



LEGACY OF SUCCESS: THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF BEED TOPNOTCHERS

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Abstract:

This study utilized a qualitative phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of BEED topnotchers from Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Colleges in their preparation and success in the Licensure Examination for Teachers. It focused on describing their personal and academic journeys, highlighting the challenges they encountered, the coping strategies they used, and the insights that contributed to their achievement. Through in-depth interviews, five participants shared meaningful narratives that were analyzed and organized into key themes. These included overcoming self-doubt through faith and effective strategies, using expectations as motivation, and viewing challenges as opportunities for growth. Their coping mechanisms involved time management, emotional regulation, social support, faith, and consistent study routines. The insights gained emphasized the importance of self-belief, discipline, humility, and inner drive. These findings carry significant implications for teacher education programs. They suggest the need to incorporate not only strong academic preparation but also psychological support, mentoring, and learner-focused review methods. Faculty and administrators are encouraged to develop responsive systems that support both the intellectual and emotional needs of aspiring educators. For future research, broader and more diverse samples, along with long-term and intervention-based studies, are recommended to further explore and enhance licensure

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exam preparation. Becoming a topnotcher reflects perseverance, faith, and dedication to the teaching profession.

Keywords: BEED topnotchers, licensure examination, lived experiences, coping strategies, success journey

1. Introduction

This study focuses on the importance of teacher quality in achieving inclusive and quality education, as emphasized through the Licensure Examination for Teachers mandated by Republic Act No. 7836. For Bachelor of Elementary Education graduates, achieving top ranks in the Licensure Examination for Teachers signifies academic excellence, professional readiness, and strong personal commitment to the teaching profession. This study recognizes that becoming a topnotcher reflects not only mastery of academic content but also perseverance, discipline, and the ability to overcome academic and personal challenges.

This study is grounded in the concept of lived experiences within a phenomenological framework, which seeks to understand how individuals perceive and give meaning to their journey toward licensure success. While previous research has largely focused on measurable predictors of examination performance, limited attention has been given to the subjective experiences of BEED topnotchers. Challenges such as self-doubt, pressure from expectations, mental fatigue, and emotional regulation play a significant role in licensure preparation and remain underexplored in existing literature.

This study situates licensure success within interconnected personal and environmental contexts, including institutional support, family and peer influence, and individual motivation. Guided by established educational and psychological theories, this study explores the challenges encountered, coping strategies employed, and insights gained by BEED topnotchers from Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Colleges. By examining these lived experiences, this study aims to provide meaningful insights that can inform curriculum development, review programs, mentoring initiatives, and support systems to better prepare future educators for success in the Licensure Examination for Teachers.

2. Literature Review

This section reviews significant scholarly literature that informed this study on the lived experiences of Bachelor of Elementary Education topnotchers. The sources consulted include peer-reviewed journal articles, books, institutional reports, and recent empirical studies related to teacher licensure examinations, academic achievement, motivation, and phenomenological research. These works provide essential background and context by explaining how licensure success is examined in educational research and how personal and environmental factors influence academic and professional outcomes.

Existing literature on the Licensure Examination for Teachers emphasizes that high performance is influenced by both academic preparation and psychological factors.

Studies grounded in Self Determination Theory, Social Cognitive Theory, and Expectancy Value Theory highlight the roles of intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, resilience, and goal orientation in sustaining effort during high-stakes examinations. Research also points to the importance of institutional support, curriculum alignment, and structured review programs in enhancing licensure performance. These findings support the assumption of this study that licensure success among BEED graduates is shaped by the interaction of individual motivation and external academic support.

Qualitative and phenomenological studies further reveal that top-achieving examinees experience significant challenges such as self-doubt, emotional pressure, and mental fatigue, which require effective coping strategies. However, despite the growing body of research on licensure performance, limited studies have focused specifically on the lived experiences of BEED topnotchers within the Philippine context. This study addresses this gap by synthesizing existing literature and applying a phenomenological approach to explore the personal experiences of BEED topnotchers from Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Colleges, thereby contributing deeper insight into the processes that lead to licensure excellence.

3. Material and Methods

This study employed a qualitative research approach using a phenomenological design to explore the lived experiences of Bachelor of Elementary Education topnotchers. The phenomenological method was selected to capture the personal meanings, perceptions, and interpretations of the participants regarding their journey toward achieving top ranks in the Licensure Examination for Teachers. This design allowed for an in depth understanding of participants' experiences rather than numerical measurement, making it suitable for the objectives of the study.

The participants of this study consisted of five BEED graduates from Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Colleges who achieved topnotcher status in the Licensure Examination for Teachers. The participants were selected through purposive sampling based on specific criteria, including completion of the BEED program, official recognition as LET topnotchers, and willingness to participate in the study. All participants were adults, with both male and female representation, and were of typical licensure examinee age at the time of examination. Ethical considerations were strictly observed, including informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and the right to withdraw at any point during the research process.

Data were gathered using a semi-structured interview guide developed by the researcher and validated by experts in education and research. In-depth interviews were conducted to collect rich and detailed narratives regarding the participants' challenges, coping strategies, and insights related to their licensure success. The interviews were audio recorded with permission, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed using thematic analysis. This involved familiarization with the data, coding of significant statements, clustering of meanings, and identification of emerging themes. Since this study was qualitative in nature, no statistical analysis was employed. Instead, trustworthiness was

ensured through credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability procedures. All abbreviated terms used in the study, such as BEED and LET, were clearly defined to ensure clarity and consistency throughout the research.

4. Results and Discussion

This section provides a descriptive and comparative analysis of the findings of the study in relation to existing literature and the stated objectives. The discussion is organized logically, highlighting the most significant results of the study on the lived experiences of BEED topnotchers. Only key and meaningful aspects of the findings are addressed, without repeating detailed results or introducing new data, to emphasize their relevance within the broader context of teacher licensure research.

The findings revealed that BEED topnotchers encountered considerable academic and psychological challenges during their preparation for the Licensure Examination for Teachers. These challenges included self-doubt, pressure from high expectations, mental fatigue, and difficulties in managing time and emotions. These results are consistent with previous studies on licensure examination topnotchers, which report that high-achieving examinees often experience heightened stress despite strong academic competence. The findings affirm that licensure success involves not only intellectual readiness but also emotional resilience and sustained commitment.

The study further found that the participants relied on effective coping strategies such as disciplined study habits, intrinsic motivation, faith, and strong support from family, peers, and mentors. These strategies align with existing literature grounded in Self Determination Theory and Social Cognitive Theory, which emphasize the roles of motivation, self-efficacy, and supportive environments in academic success. In the context of contemporary educational practice, these findings highlight the importance of holistic preparation for licensure examinations, suggesting that teacher education institutions should strengthen mentoring, psychosocial support, and learner-centered review programs to better support future LET takers.

5. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several theoretical and practical recommendations are proposed to strengthen teacher education and licensure preparation. From a theoretical perspective, future studies may further explore the lived experiences of licensure topnotchers using other qualitative approaches or mixed methods to deepen understanding of motivation, resilience, and meaning-making processes. Researchers may also examine the influence of contextual and cultural factors on licensure success across different institutions and regions to validate and expand the applicability of the findings of this study.

In terms of practical application, teacher education institutions are encouraged to enhance holistic review programs that address not only academic preparation but also psychological and emotional readiness for the Licensure Examination for Teachers.

Strengthening mentoring systems, peer support initiatives, and guidance services may help reduce self-doubt, examination pressure, and mental fatigue among licensure examinees. Institutions may also integrate study skills training, stress management strategies, and values formation activities into review programs to promote balanced and sustainable preparation.

This study also suggests directions for future research and broader social considerations. Future researchers may consider increasing the number of participants or conducting longitudinal studies to examine licensure experiences over time. Policymakers and educational leaders may use the insights from this study to design learner-centred and culturally responsive licensure support mechanisms. Overall, these recommendations highlight the importance of nurturing not only academic competence but also emotional resilience and social support to promote licensure success and contribute positively to the development of competent and committed educators.

6. Conclusion

This study concludes that the lived experiences of BEED topnotchers are shaped by a combination of personal, academic, and environmental factors. The participants faced significant challenges, including self-doubt, high expectations, and mental fatigue, which they overcame through discipline, effective study routines, intrinsic motivation, faith, and strong support from family, peers, and mentors. These experiences highlight that success in the Licensure Examination for Teachers is not solely determined by academic preparation but also by resilience, emotional regulation, and social support.

The study further concludes that coping strategies and personal insights play a critical role in achieving topnotcher status. Structured review practices, time management, goal setting, and holistic stress management were key mechanisms that enabled participants to navigate challenges effectively. The findings suggest that topnotchers actively integrate both cognitive and affective strategies to sustain focus, motivation, and confidence throughout the licensure preparation process.

Finally, this study concludes that understanding the lived experiences of BEED topnotchers provides valuable guidance for teacher education institutions, educators, and future licensure examinees. The integration of psychological support, mentorship, learner-centred review programs, and faith-based or culturally contextualized practices can enhance licensure readiness and academic excellence. Ultimately, topnotcher success reflects the interplay of personal determination, strategic preparation, and a supportive learning environment, offering a model for aspiring educators to follow.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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Jocelyn S. Jimenez, EdD, LPT, is a co-author and thesis adviser who provided guidance, expertise, and supervision throughout the research process. She specializes in teacher education, curriculum development, and educational research methodology. Ma'am Jocelyn has published and mentored numerous studies in the field of education and actively participates in initiatives aimed at improving academic performance and licensure outcomes.

Mark Paul D. Nitafan is a co-author and collaborator in this study, contributing to research design, data analysis, and manuscript preparation. He has extensive experience in education research and mentoring students in the College of Teacher Education. His professional interests include curriculum enhancement, teacher training programs, and evidence-based pedagogical strategies.

Together, the authors are committed to advancing educational research that enhances teacher preparation, supports aspiring educators, and strengthens licensure examination readiness in the Philippines.

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