Reassessing Employment Trends and Outcomes for Teacher Education Graduates in a Changing Educational Landscape

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This study delves into the employment outcomes of the 2021-2022 College of Education (COED) Alumni from Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology (NEUST) Gabaldon Campus, employing a quantitative approach, specifically, the descriptive-correlational design. A cross-sectional survey utilizing a web-based questionnaire was employed to collect quantifiable data from COED graduates regarding their general information, post-college training and advanced studies, current employment, encountered challenges, and coping strategies. The study assesses the graduates' employment readiness, the challenges they faced, their coping mechanisms, and their current job status. Results reveal that the majority of these graduates are aged 23 or younger, predominantly female, and single, with a focus on pursuing the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET). Many quickly secured jobs, primarily in temporary roles and local companies. Interestingly, graduates tended to disagree with the challenges they encountered and displayed adaptable and effective coping strategies. The study highlights significant relationships between training and performance in professional examinations, as well as the notable influence of gender on job application challenges, through the use of Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. This investigation sheds light on the career trajectories of COED graduates from NEUST Gabaldon Campus and offers valuable insights for future graduates and institutions alike.

Keywords: post-pandemic, employment status, coping mechanisms, challenges, teacher education graduates

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly disrupted traditional educational systems worldwide, forcing institutions to rapidly adapt to distance learning modalities (Carrillo, 2020). In the Philippines, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) mandated the implementation of flexible learning in higher education, including for teacher education programs (CHED, 2020). The CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) no. 04 series of 2020 stipulated the CHED guidelines in implementing the flexible Learning while the CMO no. 06 series of 2022, further reiterated to sustain flexible learning in Higher Education.

While this transition provided necessary continuity, it also presented unique challenges for students, particularly those nearing graduation.

This study aims to investigate the experiences of the first cohort of College of Education graduates who completed their degrees during the pandemic. Specifically, it will explore the challenges they encountered in job seeking, their employment preparation strategies, coping mechanisms, and their current employment status. By understanding these factors, this research seeks to identify areas for improvement in teacher education curricula and support services to better equip future graduates for the post-pandemic job market.

A tracer study is a very effective approach for assessing the whereabouts and performance of graduates in the workplace; it also helps to trace whether the graduates are in line for teaching-related jobs. Tracer studies also sought information from graduates regarding the compatibility of the knowledge and skills they acquired with their job.

It is supported by the study of Cuadra, et. al. (2019) that a tracer study is an assessment of graduates from academic institutions, which is being conducted a few years after graduation. The subjects of a tracer study can be numerous, but common subject, includes questions on study progress, the transition to work, work entrance, job career, and use of learned competencies. The tool's ultimate purpose is rebuilding employability skills to make graduates be more competitive (Hadromi, et. al, 2021)

The challenges faced by newly graduated teachers, particularly in the context of a pandemic-induced shift to online learning, have become a pressing issue worldwide. In the study of Sensoy Murt, et. al. (2023), their findings revealed that preservice teachers faced challenges related to graduation, employment, and future teaching competencies during the pandemic. However, they also developed positive coping mechanisms, including self-care, technological skill-building, and crisis management.

Previous studies have consistently highlighted the difficulties in securing employment, adapting to the demands of the teaching profession (Konig, et. al., 2020), and navigating the challenges of remote instruction (Goodwin, et. al., 2023; Livingston, 2017])

While the Philippines has experienced its own unique set of challenges in teacher education and employment, the global trend of increasing teacher shortages and the impact of the pandemic on education systems worldwide underscore the need for comparative analysis. By examining international research on teacher education and employment outcomes, this study aims to provide a broader context for understanding the experiences of Filipino teacher graduates.

Despite the growing body of literature on teacher education and employment, there remains a gap in understanding the specific challenges faced by graduates who completed their studies during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study seeks to address this gap by providing a detailed analysis of the experiences of the first cohort of Filipino teacher graduates who transitioned to flexible learning.

By examining the challenges, coping mechanisms, and employment outcomes of these graduates, this research contributes to the broader understanding of the impact of the pandemic on teacher education and provides valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and support services.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative method utilizing a descriptive-correlational research design to gather quantifiable information for statistical analysis of the population sample. This approach is commonly used in market research to collect and describe the characteristics of a specific demographic segment. According to Bhat (2020), descriptive research involves observing, describing, and documenting various aspects of the phenomenon. The design describes what actually exists, determine the frequency with which it occurs, and categorizes the information. Correlational design, on the other hand, purports to systematically investigate the nature of relationships, or associations between and among the given variables. It will examine if changes in one or more variables are related to changes in other variables. These correlations analyze the direction, degree, magnitude, and strength of the relationships or association.

This research design was used to provide systematic information about the profile of the target respondents, employment status, training and advance studies they have taken and the challenges they encountered and coping mechanisms in terms of job seeking and the relationships that occur naturally between and among the given variables under investigation.

Data Collection

To examine the preparation for employment, challenges encountered, coping mechanisms, and current employment status of the respondents, the researcher employed a cross-sectional survey which focuses on a single point in time. Due to social restrictions and health protocols during this time of the pandemic, survey questionnaires were administered through web-based (Google Forms) and other online platforms such as Facebook Messenger, E-mails, and Short Message Service (SMS) through which the respondents can be reached. The researcher sought permission and was issued with an endorsement letter by the Campus Director, requesting all the target respondents to cooperate and respond to the survey questionnaire. The said endorsement letter, together with the Consent Form and the links to the questionnaire, was sent to all the respondents via e-mails to ask for their approval and permission. The respondents were able to access the Google forms and submit their responses. The researcher, afterwards, downloaded the responses from the Google forms.

Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling, specifically total sampling, was used to select the targeted sample from the population. The target population was the College of Education Alumni who graduated in June 2022 from NEUST Gabaldon Campus. The sample size was the total population of College of Education Alumni, which comprised 41 graduates. These

graduates were specifically selected as they were the first batch to graduate during the pandemic.

Instrument

To gather the necessary information, the researchers administered a structured survey questionnaire adapted from the CHED graduate tracer study. The questionnaire was modified to align with the current research objectives.

The research instrument consisted of five parts, namely: (I) General Information, including age, sex, civil status, degree obtained, and professional examinations taken; (II) Training(s) and advanced studies attended after college; (III) Employment Data, including employment status, job title, and type of employer; (IV) Challenges encountered after graduation; (V) Coping mechanisms used to address challenges.

Validity and Reliability

The modified questionnaire was subjected for content validation through checking and confirmation by the four (4) experts in the field of education. Its reliability was tested through field testing. The statements, along with the response categories arranged in an agreement-disagreement continuum, were presented to a group of subjects excluded from the target respondents of the study. This is an opportunity for the questionnaire developer to learn if any items are being misunderstood, as well as whether respondents have suggestions for possible improvements to the items. A rough idea of the response distribution to each item can also be obtained, which can be useful in determining whether there is enough variation in the response. Internal consistency reliability, as measured by alpha coefficient reliability or Cronbach Alpha, is used to assess the instrument's reliability (Ghazali, 2016). The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the modified items in Challenges encountered after graduation and Coping mechanisms used to address challenges were 0.933 and 0.913, respectively, suggesting an excellent degree of internal consistency.

Data Analysis

To facilitate analysis and interpretation, the data was coded, tallied, and tabulated before being subjected to the following statistical treatments:

Frequency and percentage distribution were employed to categorize respondents based on their personal background variables, such as civil status, sex, degree, and others. This analysis provided insights into the demographic composition of the study sample.

The weighted mean was utilized to determine the average responses to the different options in the second part of the questionnaire. This measure allowed for the calculation of the mean score for each response option, taking into account the varying degrees of agreement expressed by respondents.

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to examine the association between respondents' profiles and their preparations, challenges encountered, coping mechanisms, and current employment status. This correlation analysis identified any significant relationships between these variables and provided

insights into the factors that may influence the employment outcomes of pandemic graduates.

FINDINGS

Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 provides an overview of the respondents' profile. The data reveals that 22 respondents (53.7%) are 23 years old, eight (19.5%) are 22 years old, five (12.2%) are 24 years old, and there are two (4.9%) each for 25 and 26 years old. Additionally, one respondent (2.4%) falls into the age categories of 27 and 29 years old. The gender composition of the respondents reveals that a substantial majority are females, comprising 34 respondents (82.9%), while the male respondents make up the remaining 7 respondents (17.1%). In terms of marital status, the majority of the respondents are single, accounting for 39 respondents (95.1%). Furthermore, the majority of the respondents, specifically 34 (82.9%), have taken the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET), while the remaining 7 (17.1%) have not pursued any professional examinations.

Table 1
Profile of the respondents

Profile		Frequency	Percent
1. Age			
	22	8	19.5%
	23	22	53.7%
	24	5	12.2%
	25	2	4.9%
	26	2	4.9%
	27	1	2.4%
	29	1	2.4%
	Total	41	100%
2. Sex			
	Male	7	17.1%
	Female	34	82.9%
	Total	41	100%
3. Marital Status			
	Single	39	95.1%
	Single Parent	1	2.4%
	Married	1	2.4%
	Total	41	100%
4. Professional Examination Taken			
	Licensure Examination for Teachers	34	82.9%
	Not Applicable	7	17.1%
	Total	41	100%

Trainings and Advanced Studies Attended by the Respondents

Table 2 provides a breakdown of the respondents' training attendance. Out of the respondents, 22 (53.7%) were engaged in Review Center training, 11 (26.8%) were

pursuing self-review, five (12.2%) were participating in free review services provided by NEUST, two (4.9%) were attending short courses sponsored by TESDA, and one (2.4%) was enrolled in free online training.

Table 2
Trainings and advanced studies attended by the respondents

Training/s and Advanced Studies Attended	Frequency	Percent
Formal Review Centers	22	53.7%
Short Course/Training Programs (TESDA)	2	4.9%
Self-Review	11	26.8%
Online Teacher Training	1	2.4%
Review Services by the Institution	5	12.2%
Total	41	100%

Employment Data of the Respondents

Duration Before the Respondents Landed on a Job

Table 3 presents the duration of time it took respondents to find employment. The data reveals that nearly half of the respondents (46.3%) secured a job within the first two months of their search. Notably, 15 respondents (36.6%) chose not to answer this question. Of the remaining respondents, 12.2% found a job within three to four months, 2.4% found a job within five to six months, and 2.4% took more than seven months to find a job.

Table 3
Duration before the respondents landed on a job

Duration	Frequency	Percent
1-2 months	19	46.3
3-4 months	5	12.2
5-6 months	1	2.4
7 months and above	1	2.4
Not applicable	15	12.2
Total	41	100

Respondents who are Presently Employed

Table 4 presents the employment status of the respondents. As shown in the table, nearly half of the respondents (48.3%) were currently employed, while a significant portion (46.3%) were not currently employed. A small percentage (4.6%) had never been employed.

Table 4
Respondents who are presently employed

Number of Presently Employed	Frequency	Percent
Yes	20	48.8
No	19	46.3
Never Employed	2	4.9
Total	41	100

Type/s of Company/Industry

Table 5 presents the distribution of respondents' current employment across various company/industry types. Notably, over half of the respondents (51.2%) chose not to respond to this question. Among those who provided responses, the majority (26.8%) were employed as professionals, indicating a strong representation of respondents in this category. Additionally, service workers and shop and market sales workers accounted for 9.8% of the responses, followed by clerks (7.3%), officials of government and special interest organizations (2.4%), and plant and machine operators and assemblers (2.4%).

Table 5

Type/s of company or industry

Type/s of Company or Industry	Frequency	Percent
Government and Special Interest Organization	1	2.4
Education Sector	11	26.8
Clerk/Office Work	3	7.3
Service workers/Shop/Market Sales Worker	4	9.8
Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers	1	2.4
Not applicable	21	51.2
Total	41	100

Relevance of their First Job to Their Course in College

Table 6 presents the relevance of respondents' first jobs to their college courses. Notably, over half of the respondents (51.2%) chose not to respond to this question. Among those who provided responses, a significant portion (24.4%) indicated that their first jobs were related to their course, suggesting that their education directly prepared them for certain employment opportunities. However, an equal proportion of respondents (24.4%) reported that their first jobs were not related to their course, highlighting the versatility of teacher education graduates and their ability to adapt to diverse work environments.

Table 6

Relevance of their first job to their course in college

Relevance of their First Job to Their Course in College	Frequency	Percent
Yes	10	24.4
No	10	24.4
Not Applicable	21	51.2
Total	41	100

Factors Contributing to Unemployment among Respondents

Table 7 presents the reasons why the respondents are not yet employed. As shown in the table, over half of the respondents (51.2%) chose not to respond to this question. Among those who provided responses, the most common reason for unemployment was family concerns or personal family problems (19.5%) followed by the desire to further their studies (12.2%), lack of work experience (9.3%), not yet finding a job (4.9%), and lack of job opportunities (2.4%).

Table 7
Factors contributing to unemployment among respondents

Factors Contributing to Unemployment among Respondents	Frequency	Percent
Advance further study	5	12.2
Family concern	8	19.5
Lack of work experience	4	9.3
No job opportunity	1	2.4
Did not look for a job	2	4.9
Not Applicable	21	51.2
Total	41	100

Present Employment Status of the Respondents

Table 8 provides a comprehensive overview of the current employment status of the survey respondents, shedding light on the varied nature of their occupational engagements. Out of the total respondents, it's noteworthy that 43.9% chose not to provide information for this particular survey item, potentially indicating a degree of sensitivity or reluctance to disclose their employment status. For those who did disclose their status, the distribution is as follows: 39.1% of respondents held contractual positions, 9.8% were employed as regular workers, 7.3% occupied temporary positions, and a mere 2.4% reported being self-employed or engaged in casual labor.

Table 8
Present employment status of the respondents

Present Employment Status of the Respondents	Frequency	Percent
Regular	4	9.8
Contractual	14	39.1
Temporary	3	7.3
Self-employed	1	2.4
Casual	1	2.4
Not applicable	18	43.9
Total	41	100

Employment Challenges Encountered by the Respondents

Table 9 outlines the fifteen (15) challenges faced by the survey respondents, offering a comprehensive view of their experiences. Based on the research findings, it is apparent that most respondents expressed disagreement regarding several challenges. "The job opportunities are limited" stands out with a high weighted mean of 2.54, interpreted as agreement. Following closely is "I am having difficulty to focus on reviewing on my own in preparation for LET" with a weighted mean of 2.52, also interpreted as agreement. On the other hand, "Looking for a job is stressful" received a weighted mean of 2.46, indicating disagreement, as did "I am having a hard time to attend online review" with a weighted mean of 2.37. "I am pressured to get a reasonable job" garnered a weighted mean of 2.34, also reflecting disagreement. "I am having difficulty reaching my targets after graduation" and "I lack motivation to look for jobs related to my degree" both share a weighted mean of 2.22, denoting disagreement. Similarly, "They are not experiencing anxiety in terms of job hunting" and "I lack experience in career adjustment" both have a weighted mean of 2.17, interpreted as disagreement. "I

am not confident enough about the knowledge I gained" is represented by a weighted mean of 2.07, signifying disagreement. "My knowledge about the job that I am applying for is not sufficient" has a weighted mean of 2.02, indicating disagreement, and "The skills that I gained are not enough to land a job" has a weighted mean of 1.95, also suggesting disagreement. Notably, "I didn't gain enough training during my internship" received the lowest weighted mean of 1.88, showing disagreement. The data indicates that most respondents disagreed with the aforementioned challenges, leading to an overall weighted mean of 2.24, interpreted as disagreement.

Table 9
Employment challenges encountered by the respondents

Employment Challenges Encountered by the Respondents	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
My knowledge about the job that I am applying for is not sufficient.	2.02	Disagree
The skills that I gained are not enough to land a job.	1.95	Disagree
I didn't gain enough training during my internship.	1.88	Disagree
Looking for job is stressful.	2.46	Disagree
I am pressure to get a reasonable job.	2.34	Disagree
The job opportunities are limited.	2.54	Agree
I am experiencing anxiety in terms of job hunting.	2.17	Disagree
Not enough financial support to enter the review center.	2.51	Agree
I am having difficulty in reaching my targets after graduation.	2.22	Disagree
I lack the ability to overcome self-doubts.	2.15	Disagree
I lack experience career adjustment.	2.17	Disagree
I lack of motivation to look for jobs related t my degree.	2.22	Disagree
I am not confident enough about the knowledge I gained.	2.07	Disagree
I am having a hard time to attend online review.	2.37	Disagree
I am having difficulty to focus on reviewing on my own in preparation for LET.	2.51	Agree
Total Weighted Mean	2.24	Disagree

Coping Mechanisms of the Respondents

Table 10 presents a comprehensive list of twenty (20) coping mechanisms employed by the respondents after graduation, shedding light on their post-graduation strategies. Notably, most respondents displayed a high level of agreement with several coping mechanisms.

The top-rated coping mechanism is "I try to avoid negative thoughts about finding jobs," which garnered the highest weighted mean of 3.32, signifying strong agreement. Additionally, several other coping mechanisms scored significantly high in agreement: "I practice time management when preparing for my online reviews," "I always look for other opportunities available," "I ask for help/guidance from a friend/mentor when I feel overwhelmed while doing review for preparation for LET," and "I look for free LET Review materials on the internet," all with a weighted mean of 3.29 and a verbal interpretation of strongly agree.

Furthermore, "I always create a relaxed study environment during review sessions" and "I identify my strengths and weaknesses to improve my skills" both received a weighted mean of 3.20, indicating agreement. Overall, most respondents agreed with the adoption of these coping mechanisms, resulting in an overall weighted mean of 2.97, verbally described as "Agree."

Table 10
Coping mechanisms of the respondents

Employment Challenges Encountered by the Respondents	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
I attend different seminars to gain new knowledge related to my field of my specialization.	2.95	Agree
I watched online webinars that helps me to gain knowledge.	3.07	Agree
I find a local job club to network with other professionals, job seekers, and people who are all looking for career change or learning opportunities.	2.78	Agree
I attend workshop to enhance my skills.	2.61	Agree
I attend TESDA trainings that help me to develop my technical skills.	2.68	Agree
I identify my strengths and weaknesses to improve my skills.	3.20	Agree
I practice time management when preparing for my online reviews.	3.29	Strongly Agree
I try to avoid negative thoughts about finding jobs.	3.32	Strongly Agree
I always look for other opportunities available.	3.29	Strongly Agree
I ask for help/guidance from a friend/mentor when I feel overwhelmed while doing review for preparation for LET.	3.29	Strongly Agree
I look for free LET Review materials on the internet.	3.29	Strongly Agree
I ask some peers for us to have review sessions together.	3.05	Agree
I always create a relaxed study environment during review sessions.	3.20	Agree
I don't use any social media while reviewing to avoid getting distracted.	2.66	Agree
I am looking for free review centers in preparation for LET.	2.88	Agree
I consider applying for other jobs even those that are not related with teaching while waiting for LET schedule.	2.68	Agree
I am applying to private schools to have teaching experience while waiting the LET schedule.	2.85	Agree
I look for other LET Review materials or resources.	3.15	Agree
I enrol to related post graduate studies or programs to enhance my professional competence.	2.54	Agree
I apply part time job and manage own business for extra income.	2.56	Agree
Total Weighted Mean	2.97	Agree

Relationship of Respondent's Profile and Training, Challenges Encountered, Coping Mechanisms, and Employment Status

Table 11 shows the relationship of the respondents' profile and their training, challenges encountered, coping mechanisms, and employment status. The data reveals that there is no significant relationship between respondents' sex and their training, as

indicated by a p-value of .331. A similar lack of significant relationship is observed between civil status and training, with a p-value of .206. In contrast, the data highlights a highly significant relationship between training and professional examination, with a p-value of .009. It was also revealed that a highly significant relationship between respondents' sex and the challenges they faced, as indicated by a p-value of .037. Similarly, no significant connection was observed between perceived challenges and professional examination, with a p-value of -182. It was also highlighted that no significant relationship was observed between respondents' profiles (sex, civil status, and professional examination taken) and their coping mechanisms. The p-values for these relationships are .927, .095, and -193, respectively. Moreover, no significant relationship was observed between respondents' profiles (Sex, Civil Status, and Professional Examination) and their employment status. The p-values for these relationships are -0.193, -0.101, and 0.033, respectively. Notably, the study showed that the sex of the graduates had a significant relationship with their employment. Additionally, the analysis revealed a significant relationship between the respondents' civil status, graduation year, and eligibility with their employment.

Table 11
Relationship of respondent's profile and training, challenges encountered, coping mechanisms, and employment status

		p-value	r-value	Interpretation
1. Sex				
	Trainings Attended	.331	-.145	Not significant
	Employment Challenges	.037	-277	Highly Significant
	Coping Mechanisms	.972	-.005	Not significant
	Employment Status	0.226	-0.193	Not significant
2. Civil Status				
	Trainings Attended	.206	-.187	Not Significant
	Employment Challenges	.606	-.068	Not significant
	Coping Mechanisms	.095	-221	Not significant
	Employment Status	0.531	-0.101	Not Significant
3. rofessional Examination				
	Trainings Attended	.009	.388**	Significant
	Employment Challenges	-182	0.14	Not significant
	Coping Mechanisms	-193	-.173	Not significant
	Employment Status	0.838	0.033	Not significant

Relationship of Respondent's Employment Status and the Challenges they Encountered and their Coping Mechanisms

Based on the data analysis, no significant relationship was observed between respondents' employment status and their perceived challenges, as indicated by a p-value of -0.233. Similarly, no significant relationship was found between employment status and perceived coping mechanisms, with a p-value of 0.143. These results suggest that respondents' employment status was not significantly associated with the challenges they faced or the coping mechanisms they employed.

Table 12
Relationship of respondent's employment status and the challenges they encountered and their coping mechanisms

		p-value	r-value	Interpretation
Employment Status				
	Challenges Encountered	0.526	0.102	Not significant
	Coping Mechanisms	0.102	-0.233	Not significant

DISCUSSION

The analysis of the data from the first cohort of College of Education graduates who transitioned to flexible learning during the pandemic yielded several significant findings, which can be categorized into distinct themes for a more systematic discussion.

Demographic Profile

The demographic profile of the respondents indicates that a substantial majority were under 23 years old, which aligns with the typical graduation age in the Philippines (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2013). This age group is predominantly female, reflecting the gender dominance in teacher education programs, as noted by Gines (2014). Furthermore, most respondents were single, a trend consistent with the general characteristics of young graduates (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2019). Notably, a significant number of respondents had taken the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET), underscoring their commitment to pursuing careers in education (Natalie et al., 2022).

Training and Preparation

In terms of training and preparation, a considerable portion of respondents attended review centers, which correlates with previous research indicating that such preparatory programs can enhance LET performance (Amparo, 2012; Visco, 2015). However, Dagdag et al. (2017) highlight that the relationship between course audit review and licensure examination outcomes is complex, suggesting that multiple factors influence LET performance. This complexity necessitates a comprehensive approach to understanding how various training modalities can affect graduates' readiness for the examination and subsequent employment.

Employment Outcomes

Regarding employment outcomes, nearly half of the respondents secured jobs within two months of initiating their job search, likely due to their openness to non-teaching positions (Table 12). This flexibility in job preferences appears to have facilitated their employment upon completing the licensure exam. A significant portion of respondents found themselves in professional roles, reinforcing the notion that teacher education programs equip graduates with versatile skills applicable in various fields (Cornillez et al., 2021). While many graduates secured positions aligned with their educational background, a notable percentage transitioned into non-teaching roles, echoing findings from Aquino et al. (2015) that emphasize the broad applicability of skills acquired through teacher education.

Challenges and Coping Mechanisms

Despite the positive employment outcomes, the respondents encountered various challenges, including limited job opportunities, difficulties concentrating on LET review, and inadequate training during internships. Interestingly, most respondents expressed disagreement with these challenges, suggesting they were effectively coping with the pandemic's adversities. The coping mechanisms employed included avoiding negative thoughts, practicing time management, seeking support from friends and mentors, and utilizing free LET review materials. These strategies likely contributed to their resilience during a tumultuous period, reflecting the importance of mental health and social support in navigating career transitions (Holmes, et. al. 2020).

Relationships and Implications

The data also revealed a significant relationship between training and professional examination outcomes, underscoring the critical role of preparatory training in influencing LET results (Visco, 2015). Gender differences emerged, with males perceiving job applications as more challenging compared to their female counterparts (Cruickshank, 2016; Burn & Pratt-Adams, 2015). Notably, no significant relationships were found between the respondents' profiles—such as sex, civil status, or professional examination—and their coping mechanisms or employment status. This finding suggests that effective coping strategies were prevalent across the cohort, indicating that individual demographic factors did not significantly impact their employment outcomes.

Generally, the findings of this study have important implications for teacher education programs and support services. They highlight the necessity of equipping graduates with a diverse skill set that extends beyond subject-specific knowledge, including communication, problem-solving, and adaptability skills (Teo, 2021). Additionally, the study emphasizes the need for ongoing support and guidance for graduates as they navigate the job market, suggesting the implementation of career counseling, mentorship programs, and workshops focused on job search strategies (Parker, et. al., 2021). Furthermore, the findings point to the importance of preparing graduates for the challenges of flexible learning and remote work environments, advocating for the development of technological skills and fostering resilience (Susin, et. al., 2023;

Forster, 2021). Finally, this study underscores the need for further research to explore the long-term impacts of the pandemic on teacher education graduates and to identify additional strategies for supporting their success in an evolving job market.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the resilience and adaptability of College of Education graduates who transitioned to flexible learning during the pandemic. Despite facing challenges such as limited job opportunities and difficulties with licensure examinations, most respondents effectively coped using strategies like time management and seeking support from peers. Nearly half secured jobs within two months, often due to their openness to non-teaching positions, demonstrating the versatility of skills acquired through teacher education programs. The findings further emphasize the importance of comprehensive preparatory training in influencing licensure examination outcomes and suggest that graduates need diverse skill sets that extend beyond subject-specific knowledge, including communication and problem-solving abilities. Ongoing support, such as career counseling and mentorship programs, is crucial for helping graduates navigate the job market. Additionally, preparing them for flexible learning and remote work environments is essential for their success.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Specifically designed career counselling services may be offered to help graduates navigate the transition from education to the professional world. The institution may continue advertising its free review services to its graduates to improve Licensure Examination passing rate. Educational institutions may incorporate practical job preparation in their curriculum to enhance graduates' competitiveness in the local job market. Given the positive outlook on pandemic-related challenges, institutions may continue providing support structures that contribute to effective coping mechanisms during difficult times. Incorporating resilience-building strategies into educational programs is recommended to equip students with the skills needed to navigate evolving landscapes, especially during crises like the pandemic. Institutions may explore targeted interventions for gender-specific job application challenges, and consider offering additional support to address these disparities. Fostering a supportive environment that transcends employment status, ensuring all graduates receive the necessary support for their professional journeys is recommended.

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