

Determinants of Failure and Resilience: A Holistic Analysis of BEEd Graduates' Experiences in the Licensure Examination for Professional Teachers

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Article Info

Article history:

Received Oct 20, 2025

Revised Dec 03, 2025

Accepted Jan 09, 2026

OnlineFirst Jan 26, 2026

Keywords:

Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET)

Psycho-emotional Factors

Self-efficacy

Teacher Education

Teacher Readiness

ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: High failure rates in the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET), particularly among Bachelor of Elementary Education graduates, present a persistent challenge to the Philippine education system. This study aimed to determine the interlocking personal, academic, and institutional factors influencing repeated failure and to develop a holistic LET Readiness Framework integrating cognitive, emotional, and contextual dimensions.

Methodology: The study utilized a mixed-methods research design involving BEEd graduates. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Spearman's rho correlation via SPSS and Jamovi to examine the relationship between General Education and Professional Education performance. Qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using the CAQDA tool, Quirkos, to identify thematic patterns in examinee experiences.

Main Findings: The study concludes that repeated LET failure stems from a complex interplay of academic, emotional, and contextual experiences. Quantitative analysis confirmed that scores in the Professional Education component were consistently lower than those in General Education, reaffirming a critical academic weakness. Qualitative findings highlighted significant psycho-emotional challenges among examinees, including stress, self-doubt, and financial hardship. Participants' trajectories were also shaped by their internal coping mechanisms, their attributions for failure, and the availability of support systems. These factors were synthesized into a proposed LET Readiness Framework grounded in psychological theory.

Novelty/Originality of this study: The research introduces a novel Holistic LET Readiness Framework that synthesizes Self-Efficacy, Attribution, and Self-Regulated Learning theories. It advances understanding by integrating academic, emotional, and institutional dimensions, offering a data-informed, human-centered model for teacher education institutions and policymakers.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) functions as a critical licensure screen [1] and a key mechanism for professionalization and quality control in the Philippine education system [2]. However, licensure

exams globally have also been identified as potential systemic barriers that can disproportionately affect candidates from specific demographic backgrounds [3]. In the Philippines, success rates, particularly for Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEd) graduates, highlight persistent challenges, making the exam a significant hurdle for many aspiring educators [4], [5]. This study investigates the interlocking factors contributing to these failures, moving beyond a narrow focus on academic shortcomings to explore a more holistic understanding of the examinee experience.

The challenges are well-documented, particularly concerning persistent academic weaknesses. Among the LET components, Professional Education (Prof Ed) consistently emerges as the most challenging [6], [7]. A large body of research confirms a strong link between pre-service academic achievement (such as college GPA) and LET performance [8]-[11]. This suggests that academic predictors, content knowledge [12], and the perceived readiness of students before graduation are fundamental to their success [13], [14].

However, “readiness” is not monolithic; it is a complex process. It involves navigating new curriculum frameworks [15]-[17] and developing core professional competencies [18]. It requires mastering specific pedagogical strategies for diverse subjects like science [19]-[21], STEM [22]-[24], literacy [25], and physical education [26]. Furthermore, the strategies teachers learn for fostering empathy [27], implementing authentic learning [28], managing disruptive behaviors [29], applying differentiated instruction [30], and implementing equity-based practices [31] are all distinct parts of the broad competence that the LET attempts to measure.

This persistent performance gap underscores the pressing need to re-evaluate curriculum delivery [32] and the collaborative relationships between universities and partner schools [33]. Institutions are thus encouraged to use tools like diagnostic assessments [34] and graduate tracer studies [35] to inform evidence-based curriculum revisions. The implications of this weakness extend beyond merely passing the exam; Prof Ed scores have been shown to be a strong predictor of in-service teaching effectiveness, linking licensure performance to actual pedagogical competence in the classroom [36].

Beyond academics, the preparation phase is a deeply socio-emotional journey [37], requiring significant personal and professional resources [38] and resilience [39]. Examinees, particularly repeat takers, must navigate competing life roles, such as caregiving and full-time employment [37]. These obligations can lead to cognitive overload, burnout, and diminished focus [40], compounded by major external stressors such as the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic [41]. Personal factors, including managing these responsibilities, significantly affect preparation [42]. Social support systems are critical; emotional encouragement, academic peer tutoring, and institutional scaffolding serve as protective buffers against this psychological burden. Conversely, the absence of such support can amplify feelings of isolation and hopelessness [37], [43]. Research confirms that success is influenced by a combination of both intrinsic and extrinsic personal factors [44].

Consequently, repeated failure can profoundly disrupt an individual's professional identity [37]. Graduates often report feelings of diminished self-worth and a psychological conflict, or dissonance, between their self-concept as a teacher and the lack of formal validation [45]. This can lead to withdrawal from the profession [37] and contributes to the broader, well-documented problem of teacher attrition [46]. In contrast, studies of topnotchers and successful examinees consistently highlight the importance of deliberate, intensive cognitive preparation (e.g., mock exams, peer learning) alongside psychological resilience [39], [47], [48]. This suggests that success in high-stakes exams demands not only content mastery but also adaptive self-regulation [40].

This study frames LET performance through a multi-theoretical lens to analyze this complex interplay of academic, motivational, and emotional factors. We draw from three established psychological theories: Self-Efficacy Theory [49]: Posits that one's belief in their capability to succeed is a critical determinant of motivation. This factor is well-documented in teacher education [20], [43], [50]. Attribution Theory [51], Explains how individuals' causal explanations for their failure shape their emotional responses and future motivation to re-engage. Self-Regulated Learning Framework [40]: Provides a model for understanding how examinees strategically manage their cognition, motivation, and behavior. This process is closely linked to developing professional resilience [39] within supportive, cohort-based learning communities [52]-[54].

While these factors are known individually, a holistic understanding of how they interlock among repeatedly failing BEEd graduates remains underdeveloped. Most existing literature focuses on isolated predictors (e.g., GPA or curriculum), failing to capture the lived experience where academic gaps meet socio-emotional burnout. This study addresses this gap, anchored in the understanding that failure is a complex phenomenon. Investigating this is urgent to prevent the loss of potential educators to attrition. The study aimed to address the following research questions: 1) What personal and academic experiences did BEEd graduates who failed the LET report?; 2) What factors did BEEd graduates perceive as contributing to their failure in the LET?; 3) How did failing the LET affect the professional and personal lives of BEEd graduates?; 4) What was the relationship between performance in Professional Education and General Education in the LET, and how could this inform the design of comprehensive LET review sessions?; 5) What themes were identified from the experiences of BEEd graduates who failed the LET that could support the development of a holistic framework?

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The study utilized a convergent mixed-methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to investigate the repeated failure of Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEd) graduates in the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET). The design was selected to allow the researcher to triangulate numerical trends from licensure performance with the depth of personal narratives, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the “interlocking” factors of failure than either method could yield alone. The study targeted BEEd graduates from institutions within the Bataan area, particularly those from BPSU-Bagac Campus, who had taken the LET but failed. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select six participants who met the following inclusion criteria: 1) Graduates of the BEEd program at BPSU-Bagac Campus; 2) Individuals who had attempted the LET at least once or twice; 3) Willing to voluntarily share personal, academic, and professional experiences.

There were no restrictions on age, gender, or socio-economic status, as the research aimed to gather diverse perspectives. Participants could be either employed or unemployed at the time of the study. Exclusion criteria were as follows: 1) Individuals who had never attempted the LET; 2) Graduates of non-BEEd programs or other institutions; 3) Those unwilling to participate in the qualitative process, not comfortable sharing personal narratives, or unavailable for data collection.

This careful delimitation ensured the richness and relevance of both quantitative and qualitative data. For the quantitative component, LET score reports were collected from each participant, particularly focusing on the General Education and Professional Education components. The qualitative component involved in-depth semi-structured interviews, designed to explore the psycho-emotional, academic, and contextual factors influencing examinees’ preparation, experiences, and reactions to failure. Interviews were conducted face-to-face or via secure online platforms, recorded with consent, and transcribed verbatim.

The quantitative component of the study employed a descriptive and correlational research design to analyze the performance of BEEd graduates in the General Education and Professional Education components of the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET). Descriptive statistics, including measures of central tendency and variability, were computed to provide a basic understanding of participant performance in each LET domain. These analyses were used to explore apparent disparities between components, particularly focusing on which areas posed greater difficulty.

Due to the small sample size and the ordinal nature of available academic indicators, Spearman’s rho correlation was utilized to examine the relationship between academic variables, such as general academic performance, and LET scores. This non-parametric test was chosen for its appropriateness in identifying monotonic associations within limited datasets that may not conform to normal distribution assumptions. Normality was checked using the Shapiro-Wilk test to determine the suitability of parametric procedures, but emphasis remained on non-parametric techniques due to the sample size and observed skewness in score distributions. Transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six-step method: familiarization with the data, initial coding, theme identification, theme review, theme definition, and final report writing. This approach enabled the extraction of recurring patterns related to emotional struggles, resilience, institutional support, and perceived causes of failure.

The research protocol was reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Committee of Davao de Oro State College, ensuring compliance with ethical standards. All participants provided written informed consent and were assured of the confidentiality of their responses. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. Pseudonyms were used in all qualitative reports to protect identities. The research protocol was reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Committee of Davao de Oro State College. To ensure rigor, member checking was employed, where participants reviewed their interview transcripts and the emerging themes to verify accuracy. Detailed descriptions of participant contexts were documented to support transferability. Reflexivity was practiced throughout the study, with the researcher maintaining a notes to monitor personal biases. All participants provided written informed consent, and pseudonyms were used to protect their identities.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study employed both quantitative and qualitative approaches to explore the complex factors influencing performance in the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET). The integration of descriptive statistics, Spearman’s rho correlation analysis, and thematic analysis of participant narratives offered a nuanced understanding of examinees’ preparation, struggles, and cognitive-emotional experiences. The analysis focused exclusively on first-time LET takers who graduated between 2023 and 2025, aligning with the study’s inclusion criteria. Repeaters, including those who graduated in previous academic years, were excluded, in accordance with the study’s exclusion parameters to ensure a consistent focus on recent graduates’ initial licensure performance (Table 1).

Table 1. Distribution of First-Time LET Takers from 2023–2025 Graduates and Excluded Repeaters Across Examination Periods

LET Period	First-Time (Included)	Repeaters (Excluded)	Notes
March 2024	2	3	Repeaters from other academic years
September 2024	1	3	Repeaters from other academic years
March 2025	5	3	Repeaters from other academic years
Total	8	9	First-timers included; repeaters excluded

Out of the total population of eight examinees, two declined to participate in the interview phase. As a result, six participants, representing 75% of the cohort, were included in the quantitative and qualitative components of the study.

Table 2. Individual LET Performance Profile of First-Time Takers (2023–2025 Graduates)

Participant	Sex	Year Graduated	Month & Year of Examination	General Education Component	Professional Education Component	Overall Performance Rating
1	M	2023-2024	March 2025	63.00	66.00	64.80
2	F	2023-2024	March 2025	62.00	64.00	63.20
3	F	2023-2024	March 2025	65.00	65.00	65.00
4	F	2022-2023	March 2024	65.00	65.00	65.00
5	F	2022-2023	September 2024	65.00	58.00	60.8
6	F	2022-2023	March 2024	71.00	66.00	68.00

Table 2 presents the sex, graduation year, examination date, and component scores (General Education, Professional Education, and Overall Rating) of six participants who took the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET). On average, participants scored slightly higher in General Education (65.17%) than in Professional Education (64.00%), suggesting that the Professional Education component may present more challenges or areas of difficulty for BEEd graduates, potentially contributing to their overall LET performance struggles.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of LET Components and Overall Rating

Descriptives	General Education Component	Professional Education Component	Overall Rating
N	6	6	6
Missing	0	0	0
Mean	65.2	63.8	64.5
Median	65.0	64.5	64.9
Standard deviation	3.13	2.99	2.38
Minimum	62	58	60.8
Maximum	71	66	68.0
Skewness	1.54	-1.97	-0.154
Std. error skewness	0.845	0.845	0.845
Kurtosis	3.15	4.23	1.21
Std. error kurtosis	1.74	1.74	1.74
Shapiro-Wilk W	0.825	0.749	0.941
Shapiro-Wilk p	0.098	0.019	0.667

As explored in the current study, examinee performance within the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) cohort, both descriptive and correlational analyses were employed. The descriptive statistics in Table 3 revealed closely clustered mean scores across the General Education (Gen Ed), Professional Education (Prof Ed), and Overall Rating components: 65.2, 63.8, and 64.5, respectively, indicating relative uniformity in participant performance. Similarly, the medians were nearly identical, ranging from 64.4 to 64.9, indicating that the central tendencies are well aligned across the board. The standard deviations were modest, 3.13 for General Education, 2.99 for Professional Education, and 2.38 for the Overall Rating, indicating that participants' performances in General Education, Professional Education, and the Overall Rating were fairly consistent across the group. No one was dramatically higher or lower than the others, suggesting a uniform level of performance (even though the average scores were still low). The minimum and maximum scores reinforce this, with General Education scores ranging from 62 to 71, Professional Education from 58 to 66, and Overall Ratings from 60.8 to 68.0. This range reflects a relatively homogenous group of examinees and suggests limited dispersion, likely

attributable to the retrospective and highly defined nature of the sample, which represents 75% of the population of failing LET takers from the specified retroactive cohort. However, deeper examination of the distributional characteristics revealed important distinctions: Gen Ed scores exhibited moderate positive skewness (1.54). This means that most of the participants scored lower, but a few scored much higher, pulling the average up slightly. In other words, there were more low to average scores, with some outliers doing much better. Whereas Prof Ed scores were negatively skewed (-1.97), suggesting the opposite pattern, most participants scored higher, but a few scored much lower, which pulled the average down a bit. Additionally, the kurtosis values, particularly for Prof Ed (4.23), implied a leptokurtic distribution, wherein scores are more peaked around the mean, reflecting greater homogeneity among participants in the domain of Prof Ed. Despite Prof Ed being more difficult (as seen in the lower average score), most participants scored closely together in that domain. In contrast, Gen Ed had more varied scores, with some performing quite well and others not as much. This could reflect a more uneven foundation in general knowledge, while teaching-specific skills posed a consistent challenge across the group.

In the test of normality, the Shapiro-Wilk test was employed due to the small sample size ($n = 6$), as it is considered more reliable for small samples. The test results revealed that the Professional Education Component significantly deviated from normality, $W = 0.749$, $p = .019$, indicating that its distribution is non-normal. A distribution is considered non-normal if the Shapiro-Wilk test yields a significant p -value ($p < .05$), indicating that the sample data significantly deviates from a normal distribution. In your case, the Professional Education Component fails the normality test, confirming it is not normally distributed. In contrast, the General Education Component ($W = 0.825$, $p = .098$) and the Overall LET Rating ($W = 0.857$, $p = .180$) did not show statistically significant deviations from normality at the conventional 0.05 level.

The descriptive profile of the data reveals closely clustered scores with limited variability as reflected in the test of normality, enhancing the internal consistency. Nonetheless, boxplots showed outliers in Gen Ed, Prof Ed, and Overall Performance Rating of the participants.

Table 4. Spearman's Rho Correlation Matrix Among LET Components and Overall Rating

Correlation Matrix		General Education Component	Professional Education Component
General Education Component	Spearman's rho		
	Df		
	p-value		
Professional Education Component	Spearman's rho	0.188	
	Df	4	
	p-value	0.722	
Overall Rating	Spearman's rho	0.647	0.672
	Df	4	4

Table 4 presents the results of Spearman's rank-order correlation, which examined the monotonic relationships among General Education, Professional Education, and Overall LET performance, using scores from six BEEd graduates who failed the licensure exam. The analysis revealed a strong positive correlation between the Professional Education component and Overall Rating ($\rho = 0.672$, $p = 0.144$). Although this relationship did not reach statistical significance, its magnitude points to Professional Education performance as a potentially substantial contributor to overall LET scores. Within this group of unsuccessful examinees, those who scored relatively higher in Professional Education also tended to achieve higher overall scores, even though all results remained below the passing mark. This pattern underscores the value of closely examining Professional Education as a focus area for targeted instructional improvement and intervention in future cohorts.

In contrast, the correlation between General Education and Overall LET performance was also strong in magnitude ($\rho = 0.647$) but statistically non-significant ($p = 0.165$). While this suggests that general knowledge proficiency may have some influence on LET outcomes, the evidence is less compelling than that for Professional Education. The weak and non-significant correlation between Gen Ed and Prof Ed scores ($\rho = 0.188$, $p = 0.722$) further supports the view that these components measure distinct domains of knowledge and skill. The aforementioned emphasizes a probable insight: intervention efforts should prioritize improving competence in Professional Education, as gains in this area may more directly translate to improved overall LET performance, a finding supported even within this limited, non-passing cohort.

It is important to note that the relationship between the component scores and the overall rating is not entirely independent. Since the Gen Ed and Prof Ed components contribute to the computation of the overall LET rating, a degree of correlation is mathematically expected. However, the discrepancy in the strength of these correlations is meaningful: if both components contributed equally, one would anticipate similarly strong correlations with the total score. The fact that Prof Ed shows a markedly stronger association suggests a potential disproportionate influence of this component on overall LET performance, at least within the cohort examined.

This stands with descriptive statistics scoring higher Gen Ed component than Prof Ed component, two independent variables, vis-à-vis to overall rating are dependent as both components are expected to have an association, yet inconclusive.

These findings must be interpreted in light of several important limitations. Foremost is the small sample size ($n = 6$), which results in low statistical power and a reduced ability to detect significant relationships, particularly for moderate correlations such as that observed with the Gen Ed component. In such conditions, non-significant findings should not be interpreted as definitive evidence of no relationship, but rather as inconclusive. Additionally, the high correlation between Prof Ed and Overall Rating may partly reflect structural overlap, given that the overall rating is derived from the component scores. Still, the differential correlation strengths indicate that Prof Ed performance may be a more consistent predictor of licensure success than Gen Ed, warranting further investigation.

This may further suggest and reinforce the value of reinforcing pedagogical foundations in teacher education curricula, as also interpreted in the descriptive statistics, while teaching-specific skills posed a consistent challenge across the group. However, given the small sample size and structural interdependencies among variables, future studies with larger samples and more advanced modeling techniques are recommended to validate and extend these preliminary findings. The current study serves as a foundation for the cohort with the same inclusion and exclusion criteria to put a degree of effort into the Prof Ed component. The quantitative evidences presented are not meant to generalize LET takers. In contrast, the current study aims to explore the reason why failure happens.

The preliminary quantitative data sets general information regarding the challenging component of the cases presented. The thematic analysis of participants' narratives reveals a multi-faceted experience of LET takers, characterized by the interplay of institutional support, personal struggles, and adaptive strategies. Four major themes emerged: (1) Balancing Support and Struggles in LET Preparation, (2) Disrupted Professional Identity and Limited Career Path, (3) Psycho-emotional Struggles in the Aftermath of Failure, and (4) Strengthening Cognitive Readiness through Intensive Review and Positive Mindset.

Balancing Support and Struggles in LET Preparation

Institutional encouragement and guidance from instructors emerged as vital factors shaping the academic readiness of participants. As one of the participants shared, "Tsaka lagi nilang inano sa amin, pagka lagi nang tinututukan niya sa amin yung mga education, lagi nilang sinasabi, oh wait to baka pumasok to sa let nyo, ganyan ganyan, in-advise nila sa amin din parati." (Participant 1). Such encouragement emphasizes the role of teacher-educators and institutions in fostering examinees' confidence and preparation, emphasizing that institutional support, including review programs and mentorship, correlates with improved licensure performance.

However, participants reported challenges stemming from competing responsibilities and time constraints. For example, one participant recounted difficulties balancing review and personal obligations: "'Yon nga, kasi 'yong working student ako, tapos nag-rereview ako, tapos pag-uwí ko nag-aalaga pa ako ng anak ko, kaya parang hindi ako masyado nakapag-focus..." (Participant 2). Moreover, participants described the pressure of time-limited examinations, a factor closely tied to test anxiety. One participant noted, "Pagdating ng exam, sobrang bilis ng oras... minsan, parang naiiwan na ako, hindi ko natapos lahat." This echoes research indicating that test duration intensifies cognitive load and anxiety, impacting performance in high-stakes exams like LET.

Disrupted Professional Identity and Limited Career Path

The aftermath of exam failure created identity struggles and career uncertainties among participants. Several expressed feelings of diminished self-confidence, as one remarked: "Siguro po, minsan kahit ano talagang masakit din 'yon kasi hindi ka nasama – lumabas 'yong pangalan mo... sobrang ano, nakaka-pressure." (Participant 3). Exam failure is often perceived as a personal setback rather than a temporary hurdle, echoing literature on how licensure exams act as gatekeepers to professional recognition and opportunities.

Others revealed a sense of professional drift, with some opting for alternative careers due to LET failure: "Nag-aano lang po ako, sir. Nag-anó lang po muna ako ngayon sa factory po, siguro..." (Participant 3). Institutional studies have noted that low licensure performance can affect graduates' employability and lead to career shifts. Furthermore, some participants encountered limited teaching opportunities due to the lack of a license: "Gusto ko po mag-apply... so, wala nga po akong lisensiya. So, hindi muna po ako nag-apply..." (Participant 1).

Psycho-emotional Struggles in the Aftermath of Failure

The participants' narratives reflect deep emotional and psychological impacts resulting from failure. Feelings of self-disappointment and anxiety were common: "Super mahirap. Sobra. Ang hirap po, ang hirap matulog po dahil hindi ka nakapasa... sobrang impact." (Participant 1). Such emotional responses are consistent with test anxiety outcomes, including sleeplessness, intrusive thoughts, and reduced well-being.

Participants also engaged in internal reflection and recognized their own shortcomings in preparation. For instance, “Yes, po. Siguro po, kulang pa talaga. Kulang pa talaga ‘yong review.” (Participant 1). This echoes self-regulated learning theory, where learners evaluate their strategies and outcomes to improve future performance.

Notably, some participants demonstrated acceptance and resilience, reframing failure as a learning experience: “Pero ano hindi naman ako nahihiya na ano, eh ganun talaga eh... marami din nag-aano kung hindi para sa’yo, may darating na mas higit na opportunity para sa’yo.” (Participant 5). Such coping mechanisms are aligned with findings that self-compassion and adaptive mindset foster persistence.

Strengthening Cognitive Readiness through Intensive Review and Positive Mindset

Participants emphasized that effective preparation requires active and focused engagement, not mere attendance at review centers. As one participant said: “Hindi kasi enough talaga eh. Hindi ‘yong pumasok sa review center is okay na ‘yon eh. Parang ‘yon nga doubtful ka parin pag uwi mo... kailangan mo ulit i-recall kung ano ‘yong mga napag-aranan.” (Participant 2). This observation aligns with the principle of active retrieval practice, which is more effective than passive review.

Face-to-face review sessions were preferred over online formats due to their interactive nature: “Mas maganda po yung face-to-face. Kasi kapag online po, andun yung pwede mag-search, pwedeng tulungan yung online...” (Participant 4). The need for structured study habits and time management also surfaced: “Yung, for example, maglalahan ka ng oras. Wari, review, tapos pahinga, tapos review ulit, yung gano’n po. Kasi kami po talaga nagkulang sa time management.” (Participant 4), which resonates with how time allocation and discipline predict success.

Participants highlighted the importance of mental and spiritual readiness, such as maintaining confidence and faith: “Ano, ang masasabi ko sa kanila is, maniwala sila sa sarili... especially, makuha ‘yong license... Huwag mong i-pressure ‘yong sarili mo.” (Participant 2). Spiritual practices, such as prayer and hope, were also reported as essential coping mechanisms: “Unang-una kapag mag-take na ganyan, meron kang pananalig...” (Participant 5). These findings align with the role of resilience, self-belief, and spiritual coping in high-stakes academic challenges.

As aforementioned, the Licensure Examination for Teachers is not solely a product of academic content knowledge quantified in numbers; nonetheless is shaped by a deeply interdependent ecosystem of cognitive preparation, personal discipline, institutional support, emotional resilience, and spiritual grounding. While the LET is often approached as a summative academic benchmark, the integrated analysis of quantitative and qualitative data reveals that examinees’ performance is complexly informed by psychological, social, and contextual factors. Probable effective interventions, therefore, must extend beyond content delivery to encompass structured review programs, mental health support, and time management training, elements that together scaffold a more holistic readiness among aspiring teachers at least with the mentioned cohort.

Interestingly, while Professional Education emerged as the lowest-scoring component among participants, it was also the domain they reported prioritizing most during review. This dissonance suggests a compelling cognitive and emotional investment in Prof Ed, which examinees perceive as central to their identity as future educators. As Participant 2 candidly explained, “Mas nagtutok po talaga ako sa Prof Ed. Parang ‘yon po kasi ‘yong core naming mga education students... doon kami medyo confident kahit paano.” Participant 3 echoed this familiarity: “Yong mga tanong kasi sa Prof Ed, minsan parang galing talaga sa mga diniscuss sa amin sa klase... so parang familiar.” These sentiments, while affirming their intrinsic motivation, may point to a false sense of readiness, wherein psychological attachment and perceived alignment with coursework mask deeper content gaps or ineffective review strategies. This theme aligns with Strengthening Cognitive Readiness through Intensive Review and Positive Mindset, yet reveals its potential limits in ensuring actual test success.

In contrast, General Education was widely perceived as diffuse, overwhelming, and less prioritized, despite some participants performing better in it. Participant 1 expressed: “Sa Gen Ed po kasi parang minsan nakakalimutan na kasi sobrang daming topic. Parang hindi mo alam kung ano ‘yong unahanin.” This lack of focus may explain inconsistent outcomes, including one notable high-scoring outlier (Participant 6, Gen Ed score = 71). The responses resonate with the theme Balancing Support and Struggles in LET Preparation, particularly for those managing time constraints, caregiving duties, or work obligations. As Participant 5 reflected, “Hindi ko talaga nabalikan ‘yong iba sa Gen Ed. Sa Prof Ed nalang ako nag-focus kasi feeling ko mas kaya ko siyang aralin.” This reinforces the notion that perceived review efficiency may not align with actual examination results, particularly when confidence is not supported by mastery.

The boxplot analyses visually captured this divergence in performance: Participant 6 emerged as a consistent high-performer across all components, particularly in Gen Ed, suggesting optimal cognitive readiness and possibly fewer contextual hindrances. Meanwhile, Participant #5, who reported balancing employment and childcare, scored markedly lower in Prof Ed (58) and Overall Rating (58.0), falling outside the lower bounds of the cohort and underscoring the compounded effects of pedagogical under-preparation and psychosocial stress. These individual cases illuminate the broader pattern that LET outcomes, while numerically summarized through

means and medians, are deeply personalized experiences shaped by varied access to resources, emotional regulation, and instructional coherence.

Beyond the realm of content mastery, the findings illuminate how psycho-emotional dimensions shape the licensure journey. Themes of Psycho-emotional Struggles in the Aftermath of Failure and Disrupted Professional Identity and Limited Career Path emerged from interviews, revealing how exam results triggered intense feelings of disappointment, anxiety, and self-doubt. Participant 1 shared: "Ang hirap po, ang hirap matulog po dahil hindi ka nakapasa... sobrang impact," highlighting the emotional toll of perceived failure and the broader psychological landscape that examinees must navigate. For some, the experience prompted a reevaluation of career goals, with Participant 3 expressing a temporary shift away from teaching: "Nag-aano lang po ako ngayon sa factory po," indicating a crisis of professional identity common in high-stakes licensure contexts. These emotional narratives align with literature on test anxiety and performance avoidance, reinforcing the need for licensure preparation models that incorporate not only academic training but also resilience-building interventions.

However, the study also surfaced narratives of adaptive reframing and spiritual coping, reflecting a belief among some participants that failure was not a terminus but a temporary detour. Participant 5's reflection, "Ganun talaga... may darating na mas higit na opportunity para sa 'yo," signals the presence of a growth-oriented mindset, which, when supported by familial or institutional encouragement, can foster persistence. These sentiments were often grounded in faith and community support—underscoring the role of spiritual and relational scaffolding in coping with high-stakes testing outcomes. Such findings resonate with self-regulated learning and affirm the utility of spiritual and emotional support systems as buffers against academic adversity.

Institutional culture also played a critical role. Participants valued structured mentorship, review programs, and constant reinforcement from instructors, which helped consolidate knowledge and boost self-efficacy. As Participant 1 recalled, "Lagi nilang sinasabi sa amin 'yan, baka lumabas sa LET... laking tulong po talaga," reinforcing the theme that institutional reminders and pedagogical repetition enhance not just cognitive recall but also the psychological readiness of examinees. This aligns with prior research emphasizing the impact of review programs, instructor support, and curricular alignment on LET outcomes.

The findings of the current study emphasize that LET performance is a multi-layered outcome, shaped by the interplay of cognitive proficiency, emotional resilience, institutional scaffolding, and adaptive behavior. Professional Education emerges as the most statistically predictive and psychologically salient domain, serving as the focal point of examinee effort and institutional preparation. Yet its impact is not isolated; it is embedded within broader life contexts that either enable or constrain engagement. The study offers compelling evidence for a paradigm shift in licensure preparation: from a narrow focus on knowledge transmission to a holistic model that supports the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual readiness of future educators.

The aforementioned converge around a multifactorial explanation of LET performance among BEEd graduates, grounded in Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory, Weiner's Attribution Theory, and the construct of academic resilience. These theories offer a layered lens through which the narratives of success and failure can be understood, interpreted, and scaffolded into a holistic readiness framework for LET takers.

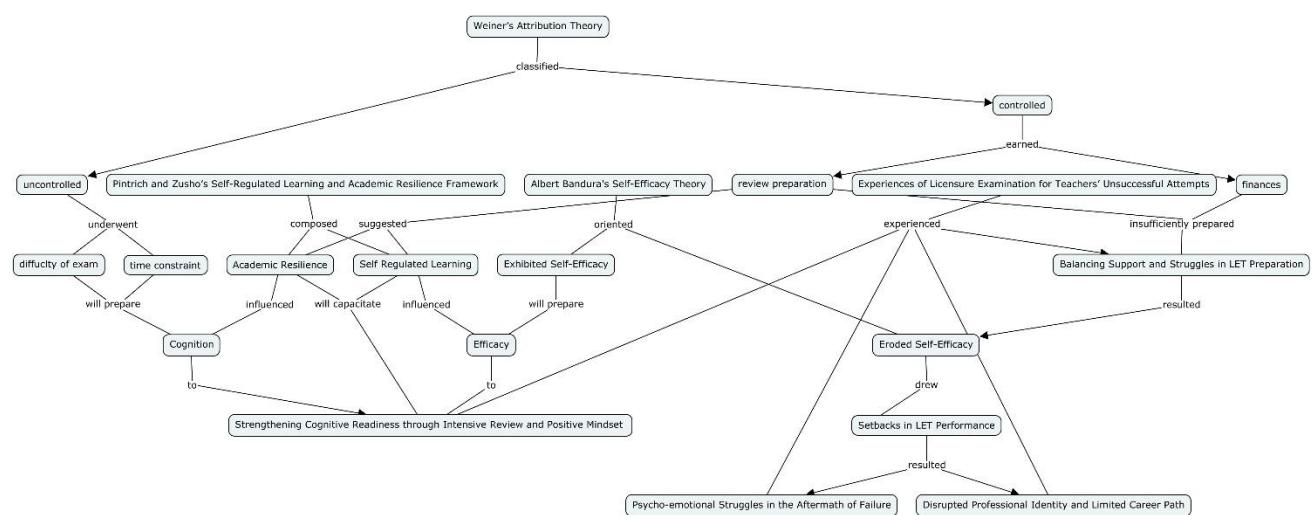


Figure 1. Thematic and Theoretical Framework of LET Takers' Challenges

Self-efficacy and the Internal Belief to Succeed

Bandura's self-efficacy theory posits that individuals' beliefs in their capabilities strongly influence how they think, feel, and act, especially when faced with challenges. Among participants, self-efficacy emerged as both a fragile and dynamic construct, shaped by institutional reinforcement and personal setbacks.

Participant 2, for instance, shared, "Mas nagtutok po talaga ako sa Prof Ed. Parang 'yon po kasi 'yong core naming mga education students... doon kami medyo confident kahit paano," signaling that familiarity with pedagogical content fosters not only competence but also confidence. This sense of mastery aligns with Bandura's premise that efficacy beliefs are built through enactive mastery experiences, success builds a robust sense of efficacy; failure undermines it.

However, repeated or perceived failure in the LET appeared to diminish self-efficacy, as shown in Participant 1's admission: "Super mahirap. Sobra. Ang hirap po, ang hirap matulog po dahil hindi ka nakapasa... sobrang impact." This highlights the debilitating emotional consequences when efficacy beliefs are fractured, especially in the absence of buffering mechanisms like encouragement or scaffolding. Yet even within these moments of doubt, some participants sought to maintain agency, reflecting a residual belief in eventual success: "Maniwala sila sa sarili... Huwag mong i-pressure 'yong sarili mo," (Participant 2).

Attributions of Failure: Controllable vs. Uncontrollable Causes

Weiner's Attribution Theory, helps contextualize how participants made sense of their failures. Graduates attributed their LET outcomes to both internal-controllable factors (e.g., effort, preparation) and external-uncontrollable ones (e.g., test design, time constraints). Participant 1 shared: "Yes, po. Siguro po, kulang pa talaga. Kulang pa talaga 'yong review," clearly identifying lack of preparation as a self-regulated, controllable factor. Such attributions are motivationally productive, as they retain the potential for future success through improved effort.

In contrast, the pressure and structure of the exam itself were framed as destabilizing and beyond control: "Pagdating ng exam, sobrang bilis ng oras... minsan, parang naiiwan na ako, hindi ko natapos lahat," reported Participant 2, suggesting that test anxiety and structural barriers also shape outcomes. This duality of attribution is critical: those who locate causality in controllable domains are more likely to persist, while those who emphasize uncontrollability may disengage over time.

Participant 3, who temporarily left the teaching trajectory, noted: "Nag-aano lang po ako ngayon sa factory po," reflecting an attribution that perhaps extended beyond personal capacity toward a systemic interpretation of failure. This professional detour reveals the psychological toll of attributing repeated failure to stable, external forces—an attribution profile Weiner identifies as demotivating.

Academic Resilience and Adaptive Reframing

Despite the challenges, narratives also revealed academic resilience, defined as the ability to persist and adapt in the face of academic adversity. Some participants embraced failure not as a finality but as part of a larger developmental trajectory. As Participant 5 put it, "Ganun talaga... may darating na mas higit na opportunity para sa'yo," signaling a reframing of failure as redirection rather than defeat. This aligns with the literature on growth mindset and self-regulated learning.

Faith and spirituality surfaced as central adaptive mechanisms. Participant 5 described turning to prayer and belief: "Unang-una kapag mag-take na ganyan, meron kang pananalig," illustrating how spiritual coping fosters emotional regulation and psychological stamina. These beliefs enabled some graduates to counterbalance the effects of failure, functioning as an emotional buffer aligned with the resilience framework.

Furthermore, time and strategy management were cited as active resilience-building practices: "Maglalaan ka ng oras... review, tapos pahinga, tapos review ulit," shared Participant 4, indicating structured engagement as a form of cognitive and emotional readiness. These strategies not only prepared them academically but also offered psychological containment amid uncertainty.

Institutional Scaffolding as a Source of Efficacy

Institutional factors played a pivotal role in shaping both efficacy and resilience. Repeated reinforcement from instructors and targeted review programs were described as crucial to preparation: "Lagi nilang sinasabi sa amin 'yan, baka lumabas sa LET... laking tulong po talaga," recalled Participant 1. Such academic nudges reflect what Bandura termed "verbal persuasion", external affirmations that bolster self-belief and reinforce persistence. Conversely, where institutional scaffolding was weak, participants reported disengagement or perceived barriers. For example, online review formats were deemed less effective due to lack of discipline and interaction: "Kasi kapag online po, andun yung pwede mag-search, pwedeng tulugan..." (Participant 4). This underscores that not all review environments equally foster resilience or self-efficacy, and highlights the importance of pedagogical structure and mentorship. The theoretical integration of self-efficacy, attribution, and resilience reveals that LET performance is not merely a function of content mastery but the culmination of complex and interacting psychological, institutional, and contextual variables. Belief in one's ability to succeed, the way one interprets failure, and the support systems available all influence whether a BEEd graduate persists, reframes, or retreats.

The integration of descriptive statistics and thematic narratives in this study underscores that LET performance is not solely determined by cognitive aptitude but by the interplay of self-belief, meaning-making,

and adaptive functioning. Interestingly, the lower performance in Professional Education, compared to General Education, complicates the assumption that familiarity equates to success. Despite participants repeatedly expressing a sense of confidence in Prof Ed content (e.g., “doon kami medyo confident kahit paano”), the results reveal a mismatch between perceived self-efficacy and actual outcomes. This gap suggests that Bandura’s self-efficacy may have operated more as perceived competence rather than accurate mastery, and when expectations were unmet, it led to emotional dissonance and reduced motivation. At the same time, Weiner’s Attribution Theory is vividly reflected in how participants rationalized their performance, some taking responsibility (“kulang pa talaga ‘yong review”), while others externalized failure (“sobrang bilis ng oras”), affecting their motivational trajectory. The attribution of failure to controllable causes aligned with proactive coping, while those attributing it to uncontrollable test conditions showed higher levels of disengagement or emotional burnout, as emphasized in Theme 3.

Despite these setbacks, many participants demonstrated the capacity for academic resilience, reframing failure as temporary and manageable rather than definitive. This is evident in their coping mechanisms, such as drawing strength from faith (“meron kang pananalig”), and engaging in regulated cycles of review and rest (“maglalaan ka ng oras... review, pahinga, review ulit”). These behaviors reflect not just emotional endurance but strategic self-regulation, aligned with Pintrich and Zusho’s model of adaptive framing and learning management. Theme 4 illustrates this well, showing how cognitive control and emotional stability were cultivated even amidst repeated failures. Moreover, institutional scaffolding was instrumental, when present, it provided motivation through verbal persuasion and structured review, enhancing both efficacy and resilience; but when weak (such as ineffective online reviews), it contributed to demotivation and withdrawal. Together, the findings underscore that LET performance is not purely academic but deeply psychological and contextual, rooted in belief systems, attribution styles, and the availability of responsive institutional support.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the repeated failure of BEEd graduates in the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) is not merely a deficit of academic content but a systemic outcome of interlocking curricular gaps, psycho-emotional burdens, and contextual constraints. While quantitative analysis identified Professional Education as the critical area of academic vulnerability, consistently scoring lower than General Education, the qualitative evidence demonstrates that this cognitive dissonance is exacerbated by external stressors, such as role strain and financial instability, which erode self-efficacy. These findings confirm that licensure outcomes are determined by a dynamic interplay between a candidate’s pedagogical mastery and their ability to navigate the psychological demands of high-stakes testing. A central contribution of this research is the formulation of the Holistic LET Readiness Framework. Grounded in the synthesis of Self-Efficacy Theory, Attribution Theory, and Academic Resilience, this framework advances the literature by providing a structured lens to view readiness not as a static trait but as a regulable process. It posits that sustainable success for repeaters requires the alignment of three domains: cognitive reinforcement (specifically in professional education), adaptive attributional styles (shifting from helplessness to strategy), and institutional scaffolding. This conceptual model moves the discourse beyond a “deficit narrative” of failing students toward a more integrated understanding of examinee resilience. Consequently, the study implies a necessary paradigm shift for Teacher Education Institutions and policymakers. To mitigate attrition and improve pass rates, institutions must transcend traditional review models to adopt data-informed, human-centered interventions. This includes the institutionalization of diagnostic predictive testing early in the curriculum to target Prof Ed weaknesses and the integration of psychosocial support systems that normalize the emotional challenges of the licensure journey. Ensuring the quality of the teaching workforce requires cultivating not only academic competence but also the holistic professional resilience necessary to endure and succeed in the testing process.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The research was funded by Bataan Peninsula State University (BPSU) through institutional research funding. The author extends heartfelt thanks to the institution for its commitment to the study. Sincere gratitude is also owed to the participants of the study for their invaluable contributions and to the faculty members who provided intellectual guidance.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

ZLA was responsible for the research design, data collection, data analysis, and manuscript preparation. JMF contributed to conceptual development, JART and MHMB, contributed to research methodology guidance, and critical review of the manuscript. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The author(s) declare no conflict of interest.

USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGY

The authors declare that no artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used in the generation, analysis, or writing of this manuscript. All aspects of the research, including data collection, interpretation, and manuscript preparation, were carried out entirely by the authors without the assistance of AI-based technologies.

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