

Leaving The Dream: The Lived Experiences of Licensed Professional Teachers Pursuing Non-Teaching Careers

Ibrahim C. Budzal Jr.¹, Nancy B. Espacio, EdD¹

¹*Sultan Kudarat State University, EJC Montilla, Tacurong City, Sultan Kudarat, Philippines*

Email of Corresponding Author: bbudzal@gmail.com

Publication history:

Received: September 13, 2026

Accepted: October 18, 2026

Revised: October 15, 2026

Published: October 19, 2026

International Journal of Sustainable and Integrated Studies, Vol. 1, No. 3, pp. 649–658, October 2026.

Abstract

This study explored the lived experiences, career decisions, professional identities, and future aspirations of Licensed Professional Teachers (LPTs) who pursued non-teaching careers in SOCCSKSARGEN (Region XII), Philippines. Anchored in Moustakas' Transcendental Phenomenology, and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, the study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design involving eight purposively selected Bachelor of Secondary Education graduates majoring in Social Studies who passed the Licensure Examination for Teachers between 2015 and 2023 but had never entered formal teaching employment. Data were collected through validated, semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted face-to-face or online and analyzed using Colaizzi's seven-step phenomenological method. Findings revealed that financial stability, professional advancement, family responsibilities, work-life balance, and social expectations influenced participants' career decisions. Despite experiencing uncertainty, regret, and societal pressure, participants maintained their professional identities and applied transferable teaching competencies, including communication, leadership, mentoring, adaptability, and problem-solving, across alternative occupations. Their experiences demonstrated professional growth, career flexibility, and continued appreciation of the teaching profession, with some remaining open to future teaching opportunities. The findings informed the proposed Career Awareness and Responsive Empowerment for Licensed Professional Teachers (CARE-LPT) program, emphasizing career guidance, competency development, mentoring, and professional support. The study aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) and Sustainable Development Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) by highlighting lifelong learning, professional adaptability, and meaningful employment opportunities. Its sustainability implications included strengthening institutional career guidance, promoting workforce adaptability, and supporting responsive teacher education programs that recognize diverse professional pathways.

Keywords: Career Adaptability; Career Development; Licensed Professional Teachers; Non-Teaching Careers; Professional Identity; SOCCSKSARGEN; Transcendental Phenomenology

1. Introduction

The career decisions of Licensed Professional Teachers (LPTs) in the Philippines have become increasingly relevant to teacher education, employment mobility, and workforce development. Although passing the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) establishes professional eligibility, some graduates pursue non-teaching occupations because of financial considerations, career opportunities, and personal aspirations. This study explored the lived experiences of Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSED) graduates majoring in Social Studies in SOCCSKSARGEN (Region XII) who obtained teaching licenses but pursued non-teaching careers, focusing on their experiences, social contexts, professional identities, and future career perspectives.

Teaching contributes significantly to educational and societal development, with countries such as Finland, Japan, and Singapore emphasizing professional preparation and institutional support. In the Philippines, the LET serves as a professional qualification requirement under Republic Act No. 7836 (Bellen et al., 2022). However, some LPTs pursue employment in corporate services, business, virtual assistance, and overseas industries because of financial stability, professional advancement, and work-life balance (Cahilog et al., 2023). Their communication, instructional, and interpersonal competencies remain transferable across occupations (Poláková & Panlaqui, 2023). In SOCCSKSARGEN, despite the presence of 74 Teacher Education Institutions (Palomar et al., 2025), licensure does not necessarily guarantee teaching employment (Collado & Espero, 2023), while alternative industries provide opportunities for career mobility (Limbaga, 2026).

Career decisions among education graduates are influenced by personal motivations, social expectations, professional rewards, and employment opportunities (See et al., 2022; Bergey and Ranellucci, 2021). Cultural expectations and professional experiences also shape teaching intentions and occupational commitment (Ye et al., 2021; Wang and Zhang, 2021). Financial circumstances, workplace satisfaction, and career advancement further influence employment preferences (Almario, 2021; Digamon & De la Peña, 2021). Professional licensure does not always result in classroom employment, as graduates may encounter employment delays, institutional barriers, and alternative opportunities (Olvido et al., 2024; Collado and Espero, 2023). Career transitions may involve family influence, personal fulfillment, and adjustments to unfamiliar workplaces (Tag-ulo et al., 2025). Compensation, workload, and institutional conditions also influence occupational decisions (Jerez et al., 2025; Sarpamones and Ibojo, 2024; Pinuela, 2023; Roa, 2025; Ahmad et al., 2024). Alternative careers may offer financial stability, flexibility, and professional growth (Necesito and Mamaril, 2025; Belida et al., 2024; Laher, 2024). Teacher education graduates possess transferable competencies, including communication, adaptability, critical thinking, and technological skills, that support employment across industries (Poláková and Panlaqui, 2023; Tom, 2026; Agbayani-Pineda, 2025; Valtonen et al., 2021). Their transitions also involve professional identity reconstruction, career satisfaction, and self-directed learning (Beijaard et al., 2004; Sun et al., 2022; Fu and Niu, 2025).

Globally, teacher career decisions reflect changing professional expectations, social influences, and employment opportunities (Ye et al., 2021; Fu & Niu, 2025). In the Philippines, socioeconomic conditions, labor market demands, and institutional recruitment practices influence graduates' occupational choices (Almario, 2021; Bustos, 2024; Mejia et al., 2025; Juntilla-Amora and Simpall, 2025). Migration and employment opportunities outside teaching further demonstrate the importance of economic considerations in career decisions (Cahilog et al., 2023). In SOCCSKSARGEN, the presence of established teacher education institutions (Palomar et al., 2025) contrasts with the reality that some licensed graduates pursue employment outside teaching (Collado & Espero, 2023). These circumstances highlight the need to understand the experiences of LPTs navigating alternative careers within the region.

This study was anchored in Moustakas' Transcendental Phenomenology (1994) and the Hierarchy of Needs Theory by Abraham Maslow (1954). Transcendental phenomenology guided the examination of participants' lived experiences, personal meanings, and interpretations of non-teaching career transitions. Maslow's theory provided a motivational perspective for understanding how financial security, employment stability, professional recognition, and self-actualization influenced occupational choices (Mauluddiyah et al., 2021). Additionally, Career Construction Theory explained how individuals interpreted previous experiences, present competencies, and future career possibilities (Savickas, 2002). These perspectives supported the examination of career decisions, professional identity, and personal fulfillment among LPTs.

Using the Miles (2017) taxonomy, the study identified knowledge-void, practical-knowledge, and population gaps. Although previous research examined the experiences of LPTs pursuing non-teaching careers in Bukidnon (Miranda and Paglinawan, 2025) and the business process outsourcing sector in Davao Oriental (Tom, 2026), limited evidence addressed the experiences of BSED Social Studies graduates in SOCCSKSARGEN. Existing studies also emphasized employment transitions and adaptability (Collado & Espero, 2023; Agbayani-Pineda, 2025), with insufficient attention to how non-practicing LPTs interpreted their professional identities, social circumstances, and future aspirations. To address these gaps, the study explored the lived experiences of eight licensed BSED Social Studies graduates who passed the LET between 2015 and 2023 but pursued non-teaching careers without entering formal teaching employment. It examined their experiences, social contexts, professional identities, future career perspectives, and insights for teaching, learning, and institutional program development.

The study aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) and Sustainable Development Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). SDG 4 emphasizes quality education and lifelong learning, while SDG 8 promotes productive employment and sustainable economic opportunities (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, n.d.-a, n.d.-b). By examining how licensed teachers applied their educational

competencies in alternative occupations, the study provided insights into professional adaptability, career development, and the relationship between teacher preparation and employment opportunities.

The study contributed to educational sustainability by providing insights that may inform teacher preparation, career guidance, and workforce development. Its socioeconomic relevance involved understanding employment stability, professional mobility, and the application of transferable competencies beyond teaching. Institutionally, the findings may support education policymakers and higher education institutions in developing responsive programs addressing graduate employment, professional development, and teacher retention. Overall, the study emphasized the importance of understanding non-teaching career experiences in promoting adaptable educational systems, meaningful employment, and sustainable professional opportunities.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study utilized Moustakas' (1994) Transcendental Phenomenology to examine the lived experiences, career decisions, and professional identities of LPTs who pursued non-teaching occupations. This approach emphasized participants' subjective experiences while minimizing researcher assumptions. Data were analyzed using Colaizzi's (1978) seven-step framework to identify significant statements, formulate meanings, develop themes, and validate interpretations.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in SOCCSKSARGEN (Region XII), Philippines, comprising South Cotabato, Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani, and General Santos City. The region was selected because of its diverse employment opportunities in government, private enterprises, and business process outsourcing industries. Figure 1 illustrates the geographical coverage of the study, providing the regional context for examining the career transitions of LPTs into non-teaching professions.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The participants comprised eight BSED Social Studies graduates from SOCCSKSARGEN who passed the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) between 2015 and 2023. All participants were employed in non-teaching occupations and had never entered formal teaching employment despite obtaining professional teaching licenses. Their experiences provided insights into career transitions, social circumstances, professional identities, and future aspirations.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

Purposive sampling was employed to select participants whose experiences directly aligned with the research objectives. This technique facilitated the selection of information-rich cases appropriate for qualitative investigation. Eight participants were selected based on their BSED Social Studies qualifications, LET completion between 2015 and 2023, current non-teaching employment, and absence of formal teaching experience.

2.5 Research Instrument

Data were collected through a researcher-developed, semi-structured interview guide containing open-ended questions about participants' career experiences, professional identities, social contexts, and future aspirations. Semi-structured interviews allowed flexibility while ensuring consistency with the research objectives. The instrument underwent initial adviser review and content validation by five experts comprising one Master of Arts in Education holder, one Master of Arts in Teaching major in Social Studies holder, and three Doctor of Philosophy holders. Interview protocols, informed consent forms, and transcription guidelines supported data collection.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

Following approval from the Graduate School Dean, participants were recruited according to the established selection criteria and provided informed consent before individual interviews. Data collection followed seven stages, as presented in Figure 2: initial communication, participant orientation, interview question validation, consent and trial online interview, actual interviews, transcription, and member checking. Open-ended questions encouraged participants to describe their experiences freely. Interviews were conducted face-to-face or through Zoom according to participants' availability, while member checking supported the accuracy of the recorded narratives.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The process involved repeated reading of transcripts, extraction of significant statements, formulation of meanings, clustering of themes, development of an exhaustive description, identification of the phenomenon's fundamental structure, and participant validation. Research trustworthiness was guided by Lincoln and Guba's

(1985) criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Enworo, 2023). Member checking, detailed contextual descriptions, consistent procedures, adviser review, and documentation of analytical decisions supported the rigor of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; McLeod, 2024; Drisko, 2025). The researcher served as the primary instrument for data collection and interpretation, maintaining sensitivity and reflexivity throughout the interviews. The researcher's background in teaching preparation, virtual assistance, and quality assurance provided relevant professional context, while adviser consultation and peer debriefing helped address potential researcher bias.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

The study observed ethical principles involving informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and data protection. Participants were informed of the research objectives, procedures, potential risks and benefits, and their right to withdraw without penalty. Their identities were protected through coded identifiers in accordance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act 10173). Audio recordings and transcripts were maintained in password-protected storage accessible only to the researcher and adviser and were restricted to research purposes.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Lived Experiences of Licensed Professional Teachers Pursuing Non-Teaching Careers

3.1.1 Maintaining Professional Identity Beyond the Classroom

Participants maintained their identities as educators despite working in non-teaching occupations. They applied patience, communication, leadership, organizational skills, and service-oriented values in corporate, government, and virtual workplaces. Their teaching competencies remained evident through mentoring colleagues, guiding others, and supporting workplace learning. These findings indicate that professional identity extends beyond formal classroom responsibilities. This interpretation is consistent with Moustakas (1994), who emphasized meaning-making through lived experiences, and Beijaard et al. (2004), who described professional identity as continuously developing. Similarly, Agbayani Pineda (2025) and Poláková and Panlaqui (2023) recognized the transferability of teacher education competencies to corporate environments.

3.1.2 Choosing Alternative Career Pathways

Participants pursued non-teaching careers primarily for financial stability, professional advancement, family responsibilities, flexibility, and work-life balance. Employment in government institutions, private industries, and virtual assistance provided opportunities to improve their economic circumstances while utilizing competencies acquired through teacher education. The findings suggest that career redirection reflected practical decisions rather than rejection of teaching. This supports Laher's (2024) findings regarding salary, job security, personal interests, and career opportunities. From the perspectives of Moustakas (1994) and Maslow's (1954) Hierarchy of Needs, these decisions reflected participants' efforts to reconcile professional aspirations with financial security and personal needs.

3.1.3 Discovering Growth Through New Career Experiences

Participants reported acquiring administrative, technological, communication, and problem-solving competencies through their alternative occupations. Their experiences strengthened confidence, independence, adaptability, professional networks, and personal satisfaction, demonstrating opportunities for growth beyond classroom teaching. These experiences reflect professional development through continuous learning and self-discovery, consistent with Moustakas (1994). The findings also correspond with Agbayani-Pineda (2025) and Poláková and Panlaqui (2023), who emphasized the adaptability and employability of teacher education graduates across industries.

3.1.4 Reconciling the Emotional Realities of Career Redirection

Participants experienced mixed emotions, including pride in obtaining their teaching licenses, regret over not practicing classroom teaching, and relief from achieving financial stability and improved working conditions. Over time, they developed greater acceptance of their career decisions while continuing to value their professional credentials. These findings demonstrate that career transitions involved emotional adjustment and the reconstruction of personal definitions of success. Consistent with Moustakas (1994), participants assigned new meanings to their professional achievements. Their experiences also support See et al. (2022) and Ye et al. (2021), who identified personal, environmental, and cultural influences on career decisions.

3.1.5 Responding to Social Expectations and Career Pressures

Participants encountered family expectations, public comparisons, and questions regarding their decisions not to teach after passing the LET. Although these experiences initially created pressure and uncertainty, participants gradually developed confidence, defended their choices, and recognized the importance of personal autonomy and social support. The findings suggest that career decisions were influenced by social expectations alongside individual aspirations. From the phenomenological perspective of Moustakas (1994), participants reconstructed

their understanding of professional success through reflection. This corresponds with Almario's (2021) findings concerning the influence of socioeconomic and social factors on career decisions.

3.1.6 Reflecting on the Realities of Teaching in the Philippines

Participants recognized teaching as a meaningful profession but expressed concerns regarding heavy workloads, administrative responsibilities, inadequate compensation, and work-life balance. These perceptions influenced their preference for alternative employment while strengthening their appreciation of teachers' dedication and societal contributions. The findings indicate that perceived employment conditions affected the attractiveness of teaching as a career. This interpretation aligns with Moustakas (1994), emphasizing reflection on lived experiences, and Jerez et al. (2025), who identified compensation-related concerns as factors affecting teachers' intentions to remain in the profession.

3.2 Social Contexts of Licensed Professional Teachers in Non-Teaching Careers

3.2.1 Receiving Support from Significant Others

Participants received encouragement, reassurance, and acceptance from family members, spouses, friends, mentors, and former professors. These relationships reduced uncertainty, strengthened confidence, and supported their adjustment to non-teaching employment. The findings emphasize the importance of social support in professional transitions. This aligns with Moustakas (1994), See et al. (2022), and Ye et al. (2021), who recognized the influence of personal experiences and social relationships on career decisions. Wang and Zhang (2021) further associated professional identity with social interactions, while Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1954) explains the importance of belongingness and esteem.

3.2.2 Reframing Family Perceptions of Career Choice

Participants initially encountered family disappointment, doubts, and expectations to enter teaching. However, some families became more accepting after observing their financial independence, employment stability, professional growth, and personal satisfaction. These experiences suggest that family perceptions of career success can change through demonstrated achievements. This reflects the meaning-making perspective of (Moustakas, 1994) and supports Almario (2021) and Digamon and De la Peña (2021), who emphasized socioeconomic influences on career decisions. Similar findings regarding social expectations were reported by See et al. (2022) and Ye et al. (2021).

3.2.3 Finding Social Validation in Non-Teaching Roles

Participants gained workplace recognition through communication, leadership, planning, mentoring, and organizational competencies. Appreciation from colleagues and supervisors reinforced their confidence and demonstrated the relevance of teacher preparation across professional settings. These findings indicate that workplace recognition strengthened participants' professional identity and perceived competence. This interpretation is consistent with Moustakas (1994), while Agbayani Pineda (2025), Poláková and Panlaqui (2023), and Tom (2026) similarly recognized the applicability of teacher education competencies in corporate and business process outsourcing industries.

3.2.4 Responding to Social Expectations and Career Influences

Participants experienced cultural assumptions that education graduates should pursue classroom teaching. Despite comparisons and public judgments, they increasingly prioritized personal well-being, financial considerations, and career aspirations while encouraging broader perspectives on professional opportunities. The findings highlight career autonomy as an important aspect of occupational adjustment. Consistent with Moustakas (1994), participants reinterpreted their experiences and professional goals. The findings also correspond with See et al. (2022) and Ye et al. (2021) regarding social influences, and Bustos (2024), who emphasized aligning graduates' competencies with labor market opportunities.

3.3 Professional Identity and Future Career Perspectives of Licensed Professional Teachers

3.3.1 Maintaining an Educator Identity Beyond the Classroom

Participants continued to identify as educators despite working outside formal teaching. Their professional values were demonstrated through patience, discipline, communication, mentoring, knowledge-sharing, and service to others. These practices reinforced their understanding that teaching-related responsibilities could extend beyond educational institutions. The findings indicate that educator identity remained meaningful across occupational settings. This aligns with Moustakas' (1994) perspective on personal meaning, Beijaard et al. (2004) on the continuous development of professional identity, and Agbayani-Pineda (2025) on transferable teaching competencies. Sun et al. (2022) further emphasized the relationship between professional identity and satisfaction.

3.3.2 Embracing the Value of Being a Licensed Professional Teacher

Participants regarded their teaching licenses and educational preparation as significant achievements despite not entering classroom teaching. Their qualifications strengthened confidence, demonstrated perseverance, and provided foundational competencies applicable to alternative occupations. These findings suggest that

professional licensure retained personal and occupational value beyond its intended teaching function. This interpretation corresponds with Moustakas (1994), emphasizing the meanings attached to achievements, and supports Agbayani-Pineda (2025) and Tom's (2026) findings concerning professional adaptability and employment opportunities outside education.

3.3.3 Envisioning Flexible Career Futures

Participants expressed intentions to maintain stable employment while remaining open to career advancement, further education, professional development, and alternative opportunities. Their future plans reflected changing priorities, financial considerations, and willingness to pursue different professional directions. The findings demonstrate that participants viewed career development as flexible rather than predetermined. This reflects Moustakas (1994) and corresponds with Fu & Niu (2025), who associated self-directed learning with career adaptability. Similarly, Valtonen et al.'s (2021) and Loyola et al.'s (2025) findings emphasized transferable competencies and changing professional aspirations.

3.3.4 Reconsidering Teaching as a Future Possibility

Participants continued to recognize teaching as a meaningful future career option, although their willingness to enter the profession depended on financial readiness, family responsibilities, employment conditions, and personal aspirations. Some considered returning to teaching after achieving greater economic stability, while others preferred to continue their current careers. These findings indicate that pursuing non-teaching employment did not necessarily eliminate participants' interest in classroom teaching. Consistent with Moustakas (1994), their aspirations reflected changing interpretations of professional goals. The findings also correspond with Loyola et al. (2025), Fu and Niu's (2025), and Laher's (2024) regarding professional fulfillment, career adaptability, and alternative career pathways.

3.4 Implications of Non-Teaching Career Experiences for Teaching and Learning

3.4.1 Teaching Competencies Extend Beyond the Classroom

Participants reported applying communication, leadership, patience, planning, and instructional skills in non-teaching workplaces. These competencies supported workplace training, mentoring, problem-solving, and interpersonal relationships, demonstrating the practical relevance of teacher preparation across different industries. The findings indicate that teaching competencies extend beyond formal instruction and remain useful in diverse professional contexts. This aligns with Moustakas (1994), while Valtonen et al. (2021) emphasized transferable twenty-first-century competencies developed through teacher education. Similarly, Tom (2026) identified the relevance of communication and technological skills among LPTs employed in the business process outsourcing industry.

3.4.2 Teacher Education as Preparation for Lifelong Learning and Professional Growth

Participants recognized teacher education as a foundation for adaptability, confidence, continuous learning, and professional development. Their preparation strengthened communication, organization, leadership, and problem-solving abilities that supported adjustment to unfamiliar employment environments. These findings suggest that teacher education contributed to professional growth beyond initial occupational preparation. This interpretation is consistent with (Moustakas, 1994), while Fu and Niu (2025) emphasized self-directed learning as a contributor to career adaptability. Agbayani-Pineda (2025) likewise recognized the transferability of teacher education competencies across professional settings.

3.4.3 Recognizing the Continuing Value of the Teaching Profession

Participants expressed continued respect for teachers' contributions to education and society despite pursuing alternative careers. Their reflections emphasized teachers' dedication, responsibilities, sacrifices, and influence on learners while acknowledging challenges involving compensation, workload, and employment opportunities. The findings indicate that experiences outside teaching strengthened participants' appreciation of the profession rather than diminishing its significance. This reflects the phenomenological perspective of Moustakas (1994), emphasizing reflection on meaningful experiences, and Beijgaard et al. (2004), who described professional identity as continuously shaped through personal and professional experiences.

3.5 Proposed CARE-LPT Program for Career Awareness and Professional Development

The findings served as the basis for the proposed Career Awareness and Responsive Empowerment for Licensed Professional Teachers (CARE-LPT) program. The program addressed participants' experiences concerning career mobility, transferable competencies, professional identity, social support, and continuing professional development. It comprised four interconnected components: career awareness and alternative pathway exploration; career planning and transferable competency development; professional identity, mentoring, and social support; and professional development, networking, and continuing career growth.

The proposed program may provide career orientation, competency assessments, professional development workshops, mentoring, alumni engagement, and networking opportunities. Its implementation may involve collaboration among Teacher Education Institutions, career placement offices, faculty members, alumni

associations, and industry partners. Integration into existing institutional services and periodic evaluation were proposed to support its sustainability. The program represents a recommended institutional response derived from the findings rather than an intervention that was implemented or evaluated.

3.6 Synthesis of the Lived Experiences of Licensed Professional Teachers

The textural and structural descriptions revealed that participants' decisions to pursue non-teaching careers involved financial considerations, personal aspirations, professional opportunities, and social expectations. Although career transitions generated uncertainty, regret, pride, and relief, participants gradually developed confidence and satisfaction in their chosen occupations. Their teaching competencies remained evident through communication, leadership, mentoring, guidance, and service across different professional environments. The fundamental essence of their experiences was redefining teacher identity beyond the classroom. Participants demonstrated that professional identity was not exclusively determined by classroom employment but remained expressed through educational values, transferable competencies, and meaningful contributions to others. Their experiences highlighted career adaptability, personal fulfillment, and the continuing relevance of teacher education while recognizing the significance of teaching as a profession.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concluded that pursuing non-teaching careers did not diminish the professional identity of Licensed Professional Teachers (LPTs). Based on the lived experiences of eight LPTs in SOCCSKSARGEN, career decisions were influenced by financial considerations, personal aspirations, employment opportunities, and social expectations rather than rejection of the teaching profession. Despite working outside the classroom, participants continued to value their professional licenses, educational preparation, and teaching-related competencies, particularly communication, leadership, adaptability, and professional values. Their experiences demonstrated that teacher education provided transferable skills applicable across various employment sectors, while some participants remained open to pursuing teaching in the future. These findings served as the basis for the proposed Career Awareness and Responsive Empowerment for Licensed Professional Teachers (CARE-LPT) program.

Teacher Education Institutions are encouraged to strengthen career orientation and guidance programs that recognize both teaching and non-teaching employment opportunities and emphasize the transferable competencies developed through teacher preparation. Social Studies educators may integrate discussions on labor market conditions, unemployment, economic realities, and career decision-making to enhance students' understanding of employment challenges and opportunities. Education graduates and future LET passers are encouraged to recognize the continuing value of their professional qualifications across different career pathways. The proposed CARE-LPT program may support career planning, skills development, mentoring, and professional growth. Future researchers are encouraged to investigate LPTs from other specializations, regions, and employment sectors and examine how working conditions, institutional support, and career opportunities influence their decisions to pursue or return to teaching.

The study was limited to eight purposively selected BSED Social Studies graduates in SOCCSKSARGEN who passed the Licensure Examination for Teachers between 2015 and 2023 and pursued non-teaching careers without formal teaching experience. Its qualitative phenomenological design relied on participants' self-reported experiences, perceptions, and reflections, which were specific to their personal and professional circumstances. Consequently, the findings were not intended for statistical generalization to all LPTs, other educational specializations, or geographical regions. The proposed CARE-LPT program was developed from the findings but was not implemented or evaluated within the study.

5. Compliance with ethical standards

The authors acknowledge the participation of eight Licensed Professional Teachers (LPTs) pursuing non-teaching careers in SOCCSKSARGEN (Region XII), Philippines, and the institutional cooperation of the Graduate School. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained prior to data collection through non-invasive, semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted face-to-face or online. Participant confidentiality and privacy were safeguarded through coded identifiers, secure storage and restricted access to research data, and the reporting of findings without disclosing personally identifiable information.

REFERENCES

- Agbayani-Pineda, M. (2025). Employability and adaptability of teacher education alumni in non-educational corporate sectors. *Journal of Educational Transitions*, 14(2), 112–129.
- Ahmad, I., Gul, R., & Kashif, M. (2024). A qualitative study of workplace factors causing stress among university teachers and coping strategies. *Human Arenas*, 7, 812–834. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42087-022-00302-w>

- Almario, M. T. (2021). Socio-economic stratifications and the pragmatic career choices of low-income tertiary graduates in the Philippines. *Philippine Social Sciences Review*, 73(1), 45–62.
- Beijaard, D., Meijer, P. C., & Verloop, N. (2004). Reconsidering research on teachers' professional identity. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 20(2), 107–128. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2003.07.001>
- Belida, P. R. C., Ong, A. K. S., Young, M. N., & German, J. D. (2024). Determining the factors influencing the behavioral intention of job-seeking Filipinos to career shift and greener pasture. *Societies*, 14(8), Article 145. <https://doi.org/10.3390/soc14080145>
- Bellen, R., Socio, M., & Castor, J. (2022). The predictive validity of pre-board examination performance on the licensure examination for teachers. *International Journal of Educational Assessment*, 9(3), 204–219.
- Bergey, B. W., & Ranellucci, J. (2021). Motivation profiles of urban preservice teachers: Relations to socialization, initial career perceptions, and demographics. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 64, Article 101936. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2020.101936>
- Bustos, R. (2024). Bridging the gap: Aligning higher education priorities with the shifting job landscape in the Philippines. *Recoletos Multidisciplinary Research Journal*, 12(1), 9–24. <https://doi.org/10.32871/rmrj2412.01.02>
- Cahilog, L. M., Dela Cruz, R. F., & Santos, P. A. (2023). Brain drain and global vocation: The migration patterns and economic push factors of young Filipino professionals. *Philippine Economic Journal*, 62(4), 310–327.
- Cheng, M. M. H., Tang, S. Y. F., Wong, A. K. Y., & Yeh, F. Y. (2023). How early career teachers overcome everyday work-related challenges: An analysis from the perspective of teacher buoyancy. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 49(5), 753–767. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02607476.2022.2150962>
- Colaizzi, P. F. (1978). Psychological research as the phenomenologist views it. In R. S. Valle & M. King (Eds.), *Existential-phenomenological alternatives for psychology* (pp. 48–71). Oxford University Press.
- Collado, J. N., & Espero, F. M. (2023). The licensure-employment paradox: Tracking the employment latency period of regional board passers. *Journal of Education and Work*, 36(5), 411–426. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639080.2023.2210984>
- Digamon, H. L., & De la Peña, M. C. (2021). Vocational calling versus financial survival: Career decision-making among economically marginalized student groups. *Journal of Vocational Choice*, 19(3), 156–172.
- Drisko, J. W. (2025). Transferability and generalization in qualitative research. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 35(1), [page range/article details]. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10497315241256560>
- Environmental Management Bureau Region XII. (2024). 2024 Region XII state of the brown environment report. <https://r12.emb.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/2024-Region-XII-State-of-the-Brown-Environment-Rep.pdf>
- Enworo, O. C. (2023). Application of Guba and Lincoln's parallel criteria to assess trustworthiness of qualitative research on indigenous social protection systems. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 23(4), 372–384. <https://doi.org/10.1108/QRJ-08-2022-0116>
- Fu, C., & Niu, X. (2025). Exploring the dynamics of self-directed learning and career adaptability in Chinese pre-service teachers: A longitudinal analysis of cross-lagged effects and mediation by cognitive reappraisal. *Current Psychology*, 44(20), 16629–16644. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-025-08234-8>
- Generalao, I. N., Ducanes, G., Yee, K. M., & David, C. C. (2022). Teacher education in the Philippines: Are we meeting the demand for quality? *Philippine Journal for Public Policy: Interdisciplinary Development Perspectives*, 2022, 1–65. <https://doi.org/10.54096/IENE4805>
- Jerez, M. A., Villamor, S. T., & Ramos, N. P. (2025). Wage disparities between private and public basic education sectors in the Philippines and its effect on teacher retention. *Philippine Public Policy Quarterly*, 12(1), 19–37.
- Juntilla-Amora, E., & Simpal, E. A. (2025). Perceptions, motivations, and experiences of the newly hired public school teachers on the 2023 hiring policy guidelines. *International Journal of Interdisciplinary Viewpoints*, 1(2), 133–144. <https://doi.org/10.64612/ijiv.v1i2.14>
- Laher, A. M. (2024). Bypassing the classroom: Career choices and job satisfaction trajectories of teacher education graduates in non-teaching industries. *Journal of Career Development in Education*, 22(3), 244–261.
- Leung, J. W. (2025). Work-life balance and job satisfaction of Philippine public-school teachers: A systematic review. *Cognizance Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, 5(11), 101–110. <https://doi.org/10.47760/cognizance.2025.v05i11.011>
- Limbaga, D. S. (2026). A workers' inquiry into the Philippine virtual assistant industry [Master's thesis, Simon Fraser University]. Simon Fraser University Summit. <https://summit.sfu.ca/item/40533>
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. SAGE Publications.
- Loyola, P. D., Fernando, J. C., & Castillo, R. M. (2025). Self-actualization and the corporate migration: A thematic analysis of licensed non-teachers. *Qualitative Research in Education and Business*, 11(2), 103–120.
- Maslow, A. H. (1954). *Motivation and personality*. Harper & Brothers.

- Mauluddiyah, A., Patmanthara, S., & Nurhadi, D. (2021). The influences of Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, field practice experience, and 21st century skills on career choice of becoming a vocational teacher. *Teknologi dan Kejuruan: Jurnal Teknologi, Kejuruan, dan Pengajarannya*, 44(2), 108–117. <https://doi.org/10.17977/um031v44i22021p108-117>
- McLeod, S. (2024). Member checking in qualitative research. *Simply Psychology*. <https://www.simplypsychology.org/member-checking-in-qualitative-research.html>
- Mejia, I. P., Marasigan, A. C., De Vera, J. L., Serafico-Reyes, N. M. A., Castulo, N. J., De Pano, C., Sinsay-Villanueva, L. M. V., Tanyag, I. H., Berroya, J. D., Garcia, G. D. V., Lim, V. L., & Aquino, J. M. D. (2025). Review of the localization law and its effect on the hiring of teachers (PIDS Discussion Paper Series No. 2025-23). Philippine Institute for Development Studies. <https://doi.org/10.62986/dp2025.23>
- Miles, D. A. (2017). A taxonomy of research gaps: Identifying and defining the seven research gaps [Doctoral student workshop paper]. Doctoral Student Workshop: Finding Research Gaps—Research Methods and Strategies, Dallas, TX.
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. SAGE Publications. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412995658>
- Necesito, R. M. O., & Mamaril, J. C. O. (2025). From classroom to digital work: Career transitions of licensed teachers in Pangasinan I. *Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, 8(1), 23–31. Retrieved from <https://asianjournal.pti.edu.ph/index.php/ajms/article/view/564>
- Olvido, M. M. J., Dayagbil, F. T., Alda, R. C., Uytico, B. J., & Rodriguez, K. F. R. (2024). An exploration of the quality of graduates of Philippine teacher education institutions. *Frontiers in Education*, 9, Article 1235261. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2024.1235261>
- Palomar, B. C., Manicio, M. T. L., Reyes, A. S., Anudin, A. G., Jocson, J. V., Alcausin, F. B., ... & Tuazon, M. M. (2025). Profiling study of teacher education institutions (TEIs) and teacher educators.
- Pinuela, J. S. (2023). The fragile identity: Systemic conditions and the structural erosion of professional teaching identity in the Philippines. *Philippine Sociological Review*, 71(2), 177–195.
- Poláková, M., & Panlaqui, T. D. (2023). Soft skills in the modern service market: Why corporate sectors recruit education graduates. *International Journal of Human Resource and Labor Economics*, 15(4), 312–330.
- Praveena, K. R., & Sasikumar, S. (2021). Application of Colaizzi's method of data analysis in phenomenological research. *Medico Legal Update*, 21(2), 914–918.
- Professional Regulation Commission. (2026, May 12). March 2026 Licensure Examination for Professional Teachers results released in thirty-nine (39) working days. <https://prc.gov.ph/article/march-2026-licensure-examination-professional-teachers-results-released-thirty-nine-39>
- Sarpamones, M., & Ibojo, D. (2024). English teachers shifting careers: A multiple case study. *Psychology and Education: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 23(8), 1026–1039. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13319246>
- Savickas, M. L. (2002). Career construction: A developmental theory of vocational behavior. In D. Brown (Ed.), *Career choice and development* (4th ed., pp. 149–205). Jossey-Bass.
- See, B. H., Munthe, E., Ross, S. A., Hitt, L., & El Soufi, N. (2022). Who becomes a teacher and why? Review of *Education*, 10(3), Article e3377. <https://doi.org/10.1002/rev3.3377>
- Tag-ulo, J., Gooc, M. R. P., & Seclot, J. S. (2025). Exploring job mismatch experiences among licensed English teachers: A phenomenological inquiry. *International Journal of Educational Innovation and Research*, 4(2), 235–249. <https://doi.org/10.31949/ijeir.v4i2.14619>
- Tom, S. M. M. (2026). Exploring the whys of non-practicing licensed professional teachers in BPO industry. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 10(15), 802–811. <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.1015EC0056>
- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (n.d.-a). Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Sustainable Development Goals Knowledge Platform. Retrieved September 20, 2026, from <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4>
- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (n.d.-b). Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. Sustainable Development Goals Knowledge Platform. Retrieved September 20, 2026, from <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal8>
- Valtonen, T., Hoang, N., Sointu, E., Näykki, P., Virtanen, A., Pöysä-Tarhonen, J., Häkkinen, P., Järvelä, S., Mäkitalo, K., & Kukkonen, J. (2021). How pre-service teachers perceive their 21st-century skills and dispositions: A longitudinal perspective. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 116, Article 106643. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2020.106643>
- Wang, D., & Li, Y. (2024). Career construction theory: Tools, interventions, and future trends. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 15, Article 1381233. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1381233>

- Wang, D., & Zhang, L. J. (2021). Sustainability as a goal in teaching workforce retention: Exploring the role of teacher identity construction in preservice teachers' job motivation. *Sustainability*, 13(5), Article 2698. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13052698>
- Ye, W., Wang, Z., Zhang, X., Ding, Y., & Ye, W. (2021). Comparing motivations of pre-service and beginning teachers in China: Impact of culture and experience. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 47(4), 576–589. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02607476.2021.1898911>