

## How to Top the LET: Strategies from Davao del Sur’s Best

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigates the strategies, attributes, and institutional support that contribute to the success of topnotcher in the Licensure Examination for Teachers in Davao del Sur. The key objective is to confirm the strategies employed by LET topnotcher in their preparation and analyze how personal qualities, such as perseverance and motivation, influenced their performance. The research seeks to explore the possible contribution of the academic institution and the review centers attended by the candidates as factors leading to the factors leading to the topnotcher’ success. A qualitative case study design involves conducting semi-structured interviews with two LET topnotcher. Thematic analysis was conducted that unveiled recurring themes on effective ways of studying, personal attributes, and institutional support that influence performance in the board examination. Among the strategies being employed by the topnotcher were the use of goal setting, self-regulated learning, intensive reading, and participation in review programs. The important personal attributes comprising intrinsic motivation, resilience, and discipline also played a vital role in the preparations for the licensure exam. The present study brings to light important insights on what contributes to LET success, putting into focus that personal effort has to be complemented with support from the outside world. These findings can help future LET candidates adopt effective preparation strategies and inform educational institutions on how to better support their students. These insights have practical implications for teacher education, and licensure exam preparation.

**Keywords:** *Licensure Examination for Teachers, topnotcher, study strategies, motivation, institutional support.*

### INTRODUCTION

In the Philippines, the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) oversees the Board Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET), which is mandated by Republic Act No. 7836, also known as the "Philippine Teachers' Professionalization Act of 1994." The law was established to ensure high-quality education by maintaining rigorous standards for teacher licensure. For aspiring teachers, excelling in the LET is a critical milestone, as it not only demonstrates their competence but also enhances the overall quality of the teaching profession in the country. The LET serves as a gateway for individuals seeking to practice the profession, and its significance has led many to pursue exceptional preparation and training.

Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) play a pivotal role in preparing students to meet the demands of the LET by equipping them with the necessary knowledge, skills, and values. TEIs are responsible for ensuring that students become effective teachers who can contribute

meaningfully to the nation's educational goals. As part of this responsibility, TEIs must develop strategies to enhance their students' chances of success in licensure examinations, as this reflects the institutions' overall effectiveness in producing competent educators.

Despite the extensive focus on teacher preparation, many candidates face considerable challenges in passing the LET. Teacher candidates face significant challenges in preparing for these exams, including the need for critical thinking, effective question answering, and recalling complex concepts and theories. Preparing for the exam requires more than just knowledge; it demands critical thinking, effective study habits, and the ability to apply theoretical concepts in practical scenarios. Given the high expectations from society, including family and educational institutions, aspiring topnotchers are often under immense pressure to perform at their best. The need to excel, rather than merely pass, motivates many candidates to adopt specific strategies that lead them to the top of the rankings. Doing well in these exams was important for the quality of education and the professional growth of teachers in the Philippines (Raudenbush et al., 1992).

This study focuses on the strategies, personal attributes, and institutional support that contribute to the success of LET topnotchers from Davao del Sur. There is a gap in the existing research regarding the specific methods and personal characteristics that enable these individuals to achieve top rankings in the LET. By understanding these factors, this research aims to provide valuable insights that can inform the practices of both students and educators, ultimately leading to improved performance in the licensure examination. Furthermore, the study addresses the role of review centers and educational institutions in shaping the preparation journey of LET candidates, highlighting the importance of external support in achieving success.

The purpose of this research is to identify and examine the key strategies and attributes of LET topnotchers, as well as the impact of educational institutions on their preparation. Through qualitative interviews and data analysis, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors that contribute to outstanding performance in the licensure exam. The findings are expected to offer practical recommendations for aspiring teachers and educational institutions alike, helping to refine teaching methods and improve the preparation process for future LET candidates. By shedding light on the experiences of topnotchers, the study aims to inspire future educators to adopt effective preparation strategies and achieve excellence in their professional careers.

The research methods used in this study involved qualitative data collection through semi-structured interviews with two LET topnotchers from Davao del Sur. Thematic analysis was employed to identify common themes related to study strategies, personal attributes, and institutional support. The results highlight the importance of self-regulation, intrinsic motivation, and the significant role of review centers in exam preparation. These findings contribute to the growing body of literature on teacher preparation and licensure examination success, offering actionable insights for stakeholders in the education sector.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The literature review in this study provides a foundational understanding of the factors contributing to the success of Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) topnotchers in Davao del Sur. By situating the research within the existing body of knowledge, it identifies relevant theories, strategies, and findings from previous studies to contextualize the current research. The review also highlights the significance of personal attributes, institutional support, and strategic preparation in achieving success in licensure examinations.

**Study Strategies of Licensure Examination Topnotchers.** Achieving top scores in the LET is a prestigious accomplishment that reflects both individual effort and institutional effectiveness. According to Arenillo (2009), the performance of graduates in licensure exams like LET is significantly influenced by their pre-service education, particularly in general and professional education subjects. Broadbent (2017) emphasized that self-regulated learning, which involves managing study activities outside of the classroom, is crucial for exam success. By planning, monitoring, and adjusting their study approaches, students enhance their long-term retention and understanding of key concepts. Bjork (2014) further argued that strategies such as creating "desirable difficulties" can improve retention over time. While challenging, these techniques—such as spaced repetition and active recall—help students deeply engage with the material. Studies by Adesope et al. (2017) and Roediger & Karpicke (2006) also found that testing oneself and distributing study sessions over time leads to better long-term retention compared to passive review methods. Participants in this study shared that early preparation during their education, active participation in review programs, and focused final coaching were instrumental in their success. These strategies aligned with Gitomer, Brown, and Bonett's (2011) findings, which emphasize that excelling in basic skills tests increases the likelihood of passing licensure exams. Moreover, the use of well-designed practice tests and exposure to real exam conditions were cited as effective preparation techniques.

**Integrated Techniques.** The concept of integrated techniques, which involves combining diverse learning approaches, also plays a role in successful LET preparation. According to Thomas (2000), project-based learning and technology integration can significantly enhance student learning and engagement. This approach encourages collaboration, real-world problem solving, and the development of practical skills necessary for teaching. Gobet (2005) explained that theories such as chunking and template theory provide insights into how students learn and retain information more effectively. Moreover, Quiambao et al. (2015) noted that factors such as teachers' experience, quality of educational facilities, and student attributes like GPA and IQ are predictors of LET success. The importance of managing time effectively, as highlighted by Allen (2001), is crucial for balancing study commitments and achieving academic goals. Review centers, which provide concentrated exam preparation, play an essential role in helping students meet their academic objectives quickly and efficiently (McKeachie et al., 2013).

**Self-Care and Relaxation.** In addition to rigorous study strategies, maintaining well-being through self-care and relaxation was also identified as an important aspect of successful exam preparation. Kuykendall, Tay, and Ng (2015) highlighted the positive impact of leisure activities on emotional health and well-being. Engaging in hobbies, socializing, or physical activities can reduce stress and improve cognitive performance. Participants in the study emphasized the importance of balancing study with rest, indicating that maintaining a healthy routine helped them stay focused and avoid burnout during their preparation.

**Personal Attributes of Topnotchers.** Research shows that motivation is a key driver of academic success. Deci and Ryan (1985) explained that intrinsic motivation, which stems from an individual's interest in the task itself, plays a significant role in learning and performance. For LET topnotchers, personal attributes like perseverance, resilience, and self-confidence were instrumental in their journey. Participants described how intrinsic motivation, such as the desire to excel and make their families proud, sustained their focus and effort throughout the preparation process. Additionally, studies by Gottfried et al. (1985) demonstrated that intrinsic motivation leads to greater academic achievement and competence, as well as lower anxiety and a reduced reliance on external rewards. Albite (2019) supported

this, noting that topnotchers often set specific goals, identified their strengths and weaknesses, and maintained a disciplined approach to their studies.

**Institutional Support and Review Centers.** The role of educational institutions and review centers cannot be understated in preparing students for the LET. Review centers provide structured guidance, access to expert instructors, and practice exams that help students familiarize themselves with the exam format and content. Guinayen (2014) argued that the LET serves as a reliable framework for assessing the competencies of aspiring teachers, and review centers play a critical role in supporting students' success. Pascua et al. (2010) found that factors such as academic performance in general education, professional education, and specialization strongly predict board exam success. Additionally, Fallado's (2014) study identified the importance of institutional policies, faculty competence, and curriculum in shaping student performance. By creating supportive and nurturing environments, educational institutions contribute to students' academic success.

## **METHODS**

### **Research Design**

This section provides a detailed description of the procedures followed during the study, offering enough information to assess the reliability and validity of the findings, and allowing experienced researchers to replicate the study.

The researchers are using a descriptive case study. Yin (2003) stated that a case study design is used to answer how and why questions the participants cannot manipulate by the researchers, which can ensure unbiased answers, the researchers will cover contextual conditions believing that these are relevant to the phenomenon under study. While how” and “why” questions are emphasized, “what” questions are within the scope of case studies too. They help define the context and parameters of what is being examined. Baxter (2006) conducted a study using case study to determine the types of decisions made by nursing students and the factors that influenced the decision making. A case study was chosen because the case was the decision making of nursing students, but the case could not be considered without the context, it would have been impossible for this author to have a true picture of nursing student decision making without considering the contexts within which it occurred. The same goes with the LET board Topnotcher in their strategies used the researchers firmly believed looking at the background of LET topnotchers is essential to truly grasp their success. This case study approach, the researcher aims to go in-depth into the strategies and factors that contribute to the success of LET topnotchers, recognizing that the context matters in understanding their achievements.

### **Sampling**

The study focused on the topnotchers of the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) in Davao del Sur. The target population included two board topnotchers who demonstrated exceptional performance in the LET. A purposive sampling method was employed to select the participants. The respondents were chosen based on their achievement of being topnotchers, making them ideal subjects for understanding the strategies, attributes, and experiences that contributed to their success. The research context was limited to these individuals, as their experiences provided valuable insights into the research questions.

### **Data Collection**

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews. The interviews aimed to gather detailed information about the strategies, attributes, and preparation methods used by the LET topnotchers. The interview guide included questions related to study habits, participation in review programs, personal attributes (such as motivation and resilience), and the role of educational institutions in their preparation. Each interview was conducted in a quiet and private setting to ensure that the respondents could speak freely and in detail about their experiences.

The interviews were recorded with the participants' consent, and the responses were later transcribed verbatim for analysis. In addition to the interviews, the researchers reviewed available literature and institutional records to supplement the findings.

### Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyze the interview transcripts. This method involved identifying recurring themes related to the study's main objectives. The data were coded, and common themes such as effective study strategies, intrinsic motivation, the importance of self-regulation, and the role of institutional support were extracted. The analysis also involved comparing the responses of the two participants to identify any variations or commonalities in their preparation approaches. Models and formulas were not applicable in this study, as it relied on qualitative data. However, the study's design ensured that the findings were sufficiently detailed to allow for a comprehensive understanding of the success factors for LET topnotchers.

By employing semi-structured interviews, purposive sampling, and thematic analysis, the study provides a resilient framework for understanding the strategies and attributes that contribute to high performance in the LET.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study reveal several important factors that contribute to the success of Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) topnotchers in Davao del Sur. These findings are aligned with the research objectives, highlighting strategies used by topnotchers, their personal attributes, and the impact of institutional support on their achievements. The primary goal of this study was to identify the specific strategies and personal attributes that enabled topnotchers to succeed in the LET. By doing so, it sought to offer insights that could be applied to improve the preparation and success rates of future licensure candidates. Additionally, the study aimed to explore how educational institutions and review centers contributed to the overall preparation of these top performers.

**Table 1.**  
*Strategies Employed During Licensure Exam Preparations*

Categories	Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Study Techniques</li> </ul>	<p>Active Learning Strategies</p>



Techniques such as acronyms, visual imagery, and rhymes facilitate easier retrieval of information during exams.

### **Resource Optimization Strategies**

Resource optimization strategies involve maximizing the use of available tools and materials to enhance exam preparation. Topnotchers adeptly manage their resources to support effective and efficient studying.

*Review Center Condensation.* Many top students use review centers to distill large volumes of information into concise and relevant summaries. These centers often provide focused content that highlights key areas of the exam. By using these condensed materials, topnotchers can streamline their study efforts and ensure they cover essential topics comprehensively.

*Technology Aid.* Leveraging technology aids, such as educational apps, online courses, and digital flashcards, provides a modern edge to exam preparation. Top students often use these tools to access interactive and engaging content, track their progress, and receive instant feedback. Technology aids can also offer flexibility in studying, allowing for on-the-go learning and review.

*Optimizing Educational Resources.* Top students are adept at utilizing a wide range of educational resources, including textbooks, academic journals, and online databases. They select high-quality materials that align with their study goals and integrate them effectively into their preparation plan. By optimizing these resources, they ensure they have a well-rounded understanding of the subject matter.

### **Well-Being Strategies**

Well-being strategies are essential for maintaining mental and emotional health during the intense preparation period. Top students recognize the importance of balancing their study efforts with activities that promote overall well-being.

*Leisure.* Incorporating leisure activities into the study routine helps prevent burnout and keeps motivation high. Top students often engage in hobbies, relaxation techniques, or social activities to recharge and maintain a positive outlook. Leisure activities provide a necessary break from studying, which can enhance cognitive function and overall productivity.

*Recreation.* Recreational activities, such as exercise, sports, or outdoor activities, play a crucial role in managing stress and maintaining physical health. Regular physical activity helps improve concentration, reduce anxiety, and increase energy levels. Top students often integrate recreational activities into their schedule to ensure they remain physically and mentally fit throughout their preparation.

In summary, topnotchers employ a combination of active learning strategies, resource optimization strategies, and well-being strategies to excel in their licensure exam preparations. By actively engaging with the material, effectively utilizing available resources, and maintaining a balanced approach to well-being, they set themselves up for success in their exams.

Furthermore, the topnotchers utilized a combination of goal-setting, self-regulation, and discipline in their preparation. Key strategies included intensive reading, time management, and the use of review materials provided by review centers. Many participants reported that early, and continuous preparation, alongside participation in structured review programs, played a crucial role in their success. This aligns with findings by Arenillo (2009) and Broadbent (2017) that stress the importance of self-regulated learning and deliberate practice.

**Table 2.**  
*Personal Attributes and Characteristics Demonstrated by Topnotchers*

Categories	Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Personal Development</li> <li>● Striving for continuous improvement</li> </ul>	<b>Committed to Self-Improvement</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Motivation</li> <li>● Adaptability</li> <li>● Handle Pressure</li> </ul>	<b>Resilient</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Support</li> <li>● Communication</li> <li>● Provision of needs</li> </ul>	<b>Family Oriented</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Prayer</li> <li>● Personal Faith</li> <li>● Dependence on God</li> </ul>	<b>Spiritually-Attuned</b>

### **Committed to Self-Improvement**

Commitment to Self-Improvement is fundamental to the success of topnotchers. This attribute reflects an individual's dedication to ongoing personal and professional development. Such commitment drives them to continuously seek better study methods, refine their skills, and address weaknesses. By setting high standards and striving for excellence, they ensure that their preparation is thorough and effective, leading to outstanding exam performance.

### **Resilient**

Resilience is another critical attribute that topnotchers demonstrate. This characteristic encompasses motivation, adaptability, and the ability to handle pressure. Resilience enables individuals to persevere through the demanding and often stressful preparation period, adapt to unexpected challenges, and remain focused on their goals despite setbacks. This inner strength helps them maintain a positive outlook and continue working towards their objectives, even under intense pressure.

### **Family-Oriented**

Being family-oriented also significantly influences the success of topnotchers. Students are particularly vulnerable to the psychological impact of family dynamics due to their limited coping mechanisms and ongoing physiological development (Rawat & Sehwat, 2021). According to Fuligni (2011), being part of a family entails certain obligations to be considered a relevant member. This attribute involves valuing and prioritizing family support and connections. Family-oriented individuals often receive emotional encouragement and practical help from their loved ones, which can be a strong source of motivation and stability. This support network provides a foundation for managing stress and balancing study with personal life, contributing to overall success.

### Spiritually-Attuned

Lastly, being spiritually-attuned adds a profound dimension to the personal attributes of topnotchers. Spiritual commitment, which includes practices such as prayer, personal faith, and dependence on God, often plays a crucial role in providing inner strength and guidance. Spirituality helps individuals remain grounded and focused, offering a sense of purpose and resilience during challenging times. McKaughan and Snyder (2022), assert that faith and faithfulness function synergistically to sustain relationships, enabling individuals to navigate various challenges while upholding mutual reliance. This attribute supports their ability to navigate the pressures of exam preparation with a sense of peace and confidence.

Together, the attributes of commitment to self-improvement, resilience, family orientation, and spiritual attunement form a robust framework for achieving excellence in licensure exams. Topnotchers consistently demonstrate these traits, reflecting a balanced approach to personal development, emotional support, and spiritual well-being. They exhibit resilience through their ability to handle stress, maintain focus, and adapt to challenges, which underscores their intrinsic motivation to excel and make their families proud. This motivation aligns with Deci and Ryan's (1985) work, which highlights the crucial role of intrinsic motivation in student achievement and persistence. The integration of these attributes ensures that topnotchers not only prepare effectively but also thrive under pressure, ultimately leading to their remarkable success in licensure exams.

**Table 3.**  
*Influence of Schools and Review Centers*

Categories	Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expectations and Pressure</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motivation to pass the LET</li> </ul>	<b>Institutional Pride and Expectations</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solid Educational Grounding</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensive Preparation</li> </ul>	<b>Providing Structured and Effective Educational Foundation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support and Encouragement</li> <li>• Gratitude and Recognition</li> </ul>	<b>Nurturing and Supportive Environment</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaging Learning Activities</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interactive learning</li> <li>• Building our Confidence</li> </ul>	<b>Providing Focused Preparation</b>

### **Institutional Pride and Expectations**

The drive to become a top performer in licensure exams is heavily influenced by the expectations set by schools and review centers. Institutions with a track record of producing high achievers create a culture of excellence that sets ambitious goals for current students. This environment not only motivates students to strive for top positions but also subjects them to significant pressure to meet these high standards. While such pressure can encourage students

to excel, it can also lead to stress if not managed properly. Balancing institutional pride with supportive measures is crucial in helping students navigate this pressure effectively.

### **Providing Structured and Effective Educational Foundation**

Becoming a topnotcher in licensure exams requires a solid educational foundation, which is provided by schools and review centers through structured and effective preparation. Review centers help contribute to students' academic performance by offering focused preparation, expert guidance, and customized study plans. They provide regular practice tests, fostering familiarity with exam formats and improving time management skills (Andrada, 2022). These activities foster an environment where students actively construct knowledge, moving beyond the passive receipt of information (Rafiq, Afzal & Kamran, 2022). A comprehensive curriculum that aligns with exam requirements equips students with essential knowledge, while review centers offer targeted resources such as practice exams and specialized instruction. Research consistently demonstrates the significant impact of gamification on student motivation and engagement. Nacional (2023) asserts that gamification offers a fun and interactive learning experience, incorporating elements like points, badges, and leaderboards to increase motivation and engagement. This combined approach ensures that students are well-prepared both in terms of content and test-taking strategies. By integrating thorough coursework with focused preparatory support, institutions create a strong foundation that aids students in reaching their highest potential.

### **Nurturing and Supportive Environment**

For students aiming to excel as topnotchers, a nurturing and supportive environment is key. Schools and review centers that offer encouragement and constructive feedback help create a motivating atmosphere. Recognizing students' achievements and providing consistent support not only boosts confidence but also maintains motivation. Engaging learning activities and interactive methods further enhance students' commitment and performance. By fostering an environment that combines academic challenge with emotional support, institutions play a vital role in helping students achieve their licensure exam goals.

Indeed, educational institutions and review centers provided essential support to the topnotchers. The academic programs at their institutions prepared them with foundational knowledge, while review centers helped them focus on key topics and provided practice tests. The structured guidance from these institutions was particularly valuable, as it gave topnotchers a clear roadmap for their exam preparation. This is consistent with research by Gitomer et al. (2011) that highlights the importance of well-structured exam preparation strategies. An unexpected finding was that while most topnotchers emphasized the value of review centers, a few noted that personal study and self-regulation were equally, if not more, important. This suggests that while external support is beneficial, internal motivation and discipline may play a more pivotal role in achieving top results. This finding could imply that future research should further explore the balance between institutional support and self-driven preparation. The results suggest that educational institutions and review centers should continue to offer structured support while encouraging students to develop self-regulation skills. Schools could implement programs that foster these skills, such as workshops on goal-setting and time management. Additionally, providing students with early access to review programs and practice exams could further improve their chances of success.

### **Synthesis**

The study's findings show how different elements combine to help topnotchers succeed in the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) in Davao del Sur. Understanding this interaction can guide future candidates in their exam preparation.

**Linking Strategies with Personal Attributes.** Topnotchers use various strategies to excel, such as active learning, effective study techniques, and advanced note-taking methods. They also engage in collaborative learning and regular self-assessment. These strategies are supported by personal qualities like dedication to self-improvement, resilience, family support, and spirituality.

Active learning and study techniques, such as summarizing and questioning, are closely related to a topnotcher's commitment to improving their skills. By actively engaging with the material and adjusting their methods, candidates enhance their understanding and retention. This dedication shows their drive to continually improve.

Resilience is crucial for handling the pressures of exam preparation. Resilient candidates are better able to stay focused, adapt to challenges, and keep their motivation high. This personal strength allows them to persist with their study plans and make the most of their preparation.

**Importance of Institutional Support.** Educational institutions and review centers play a key role in preparing topnotchers by providing structured guidance and focused content. This support helps candidates cover essential topics and manage their study time effectively.

However, the study also highlights that while external support is beneficial, personal motivation and discipline are equally important. Candidates who combine institutional help with self-regulation and goal-setting often achieve better results. This balance between external and internal factors is crucial for success.

**Comprehensive Preparation Approach.** The findings suggest that a well-rounded approach to exam preparation is most effective. For future candidates, this means:

**Using Effective Study Techniques.** Applying strategies like active learning, detailed note-taking, and self-assessment helps deepen understanding and retention of the material.

**Developing Personal Attributes.** Building resilience, staying committed to improvement, and maintaining a strong support network are important for handling the demands of exam preparation.

**Leveraging Institutional Support.** Making the most of the resources and guidance from educational institutions and review centers, while also focusing on self-discipline, optimizes preparation.

**Maintaining Well-Being.** Balancing study with leisure and recreational activities helps manage stress and keeps motivation high.

By integrating these strategies with personal qualities and institutional support, aspiring topnotchers can better prepare for the Licensure Examination for Teachers. This balanced approach not only improves their chances of success but also prepares them for their future careers.

## CONCLUSION, IMPLICATION, SUGGESTIONS, AND LIMITATIONS

**Conclusion.** This study explored the strategies, personal attributes, and institutional support that contributed to the success of topnotchers in the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) in Davao del Sur. The findings highlight that successful candidate employed a combination of goal-setting, intensive reading, participation in review programs, and self-

awareness as part of their preparation strategies. Additionally, their intrinsic motivation, perseverance, and resilience were key personal attributes that supported their journey toward success. Educational institutions and review centers played a significant role in providing structured guidance, review materials, and practice opportunities. These findings offer valuable insights for both aspiring LET candidates and the institutions responsible for preparing future teachers.

**Implication.** The results of this study suggest several important implications for Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs), review centers, and policymakers. TEIs should integrate more structured preparation programs into their curriculum, focusing not only on content mastery but also on the development of essential skills like time management, self-regulation, and critical thinking. Review centers should continue offering tailored review programs, but also emphasize the importance of self-driven learning strategies. Policymakers may also consider developing policies that promote access to quality review materials and programs for all prospective teachers, ensuring equitable opportunities for LET success.

**Suggestions.** One limitation of the study is its small sample size, as it focused on two topnotchers from Davao del Sur. This may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research could expand the scope by including a larger sample size across different regions to validate these findings. Another limitation is the reliance on self-reported data, which may introduce bias. Future researchers should expand the sample size to include a larger pool of topnotchers from various regions in the Philippines to validate and generalize these findings. Additionally, exploring the role of modern technological tools, such as online learning platforms, in LET preparation could offer insights into how digital resources can complement traditional review strategies. Furthermore, future studies could examine the long-term career impact of the preparation strategies used by topnotchers and how these strategies influence their professional performance as educators.

**Limitations.** This study is not without its limitations. Firstly, the small sample size, consisting of only two LET topnotchers from Davao del Sur, limits the generalizability of the findings. The reliance on self-reported data may also introduce bias, as participants could have provided socially desirable responses rather than objective accounts of their experiences. Additionally, the study focused primarily on successful candidates, leaving out those who did not pass the exam, which could provide a more balanced view of the factors contributing to LET performance. Future studies should aim to address these limitations by including a more diverse participant pool and utilizing additional data collection methods such as direct observations or assessments. By acknowledging these limitations and considering the study's implications, the findings contribute to a better understanding of the factors that lead to success in the LET and offer practical guidance for future candidates and educational institutions alike.

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