

Metacognitive Study Habits of Bachelor of Science in Social Work and Bachelor of Science in Nutrition and Dietetics Students: Implications for Licensure Preparation

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Abstract – This study examined the metacognitive study habits of Bachelor of Science in Social Work (BSSW) and Bachelor of Science in Nutrition and Dietetics (BSND) students and fresh graduates at Pangasinan State University–Lingayen Campus. Using a quantitative descriptive–correlational design, data were collected from 150 respondents through a structured questionnaire. The study assessed the extent of practice of metacognitive study habits, the influence of physical, socio-emotional, and cognitive factors, and the relationships between these habits, influencing factors, and demographic profiles. Results revealed that “preparing assignments and projects” was the most frequently practiced habit, while “managing work stress” was least practiced. Cognitive factors exerted the highest influence. Significant relationships were found between sex and “organizing and planning works,” GPA and “managing work stress,” and family income and “preparing assignments and projects.” Findings underscore the need for targeted interventions to strengthen stress management, reference management, and pre-class preparation. Implications for licensure examination readiness and policy are discussed.

Keywords: metacognition, study habits, licensure preparation, social work education, nutrition and dietetics

INTRODUCTION

Metacognition—reflecting on one's own thinking—is the cornerstone of self-directed learning (Flavell, 1979; Chick, 2013). Within higher education, and more specifically in licensure-track programs, metacognitive learning habits are essential for successful long-term academic functioning and professional preparedness. These learning habits include planning, monitoring, and assessing one's learning approaches (Winne, 2022) and are influenced by cognitive, socio-emotional, and physical factors.

The Bachelor of Science in Social Work (BSSW) and Bachelor of Science in Nutrition and Dietetics (BSND) programs at PSU–Lingayen are among the few with licensure examinations, where preparation must begin early in the academic journey (Briones, 2021). Prior studies (e.g., Aquino, 2011; Mendezabal, 2013) have linked effective study habits to licensure success, but there is limited empirical work

focusing on the metacognitive dimension in these disciplines.

Current studies uphold the primacy of metacognition in licensure training. Ratnayake et al. (2023) showed that highly structured reflection instruments vastly increase metacognitive processing and academic functioning among STEM undergrads.

In the Philippines, Orbigo and Gonzales (2025) concluded that higher metacognitive awareness among criminology students translated into improved board exam preparedness, noting similarities with other licensure courses. Talidano and Cotejo (2024) found there was a high positive correlation between metacognitive awareness and study habits among BEED students, indicating that interventions for both areas have synergistic outcomes.

Additionally, self-regulated learning models highlight the interaction of motivation, metacognitive strategies, and environmental structuring (Zimmerman,

2024). Physical and socio-emotional accommodations—e.g., study-friendly environments and peer engagement—have been demonstrated to mediate the connection between metacognition and performance (Teuber et al., 2024). Stress is still a key hindrance, though: Muñoz et al. (2023) found that academic workload stress mediated the link between metacognitive deficits and lower GPA.

This study builds on these insights by examining the specific metacognitive study habits of BSSW and BSND students, the factors influencing them, and their implications for licensure readiness.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The research study aimed to determine the metacognitive study habits of PSU Lingayen BSSW and BSND students and fresh graduates. Specifically, it sought to address the following objectives:

1. Profile respondents by age, sex, year level, GPA, and family income.
2. Determine the extent of practice of metacognitive study habits.
3. Assess the influence of physical, socio-emotional, and cognitive factors.
4. Test relationships between demographic profile and metacognitive study habits.
5. Test relationships between demographic profile and influencing factors.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Design and Procedure

This study was conducted at Pangasinan State University – Lingayen Campus, Lingayen, Pangasinan. It focused on looking into the metacognitive study habits of the Bachelor of Science in Social Work and Bachelor of Science in Nutrition and Dietetics enrolled students in the first semester, 2024-2025, and fresh graduates of 2024.

This research adopted a quantitative approach employing the descriptive survey method and correlational design as research design. A structured survey was designed to gather data on the respondents' extent of practice of the metacognitive study habits and the extent of influence of the physical, socio-emotional and psychological factors to the respondents'

metacognitive study habits. Descriptive correlational design was employed to study the relationship between the respondents' metacognitive study habits and their profile.

The respondents of the study were the students enrolled at PSU Lingayen Campus under the BSSW and BSND programs during the 1st Semester, Academic Year 2024-2025 and fresh graduates who graduated in the year 2024. There are a total of 327 enrolled students and fresh graduates in the said year, whereby Slovin's Formula with a margin of error of 0.06 was employed in determining the sample size of 150. The respondents were selected through convenience sampling in which the selection of samples from the different year levels or strata of the population was involved in the research.

A survey questionnaire was distributed to the respondents to obtain the needed data. The questionnaire consisted of three parts. The first part surveyed the demographic profile of the respondents. The second part surveyed the metacognitive study habits in terms of motivation, organizing and planning works, utilizing resources and feedback, managing work stress, note taking and reading, and preparing an assignments and projects which was adapted from Lucas & Corpuz, 2014. The third part surveyed the factors affecting metacognitive study habits in terms of physical, socio-emotional and cognitive.

To expound the demographic profile of the respondents, frequency and percentage were used. To assess the metacognitive study habits of the students, and likewise the factors affecting these metacognitive study habits, a Likert scale was utilized, allowing respondents to express nuanced opinions, then, the average weighted mean was calculated to quantify these perceptions accurately. For discerning the significant relationships between the profile variables and the metacognitive study habits of the respondents and the significant relationships between the profile variables and the factors influencing the metacognitive study habits, Chi Square Test was used.

Rigorous validity and reliability measures involved pre-survey, internal consistency checks, and content validity assessments. Data was processed using SPSS and findings were presented through statistical tables and graphs, offering a nuanced understanding of the data. The research settled with discussions on the implications of the findings, recommendations for future

initiatives, and a transparent acknowledgment of the study's limitations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

I. Profile of Respondents

Table 1: Profile of Respondents

Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
18-19	46	30.67
20-21	46	30.67
22-24	58	38.67
Sex		
Male	30	20
Female	120	80
Year Level		
First Year	35	23.33
Second Year	25	16.67
Third Year	22	14.67
Fourth Year	28	18.67
Fresh Graduate	40	26.67
Grade Point Average (GPA) of Previous Semester:		
74% or below (3.25 - 5.00)	3	2
75-78% (2.75 - 3.00)	9	6
79-84% (2.25 - 2.50)	29	19.33
85-90% (1.75 - 2.00)	77	51.33
91% or above (1.00 - 1.50)	32	21.33
Estimated Monthly Income of the Family:		
Less than P 5000	35	23.33
P 5000 to P 9,999	50	33.33
P10,000 to P 14,999	29	19.33
P15,000 to P 19,999	14	9.33
P 20,000 or above	22	14.67

Table 1 presents the profile of the BSSW and BSND students in terms of their age, sex, year level, grade point average of the previous semester, and estimated monthly income of their family.

In terms of their age, 58 or 38.67% of the respondents are under 22-24 years old, 46 respondents or 30.67% are under 18-19 years old, and 46 respondents or 30.67% are under 20-21 years old. This implies that ages

of the respondents are the typical ages of college students and fresh graduates in the Philippines.

In terms of sex, majority of the respondents are female. 120 or 80% are females and only 30 or 20% are males. This result corresponds to the official list of total enrolled students and graduates that the BSSW and BSND Programs that majority of them are females. Likewise, this trend is consistent with global patterns where social work and nutrition and dietetics is often seen as a female-dominated field. Historically, women have constituted the majority of the workforce in social work, particularly in direct service roles (McPhail, 2004). Also, according to research by DeBiasse, dietetics has historically been a feminized profession. This trend continues today, with the majority of registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNs) being female (DeBiasse, 2022).

In terms of year level, 40 or 26.67% are fresh graduates, followed by first year students with a frequency of 35 or 23.33%, fourth year students with a frequency of 28 or 18.67%, and second year with a frequency of 25 or 16.67%. On the other hand, among the year levels, only 22 or 14.67 are third year students. This aligns with the age profile of the respondents. Additionally, according to the records from the Registrar's Office at Pangasinan State University, there were more graduates compared to the number of students enrolled from first to fourth year, resulting in a higher number of respondents from the graduate group.

In terms of Grade Point Average (GPA), majority of the respondents' GPAs are under the grade bracket of 85-90% (1.75 - 2.00) with a frequency of 77 or 51.33%. While 32 or 21.33% of the respondents' GPAs are under 91% or above (1.00 - 1.50), 29 or 19.33% of the respondents' GPAs are under 79-84% (2.25 - 2.50), 9 or 6% of the respondents' GPAs are under 75-78% (2.75 - 3.00), and only 3 or 2% of the respondents' GPAs are under the grade bracket of 74% or below (3.25 - 5.00). Pangasinan State University has a stricter admission policy for programs with licensure examinations, like BSSW and BSND. To be eligible for a panel interview in these programs, students must achieve a score of at least stanine four on the college entrance exam.

Lastly, in terms of Estimated Monthly Income of the Family, most of the respondents are under the income bracket of P 5000 to P 9,999 with a frequency of 50 or 33.33%. While 35 or 23.33% are under Less than P 5000, 29 or 19.33, 22 or 14.67% are under P 20,000 or above,

and only 14 or 9.33% are under the income bracket of P15,000 to P 19,999. The implementation of the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act in the Philippines has significantly increased the enrollment of students from lower-income families in universities and colleges. This corresponds to a study by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) found that the free tuition policy has made higher education more accessible to economically disadvantaged students (Reyes, 2020).

II. Extent of Practice of Metacognitive Study Habits

Table 2: Summary of Metacognitive Study Habits

Variable	AWM	Descriptive Rating
Motivation	3.78	Often
Organizing & Planning Works	3.98	Often
Utilizing Resources & Feedback	3.72	Often
Managing Work Stress	3.11	Often
Note-taking & Reading	3.81	Often
Preparing Assignments & Projects	4.06	Often
Overall	3.74	Often

Highest: Preparing Assignments & Projects;

Lowest: Managing Work Stress.

The table shows the extent of practice of the metacognitive study habits of the respondents having an overall grand mean of 3.74 with a descriptive rating of "Often". Among the variables, "Preparing Assignments and Projects" achieved the highest grand mean of 4.06 (Often), while "Managing Work Stress" achieved the lowest grand mean of 3.11 (Often).

The highest, "Preparing Assignments and Projects" indicates that BSSW and BSND students often engage in thorough preparation for their assignments and projects, suggests that they are proactive and organized in their approach to academic tasks, which is a positive habit for achieving high-quality work and meeting deadlines. On the other hand, the "Managing Work Stress" suggests that students often struggle with stress management. This indicates that while they are diligent in preparing for assignments, they may not have effective strategies for coping with the stress associated with their academic workload. In the research entitled: Study

Habits and Academic Performance among Students: A Systematic Review, it emphasized that while good study habits, such as thorough preparation, are linked to academic success, poor stress management can negatively impact students' performance. The research suggested that addressing stress management is crucial for maintaining overall well-being and academic achievement (Lone, 2021).

III. Factors Influencing Metacognitive Study Habits

Table 3: Summary of Influencing Factors

Factor	AWM	Descriptive Rating
Physical	3.84	Highly Influential
Socio-Emotional	3.92	Highly Influential
Cognitive	4.06	Highly Influential
Overall	3.94	Highly Influential

The table shows the factors that influence the metacognitive study habits of the respondents having an overall grand mean of 3.94 with a descriptive rating of "Highly Influential". Among the factors, "Cognitive" achieved the highest grand mean of 4.06 (Highly Influential), while "Physical" achieved the lowest grand mean of 3.84 (Highly Influential).

The highest mean score for cognitive factors indicates that activities stimulating the minds of BSSW and BSND students significantly impact their metacognitive study habits. While the lowest mean score for physical factors indicates that students see this as less influential to their metacognitive study habits. This could imply a potential neglect of physical health, which is important for overall well-being and can also impact cognitive function and academic performance. According to the research "Physical Activity Improves Stress Load, Recovery, and Academic Performance-Related Parameters Among University Students: A Longitudinal Study", physical activity affects university students' stress levels, recovery, and academic performance. It specified that both leisure-time physical activity and short physical activity breaks during study periods positively impact stress management and perceived academic performance (Teuber et.al., 2024).

IV. Significant Relationships

Significant associations:

- Sex × Organizing & Planning Works ($p = .041$)
- GPA × Managing Work Stress ($p = .007$)

- Family Income \times Preparing Assignments & Projects ($p = .023$)

There is no significant relationship between sex and the majority of the metacognitive study habits of the respondents, except for “Organizing and Planning Works” which has a 0.041 level of significance. This suggests that both male and female respondents generally employ similar strategies as to their metacognitive study habits. This indicates that sex does not play a major role in how these metacognitive study habits are practiced by BSSW and BSND students. However, the result also implies that sex may influence how respondents organize and plan their work. This could mean that one sex might have a more structured or organized compared to the other, such as in their use of planners, schedules, or other organizational tools. This result corresponds to the study on “Study habit and its impact on secondary school students’ academic performance in biology in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja”, which found a significant relationship between study habits, including planning and organizing, and academic performance (Ebele & Olofu, 2017).

There is likewise no significant relationship between the respondents’ Grade Point Average and the majority of their metacognitive study habits, except for “Managing Work Stress” which has a .007 level of significance. This indicates that effective stress management practices can positively influence academic performance. This could also mean that students who are better at managing work-related stress tend to have higher GPAs. This result corresponds to the study on “The relationship between socio-demographics and stress levels, stressors, and coping mechanisms among undergraduate students at a university in Barbados” which highlighted a negative relationship between stress and GPA, indicating that higher stress levels can lead to lower academic performance and vice versa (Persaud & Persaud, 2015).

There is also no significant relationship between the respondents’ monthly income of the family and the majority of the metacognitive study habits, except for “Preparing Assignments and Projects” which has a .023 level of significance. This indicates that the respondents, whose families are identified mostly under the monthly income bracket of P5000 to P9,999, treats this as a drive to strive harder by doing their best in their studies such as their assignments and projects. Also, families of the

respondents might provide more support and encouragement for them to strive harder, which can positively influence students’ metacognitive study habits, particularly in preparing assignments and projects. However, this disagrees with the study on “A study of the relationship between familial factors and academic motivation and achievement in high school students” which examined various familial factors, including monthly household income, and their impact on students’ academic motivation and achievement. It highlighted that higher family income is associated with better academic performance and motivation, which can include the ability to prepare assignments and projects effectively (Islam & Chakrabarty, 2020). It also does not correspond to the study on “Family income classification on students’ academic performance: A correlational study” which found out that higher family income contributes significantly to academic achievement, which can be linked to better preparation for assignments and projects due to access to more resources (Casas, 2023).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The research study offers evidence that while BSSW and BSND students at PSU-Lingayen frequently engage in hands-on and organized academic activities – particularly in preparing assignments and projects, these habits are accompanied by gaps in stress management and pre-class preparation. The majority of cognitive factors as the most influential suggests that enhancing the students’ metacognitive awareness and critical engagement with content can have a transformative effect on academic preparedness and licensure examination readiness.

Strong associations between sex and organizational habits, GPA and stress management, and family income and preparation practices point to the importance of keeping demographic contexts in mind when creating academic support systems. The lack of significant correlation between most demographic variables and metacognitive behaviors or factors further emphasizes that focal interventions can be applied generally across cohorts, but are enhanced by demographic sensitivity when applicable.

Finally, developing metacognitive skills is not only essential for current academic success but also for maintaining professional expertise in the social work and

nutrition and dietetics professions, both requiring adaptable, thoughtful, and self-directed practitioners.

Based on the findings of the study, several recommendations are offered.

Recommendations for Policy and Practice:

1. Embed metacognitive skill-building, including stress management lectures, within the curriculum to normalize reflective and strategic learning practices.
2. Establish mandatory guided pre-class reading tasks to foster readiness and contextual engagement.
3. Utilize demographic insights (e.g., course challenges, sex-linked organizational patterns, GPA-linked stress tendencies) to design personalized advising and mentoring sessions.
4. Establish accessible wellness services, stress-reduction workshops, and resilience training personalized for licensure-track students.
5. Implement structured training on reference organization tools (e.g., Zotero, Mendeley) to address identified weaknesses in citation and bibliography preparation.

Suggestions for Future Research:

1. Explore longitudinal effects of integrated metacognitive training on licensure exam performance.
2. Examine the interplay between digital learning environments and metacognitive study habits.
3. Investigate the qualitative experiences of students in developing and sustaining stress management strategies.
4. Expand sampling to include similar licensure-bound disciplines to validate and compare findings.

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