for Enhance Teaching Strategies and Need for Designated Day in Reviewing Previous Lessons.*

Need for Financial support. It indicates a requirement for monetary assistance to cover expenses associated with preparing for and taking the LECPA. This is supported in Table 8.

Table 8. Students need for financial support

Cases	Supporting Transcripts
Case 1	If the school were to offer financial assistance to selected students during the review, there would be a higher probability of a greater number of students taking the LECPA. Thus, I can confidently assert that the chances of passing would increase significantly due to the ample academic support provided. –NDL4
Case 2	Financial support is crucial because not all students can afford to pay for the review or take the LECPA.–DL5

In both cases, participants stress the crucial role of financial support in LECPA preparation. Case 1 suggests that school-provided assistance could boost participation and success rates, while Case 2 asserts the importance of financial aid due to the affordability barrier. Addressing financial challenges through institutional support is deemed vital for student engagement and success in the LECPA process (Tus, 2020).

Need for Emotional support. It expresses a desire for psychological assistance, encouragement, and understanding. It suggests that individuals may require emotional backing, reassurance, or empathetic support, particularly during challenging periods such as exam preparation, to help manage stress, anxiety, or self-doubt. This sub-category is manifested in Table 9.

Table 9. Students need for emotional support

Cases	Supporting Transcripts
Case 1	It would be greatly beneficial for the school to motivate us to take the exam rather than discourage us based solely on our performance in practice exams. -NDL4 Emotional support is essential not only for our academic growth but also for the students who may require emotional support from teachers. There should be gatherings or opportunities to inquire about their life status, creating a platform to ease our emotional burdens. -NDL7

The participant highlights the crucial role of emotional support, emphasizing the need for a positive and encouraging environment during LECPA exam preparation. This underscores the significance of psychological encouragement in motivating students to undertake the challenging assessment despite potential performance concerns. The insight reflects a desire for a comprehensive support system that considers both academic and emotional aspects of the educational experience (Simon, 2015).

Need for Review Materials. It signifies a necessity for resources like textbooks, online materials, practice exams, or other study aids to effectively prepare for an examination or academic evaluation. This is supported on Table 10.

Table 10. Students need for review materials

Cases	Supporting Transcripts
Case 1	They should give copies of the review materials that they gathered every after LECPA. -NDL2
Case 2	They will provide handouts and then discuss them with the students. -DL6 Provide free handouts -DL7

Participants stress the need for accessible and free review materials for LECPA preparation. Case 1 suggests gathering and distributing copies, indicating a desire for shared resources. Case 2 underscores the importance of handouts for structured reviews. The common thread highlights a practical approach, emphasizing tangible resources for effective preparation (Sugara et al., 2017).

Need for Enhanced Teaching Strategies. It refers to methods and approaches employed by educators to optimize the learning experience for students. This is supported in Table 11.

Table 11. Students need for enhanced teaching strategies

Cases	Supporting Transcripts
Case 1	<p>I believe that using various instructional methods or strategies by teachers can greatly enhance students' analytical skills. This approach proves highly beneficial to us students. -NDL1</p> <p>Employ skilled teachers in accounting to create excellent students and reduce the students' workload so they can focus more on their accounting subjects. -NDL3</p>
Case 2	<p>Creating an effective and efficient way of teaching such as a day before the discussion they will give handouts to students, it very helpful. -DL1</p> <p>Providing not just effective but also efficient quality of teaching, such explaining well and delve deeper into discussions for us to understand. Since I graduated from senior high school without efficient teaching quality from my school, I can say it's really challenging to catch up with the lessons in my first-year college. -DL2</p>

Case 1 highlights the importance of strategies enhancing analytical skills, while Case 2 underscores the need for both effective and efficient teaching to optimize learning outcomes. These perspectives align with McDonough (2015), emphasizing the critical role of well-designed teaching approaches in providing students with a high-quality education and facilitating success in an evolving educational landscape.

Need for Designated Day in Reviewing Previous Lessons. Implies a recognition of the necessity or importance of having specific days set aside for the purpose of revisiting and reviewing material covered in earlier lessons. This is manifested in Table 12.

Table 12. Students need for designated day in reviewing previous lessons

Cases	Supporting Transcripts
Case 1	<p>I believe that using various instructional methods or strategies by teachers can greatly enhance students' analytical skills. This approach proves highly beneficial to us students. -NDL1</p> <p>Employ skilled teachers in accounting to create excellent students and reduce the students' workload so they can focus more on their accounting subjects. -NDL3</p>
Case 2	<p>Creating an effective and efficient way of teaching such as a day before the discussion they will give handouts to students, it very helpful. -DL1</p> <p>Providing not just effective but also efficient quality of teaching, such explaining well and delve deeper into discussions for us to understand. Since I graduated from senior high school without efficient teaching quality from my school, I can say it's really challenging to catch up with the lessons in my first-year college. -DL2</p>

Participants suggest implementing designated teacher-led review sessions for critical subjects to enhance understanding and retention. This approach aims to clarify doubts, provide timely refreshers, and ultimately improve academic performance. This perspective aligns with Barber

(2021), emphasizing the importance of after-school activities for developing social skills and teamwork, contributing to well-rounded individuals.

Students' Preparations in taking LECPA

Preparations for licensure examinations demand dedication, discipline, and a well-structured approach. Success is not solely dependent on academic knowledge but also on effective study habits, time management, and emotional well-being. When it comes to the preparations of the participants in taking the licensure, some sub-categories need to be considered. These sub-categories were: *Reading Accounting Books*, *Summarizing Notes*, *Practicing Problem Solving and Maintaining a Positive Mindset*.

Reading Accounting Books. It refers to the act of studying or reading books related to accounting. These books cover various aspects of accounting, including principles, practices, financial reporting, and regulations. It is a way for individuals to gain knowledge and understanding of accounting concepts. This is supported in Table 13.

Table 13. Reading accounting books

Cases	Supporting Transcripts
Case 1	<p>I will continue reading accounting reviewers extensively and concentrate on my studies, particularly in the areas of accounting where I find difficult. -NDL1</p> <p>I have not undertaken proper preparations yet, but for now, I will continue reading handouts because it can assist me in getting ready and gaining knowledge in that particular topic. -NDL2</p> <p>I have some preparations but I haven't taken action on them yet. For now, my preparation is just reading books that can help you in accounting lessons, which has enabled me to pass the qualifying exam. -NDL4</p>
Case 2	Read, read, read, and understand the concept in accounting. -DL2

Effective reading, coupled with practice and review, equips professionals for success. Participants in both cases emphasize continuous reading to enhance knowledge, acknowledging its effectiveness in passing qualifying exams. Thorough reading is crucial for academic success (Shea & Ceprano, 2018).

Summarizing notes. It refers to the practice of condensing and capturing the key information from a set of notes into a more concise and manageable form. This is manifested in Table 14.

Table 14. Summarizing notes

Cases	Supporting Transcripts
Case 1	Currently, I am taking notes for my major subjects, and my approach to note-taking is to ensure that my future self or my future review self can understand it. -NDL5
Case 2	<p>Simply establishing a proper study habit is crucial for me, similar to what I do when reading books – I write notes in order for me not forget the lessons. This is my effective method to retain what I study and prevent procrastination. -DL3</p> <p>I am jotting down notes so that I can review them if needed. -DL6</p>

Participants in both cases prioritize note-taking as a strategic study habit, emphasizing its role in active learning, organization, and effective preparation for their accounting studies. This intentional practice enhances comprehension and information retention (Hamzah et. al., 2014).

Practicing problem solving. It refers to engaging in activities or exercises that involve the application of problem-solving techniques. This is supported in Table 15.

Table 15. Practicing problem solving

Cases	Supporting Transcripts
Case 1	Establishing an effective and efficient study method for example practice problem solving in the handouts given by the teachers is highly beneficial. Although it is not guaranteed to remain unchanged as I still have a few years before the LECPA, it is a valuable investment in my academic journey. -DL1 I am searching and collecting files from the internet, including sample problems, to practice. This is part of my effort to develop it into a study habit. -DL5

Participants emphasize the importance of building an effective study method for the LECPA, particularly through practicing sample problems. Utilizing diverse resources, they acknowledge the evolving nature of their study approach over time. This dynamic and adaptive strategy, focused on continuous improvement and skill development, highlights their proactive and committed approach to exam preparation (Krech, 2019).

Maintaining a Positive Mindset. It refers to an optimistic and constructive way of thinking and approaching life's challenges, opportunities, and experiences. This is supported in Table 16.

Table 16. Maintaining a positive mindset

Cases	Supporting Transcripts
Case 1	Just be positive, we can pass the LECPA in the future, and there's no need to be afraid. -NDL6 We should not consider shifting instead, we must maintain a positive outlook especially in the areas we find challenging, we should put extra effort on it. -NDL7

Participants intentionally cultivate a positive mindset as part of their LECPA preparation, recognizing its role in academic success and building resilience. This aligns with Larson's (2018) notion that mindset impacts licensure exam outcomes (Cooley & Larson, 2018).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research findings illuminate the intricate interplay between motivation, determination, self-doubt, and external influences, such as the LECPA passing rate, shaping decisions and perceptions of third-year accountancy students. The study underscores the dual role of the passing rate as both a motivating force and a source of pressure, highlighting the students' varying levels of confidence and resilience in the face of perceived challenges. The Cognitive Dissonance Theory by Leon Festinger provides valuable insights into the discomfort arising from the conflict between their motivation to become CPAs and the influences of passing rates on decision-making. However, limitations include potential biases in self-reported perceptions, a confined scope, and

the dynamic nature of external factors influencing the passing rate. Implications point to the necessity for comprehensive support systems within educational institutions, emphasizing tailored programs and resources. Recommendations include fostering a growth mindset among students, implementing tailored support programs, and encouraging long-term studies to track students' journeys. These insights contribute to a nuanced understanding of students' decisions related to licensure examinations in accountancy, yet ongoing research is essential to address the complexity of this dynamic process comprehensively.

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