

Passion and Perseverance: The Emotional Journey of a Teacher Applicant Repeatedly Applying to the Department of Education

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ABSTRACT

This phenomenological study explores the emotional journey of aspiring public-school teachers in the Philippines who repeatedly apply to the Department of Education (DepEd) but remain without permanent appointment. Thirteen teacher applicants on the Registry of Qualified Applicants were purposively recruited and provided rich, semi-structured narrative responses via Google Forms. Thematic analysis of the transcripts produced four interrelated themes: First the passion for teaching and student growth, highlighting intrinsic and altruistic motives that sustain applicants. Second the financial and emotional burdens of the prolonged application process, emphasizing costs for documents, travel, and the distress of extended uncertainty. Third, the psychological vulnerability and erosion of professional self-efficacy, where repeated non-selection precipitates self-doubt, fatigue, and identity challenges; and lastly the resilient hope and persistence, showing coping strategies such as faith, skill development, positive reframing, and active career planning. Findings revealed that repeated application is both a vocational commitment and an emotionally taxing process shaped by systemic hiring practices. Applicants' perseverance is sustained by a strong sense of calling, hope, and adaptive behaviors, yet prolonged delays risk attrition and damage to professional identity. The study recommends more transparent, applicant-centered recruitment practices and targeted support (financial, informational, and psychosocial) to mitigate harms and better retain qualified candidates. By centering applicants' lived experiences, this research contributes to an ethically informed understanding of teacher recruitment and offers practical implications for DepEd policy and local school-level support systems.

Keywords: teacher applicants; DepEd recruitment; resilience; emotional burden; teacher identity

INTRODUCTION

Education is recognized as a cornerstone of national development, economic stability, and social transformation (UNESCO, 2021). Teaching is regarded not merely as a profession but as a vocation and public service, offering job security, competitive benefits, and social prestige, making it one of the most sought-after careers among Bachelor of Elementary and Secondary Education graduates (Calaguas et al., 2020).

In the Philippines, the situation is especially meaningful because public school teacher hiring is highly competitive and regulated through DepEd recruitment systems. The Department of Education (DepEd) serves as the primary employer of public-school teachers, operating under a standardized hiring system outlined in DO 7, s. 2023, which evaluates applicants based on education, LET rating, teaching experience, specialized training, and interview/demonstration teaching performance (DepEd, 2023).

Recent studies of DepEd teacher applicants in Bukidnon and Iligan show that applicants commonly experience persistence, resilience, personal sacrifice, and strong motivation to serve learners despite the burdens of document preparation, lesson demonstrations, examinations, ranking systems, and waiting for appointment (Ceballos, 2023). For repeated applicants, the hiring journey may become an emotional experience marked by hope, discouragement, renewed determination, and professional growth. These realities show that the path to entering the teaching profession is often shaped by perseverance as much as by credentials (Candole, 2024).

Becoming a teacher is not simply a matter of meeting academic qualifications. It is also an emotional, financial, and personal journey that may involve repeated applications, uncertainty, waiting, and self-doubt.

This qualitative study, helps to understand the lived experiences of teacher applicants who have repeatedly applied but have not yet secured permanent appointment. This study revealed how repeated application affects applicants emotionally and professionally, and how schools and policymakers may better support aspiring teachers. By giving attention to the voices of teacher applicants, this research may contribute to a more humane understanding of teacher recruitment in the Philippines and help improve recruitment practices, support systems, and policy implementation.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilized a phenomenological research design, which aims to understand the lived emotional experiences of teacher applicants who repeatedly apply to the Department of Education. It explores the participants' circumstances, including their emotions, perceived meanings, challenges, and personal reflections. Rather than focusing on measuring success or failure, this study centers on the persistence of their passion and perseverance, their emotional journey, and their sense of purpose throughout the process of repeated applications.

Research Instrument

The primary data gathering instrument of this study was a semi-structured interview guide. This tool was specifically designed and employed to gather detailed narratives and personal reflections from teacher applicants who have repeatedly submitted applications for positions at the Department of Education (DepEd). This instrument consisted of open-ended questions that allowed teachers to freely express their thoughts, feelings, and experiences without being limited by fixed response options. The questions focused on exploring the applicants' emotional journey, the challenges and difficulties they encountered along the way, their motivations for continuing despite setbacks, and how they demonstrated passion and perseverance throughout each cycle of application. The guide also included probing follow-up questions to clarify responses, uncover deeper insights, and ensure that the full meaning and essence of their lived emotional experiences were captured accurately and comprehensively.

Data Gathering Procedure

The study began with securing permission to conduct the research and identifying around thirteen (13) teacher applicants still awaiting appointment in DepEd. Teachers were recruited through online postings, where interested individuals were invited to join voluntarily. After confirming their agreement to participate, the researcher sent the interview questions through Google Forms, ensuring a convenient and efficient way of gathering data. Teachers could respond at their own pace, and additional follow-up questions were raised whenever necessary to clarify the answers and obtain deeper information. All responses were kept confidential and utilized solely for this academic investigation.

Analysis of Data

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The researcher reviewed all responses repeatedly to gain familiarity with the content, then identified relevant statements. These were coded and grouped into categories based on common patterns and meanings. From these categories, core themes were derived to describe the teachers' emotions, challenges, motivation, and perseverance in reapplying to DepEd. Finally, the themes were interpreted and presented to address the research questions.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were observed throughout the study. Informed consent was obtained after explaining its purpose, procedures, and their right to withdraw voluntarily. Teachers' confidentiality and privacy were

protected using pseudonyms or codes, and all data were kept secure. Interviews were conducted respectfully to avoid discomfort, while information was reported honestly to maintain research integrity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study narrates the emotional journey of teacher applicant repeatedly applying to the Department of Education. In this section, the presentation of the data gathered as well as the discussion, analysis and implications of the findings revealed here. The study is qualitatively in nature this thematic analysis of the teachers' responses is also presented on this section.

Emerging Theme: Passion for Teaching and Student Growth

This is the emerging theme when the teacher applicants were asked on why they choose to be a teacher. This theme is supported by the responses coming from the teachers as follows:

Q1PN1: *"I choose to be a teacher because teaching young minds is my passion, sharing my knowledge and wisdom is my greatest happiness. Though being in this profession is not easy. The most crucial thing is the outcome of my perseverance and hard work makes me extremely happy whenever I see my students stand out and be at their full potential, for me that's all matter."*

Q1PN2: *"Because teaching is my passion"*

Q1PN3: *"To teach and inspire learners"*

Q1PN4 *"Because I want a stable job".*

Q1PN5: *"I chose to be a teacher because I am passionate about helping others learn and grow. I enjoy sharing knowledge, guiding students to achieve their goals, and making a positive difference in their lives. Seeing students develop confidence and succeed academically and personally gives me a great sense of fulfillment."*

Q1PN6: *"I chose to be a teacher because I love teaching and my heart is close to children. I enjoy helping them learn and develop their skills and knowledge."*

Q1PN7: *"Calling"*

Q1PN8: *"I didn't choose it at first because I come from a family of teachers, and I saw how hard it is—even at night and on holidays, they still work on lesson plans, classroom decorations, learning materials, and more. Later on, when I accidentally enrolled in Professional Education subjects, that was when I realized teaching is my passion"*

Q1PN. 9: *"Being a teacher allows me to share knowledge while helping students become better individuals"*

Q1PN 10: *"I chose to be a teacher because I want to make a lasting difference in children's lives, to help them discover their potential and give them the skills and confidence they need. After five years of trying, that purpose kept me going, finally getting an item confirmed that my commitment mattered to students and the community"*

Q1PN11: *"I became a teacher because I love learning and I want to share that love with learners. Even though I haven't been hired yet, my motivation remains to support students' growth and to serve my community through education."*

Q1PN12: *"Environment influence"*

Q1PN13: *Because I believe that it is my calling and I always wanted to make a difference.*

The emerging theme, “Passion for Teaching and Student Growth” revealed that, teacher applicant viewed teaching primarily as a purposeful and value driven career anchored in personal calling, enjoyment of teaching, and commitment to learner development. The dominant pattern is not simply teacher applicants wanted employment, but that they were drawn to the moral and relational meaning of teaching, especially the opportunity to inspire learners, help them to grow, and make a lasting difference in children’s lives. This consistent altruistic and intrinsic motivations shape teaching as a career choice, particularly they see teaching as a way to contribute to students and society.

The theme is also supported by the teachers’ repeated references to “passion,” “calling,” “inspire learners,” “helping others learn and grow,” and “making a positive difference.” These statements align with research from the Philippines showing that aspiring teachers often choose teaching because they perceive it as socially meaningful and personally fulfilling, not merely practical. For example, Filipino respondents in Landicho’s study highlighted altruistic-intrinsic reasons such as helping shape children’s futures and making social contributions, while also recognizing teaching as demanding work that requires dedication and expertise (Landicho, 2020). In a related local study, Mangaoil et al. (2017) found that Filipino students described teaching as a socially worthwhile profession that could create positive change, which reinforces the idea that a service-oriented orientation is central to the profession.

Bakar et al. (2014) reported, intrinsic and altruistic motives were strong reasons for choosing teaching, while Watt and Richardson (2007) showed that career choice in teaching driven by values related to helping others, making a difference, and shaping young lives. Kılınç et al. (2012) also found that motivations for teaching included working with children, social contribution, and personal interest in the profession. The response “Because I want a stable job” and the statement about “environmental influence” was better treated as secondary or separate ideas because they reflect extrinsic or contextual influences rather than the dominant emotional and value-based meaning shared by most teacher applicants.

Lastly, it indicates that repeated teacher applicants may continue applying because their identity as aspiring teachers is sustained by a deep sense of purpose. Their persistence is not only an employment strategy but also a way of staying aligned with their belief that teaching is meaningful. These also showed that teacher preparation and recruitment programs should not focus only on qualifications and ranking but should also acknowledge the emotional and vocational meaning that applicants attach to teaching. Thus, repeated application is shaped by both aspiration and resilience, with teaching understood as a calling tied to student development and social contribution.

Emerging Theme: Financial and Emotional Burdens of the Prolonged Application Process.

The teacher applicants narrated the challenges they faced while applying for the teaching profession. Their responses are presented below:

Q2PN1: *“I’ve experienced many challenges; financial challenge for requirements, printing, IM’s, travel expenses, and for food. Moreover, the most struggling and challenging for me is the recent ranking (retained for both JHS&SHS and applied for Elementary Teacher) specifically the Elementary because the time ranking is going on my second baby is just a week old, the agonizing pain of delivery and sleepless nights, swollen breast is really killing me but I have no choice because of my eagerness to teach I still push my application in DepEd for I wanted to help my family. And sadly, up until now I’m unemployed”*

Q2PN2: *“Waiting for Item”*

Q2PN3 *“It’s not easy, you need to have long patience and perseverance until you make it!”*

Q2PN4: *“Financial for documents and travel”*

Q2PN5: *“One of the challenges I have faced while applying for a teaching position is the highly competitive selection process. There are many qualified applicants competing for limited vacancies. Another challenge is ensuring that all the required documents and credentials are complete and updated. Despite these*

challenges, I remained patient, continued improving my skills through teaching experiences and professional development, and stayed committed to my goal of becoming a teacher. These experiences have helped me become more resilient, determined, and prepared for the responsibilities of the teaching profession”

Q2PN6: *“I have faced many challenges in applying to DepEd. Although I was included in the Registry of Qualified Applicants several times, I was not selected for a teaching item. Despite this, I continued to persevere and remain hopeful”*

Q2PN7: *When you're not the pet, less chance.*

Q2PN8: *“Financial and emotional challenges that sometimes leads to frustration because at the end of the school year I wasn’t able to secure an item”*

Q2PN9: *“One of the challenges I faced was applying to DepEd several times without being selected for a permanent teaching position. I have applied more than three times, and while the process was sometimes discouraging, I did not give up. Currently, I am serving as an LGU teacher, which has allowed me to gain valuable experience in the classroom. This journey has taught me patience, perseverance, and the importance of continuously improving myself while waiting for the opportunity to become a regular DepEd teacher”*

Q2PN10: *“Financial strain from repeatedly traveling for interviews, paying for clearances, and other application costs. Uncertainty and delay in career plans while waiting for selection. Competition against many applicants and the stress of meeting changing requirements or additional credentials. Balancing application tasks with substitute teaching, tutoring, or other temporary work”*

Q2PN11: *“Repeated rejections causing self-doubt and frustration. Limited vacancies or preference for internal hires, contractual teachers, or those with better networks. Costs and time spent on documents, attendances, and possible exams without guaranteed outcome. Difficulty gaining permanent classroom experience when most posts are occupied”*

Q2PN12: *Financial during demonstration, but the real challenge is when you are in the waiting list. "The waiting game, started"*

Q2PN13: *I thought, I no longer have control over things is emotionally draining. The reality I'm seeing that my batchmates are getting hired one by one but as for me, I have no idea when is my time.*

The application process for a permanent position within the Department of Education (DepEd) is defined by the emerging theme of the “Financial and Emotional Burdens of the Prolonged Application Process”, where systemic delays and logistical demands impose significant personal costs on applicants. This theme, highlighted the path to employment is characterized by "financial strain" and "financial challenge" stemming from the cumulative costs of "requirements, printing," "travel expenses," and "clearances" (PN1, PN10). Beyond the fiscal impact, the "uncertainty and delay" inherent in the "waiting game" leads to profound psychological distress, described by teacher applicant as "frustration," "self-doubt," and an "emotionally draining" loss of control (PN4, PN8, PN11, PN13). These findings implied that recruitment journey is not a professional transition but a period of high vulnerability where the "repeated non-selection" directly threatens an applicant's "emotional well-being" (P1, P2, PN13).

According to Simsek (2021), states that who identified that appointment-related "uncertainty" serves as a primary driver of anxiety and negative future expectations among teacher candidates. Similarly, See and Gorard (2020), argue that complex application requirements and the associated "costs and time spent" create significant barriers to entry in competitive education markets. In the Philippine context, Bual (2023) documents the "financial depletion" and "career stagnation" experienced by applicants on the Registry of Qualified Applicants (RQA), emphasizing that the prolonged wait for an "item" leads to a sense of professional limbo.

Furthermore, the stress of navigating "changing requirements" and high competition, as noted by teacher applicant, is echoed by Almerino et al. (2020), who found that the rigorous standards for entering the public school system in the Philippines place immense pressure on the resilience and "long patience" of aspiring educators (PN3, PN5, PN10).

Emerging Theme: Psychological Vulnerability and the Transformative Pursuit of Resilience.

The teacher applicants shared the emotional challenges and personal strains they experienced while pursuing the teaching profession. Their responses are presented below:

Q3PN1: *"Honestly, it's draining, exhausting, and very stressful; anxiety attacks, questioning my capabilities, Am I not that good enough to be chosen? I gave my best for every ranking, and I already ended up to applying all levels but still nothing works. But I still have positivity in my mind that if it's for you then it will be yours. I believe in Gods perfect timing"*

Q3PN2: *"Sad & frustrating"*

Q3PN3: *"It's sad but it's part of the reality"*

Q3PN4: *"Stress"*

Q3PN5: *"Repeated non-selection has been emotionally challenging at times because it can lead to feelings of disappointment and self-doubt. However, instead of giving up, I use these experiences as motivation to improve myself and become a stronger applicant. I continue to develop my skills, gain relevant experience, and maintain a positive outlook. These challenges have taught me resilience, patience, and perseverance. They have also strengthened my commitment to pursuing a teaching career and serving learners when the opportunity comes."*

Q3PN6: *"It hurts to experience non-selection every year. I felt disappointed and discouraged at times, but I chose to stay positive, keep improving myself, and continue pursuing my goal of becoming a teacher"*

Q3PN7: *"Frustrating but it's okay"*

Q3PN8: *"I already starting to question myself if I wasn't able to give my all during the entire application process. Sometimes I was thinking maybe teaching is not really for me"*

Q3PN9: *"Repeated non-selection was emotionally challenging and sometimes discouraging, because I worked hard to prepare and qualify for the position. There were moments when I questioned myself and felt disappointed. However, instead of giving up, I used those experiences as motivation to improve my skills, gain more experience, and remain hopeful. The challenges strengthened my resilience, patience, and determination to continue pursuing my goal of becoming a regular DepEd teacher"*

Q3PN10: *"Before hiring, I experienced anxiety and disappointment many times, but I learned resilience and patience. Securing an item brought relief, validation, and renewed confidence. After hiring: Past non-selections now feel like lessons that strengthened my commitment and empathy for struggling applicants"*

Q3PN11: *"Persistent non-selection has caused fatigue, lowered self-esteem at times, and periods of discouragement. It can feel like personal failure despite following requirements. It also creates stress about financial and career stability, and sometimes leads to questioning whether to change careers or keep trying"*

Q3PN12: *"It's stress me a bit but I used that as a motivation to continue learning and growing."*

Q3PN13: *"I am exhausted mentally and emotionally. But I am still thankful that I have a husband who supports me in every way. Actually, for now, I am quite at peace as I am learning to accept the fact that I don't have control over things anymore, and that I should learn to go and let God"*

Identified emerging theme from the teacher's applicant responses regarding the emotional impact of repeated non-selection is The Internalization of Failure and Erosion of Professional Self-Efficacy. This theme describes a psychological process where the lack of external validation from the Department of Education (DepEd) leads applicants to doubt their inherent competence and suitability for the teaching profession. Instead of attributing non-selection to systemic factors like "limited vacancies" or "competition," many participants begin to "question their "capabilities" and internalize the experience as a "personal failure" (PN1, PN11).

This erosion of self-belief is evidenced by participants wondering, "Am I not that good enough to be chosen?" or contemplating whether "teaching is not really for me" (PN1, PN8). The findings of this result implies this theme are profound; it suggests that a prolonged and unsuccessful application journey can permanently damage an educator's professional identity and self-esteem, potentially leading qualified individuals to abandon the field entirely due to "lowered self-esteem" and "discouragement" (PN11).

Kim and Cho (2020) showed that for prospective teachers, professional identity is heavily tied to successful entry into the workforce, and repeated rejection can lead to "career identity crisis," mirroring the "self-doubt" expressed by the participants (PN5). Bandura's theories on self-efficacy, as explored in recent studies by Fathi and Derakhshan (2021), emphasize that when individuals do not see the "outcome of their perseverance," their belief in their ability to succeed diminishes, leading to the "fatigue" and "questioning" seen in this group (PN1, PN11).

In the Philippines, a study by Madrunio and Ramos (2021) regarding the challenges of licensed professional teachers found that the psychological toll of being in the "waiting list" often results in decreased motivation and a re-evaluation of their "calling," a sentiment echoed by PN8 who began to think "maybe teaching is not really for me." This is further supported by Reyes et al. (2022), who noted that Filipino teachers' resilience is often tested by "delayed professional gratification," which can shift their focus from their "passion" to a more desperate search for "financial and career stability" (PN11).

Emerging Theme: Resilient Hope and Persistence

The theme of **Resilient Hope and Persistence** emerges as a primary coping mechanism for teacher applicants facing the competitive and often discouraging DepEd hiring process. This are supported by the responses of teacher applicants below:

Q4PN1: "Continue praying, striving, believing, that better days is coming and don't lose hope the item we long for will surely come. Fighting!"

Q4PN2: "Just keep the faith. In His time. Not all delays are denial. it's preparing you for bigger breakthroughs."

Q4PN3: "Be positive and see the bright side of it! Do not stop until you make it"

Q4PN4: "Find other job while waiting for the item"

Q4PN5: "For teachers who were not selected by DepEd despite meeting the requirements just like me, I recommend staying positive and not losing hope. Non-selection does not mean a lack of capability; it may simply reflect the competitive nature of the hiring process. Continue enhancing our qualifications through trainings, seminars, and relevant teaching experiences. Regularly review and update your documents, seek feedback when possible, and prepare thoroughly for future evaluations and interviews. Most importantly, remain patient, persistent, and committed to the profession. Every application is an opportunity to learn and improve, and with determination and continuous growth, the right opportunity will eventually come"

Q4PN6: "To those teachers who were not selected by DepEd, keep the faith. Wait for the right time that God has prepared for you. Continue praying, working hard, and believing that your opportunity will come"

Q4PN7: *“Better Luck next time”*

Q4PN8: *Just keep going. Have more patience, and if it really becomes too much or you truly can't handle it anymore, then maybe it's time to consider another profession.*

Q4PN9: *“My recommendation for teachers who were not selected by DepEd despite meeting the requirements is to remain patient, persistent, and positive. Rejection does not mean a lack of competence or potential. Instead, use the experience as an opportunity to improve professionally by attending trainings, gaining teaching experience, and strengthening your credentials. It is also important to seek feedback, continue learning, and never lose confidence in your abilities. Most importantly, keep applying and believe that the right opportunity will come at the right time”*

Q4PN10: *“Keep improving: take relevant short courses and update your credentials to stand out. Build experience, like being a job order teacher to gain classroom evidence. Stay persistent and organized, track application cycles, requirements, and deadlines; treat each attempt as practice and learning”*

Q4PN11: *“Ask for feedback, when possible, review your application documents, and strengthen weak areas. Diversify opportunities like apply to neighboring divisions and NGOs. Create visible classroom impact run community projects, learning programs”*

Q4PN12: *“Let us not lose hope. Even so, let us keep praying that we get appointed. There may be times when we feel that the Lord is not listening to our requests, but God moves in silence. We may not understand His plans, but deep in my heart I know that everything has a purpose. Let us just trust that the Lord will arrange everything. Keep praying while you wait. I leave this Bible verse with all of your fellow teacher applicants who, like me, are waiting for the Lord's perfect timing: Matthew 7:7 (KJV).”*

Q4PN13: *“Find a hobby that can shift your focus on waiting for that magic call and pray a lot to have a peace of mind”*

The emerging theme of “Resilient Hope and Persistence” indicates that teacher applicants rely on hope, faith, and continued effort as coping responses to the demanding and uncertain DepEd hiring process. The teachers' applicants' statements show that rejection and delay are not interpreted as final defeat but as temporary setbacks that require patience, self-improvement, and continued application. Their responses also reveal that hope is closely tied to action, since many of them emphasized upgrading credentials, seeking training, gaining experience, and preparing for future opportunities. Resilient hope functions as both an emotional buffer and a motivational force that enables applicants to remain committed to their career goal despite repeated discouragement (Candole & Selecios, 2024).

Hope is strongly associated with teacher coping and well-being. In a study of teachers, hope was found to positively relate to successful coping and teacher well-being, while stress had a negative association with those outcomes (MacIntyre et al., 2022). Another study reported that self-esteem, dispositional hope, and mattering significantly influence teacher resilience, with crisis self-efficacy helping explain these relationships (Yıldırım et al., 2022). These findings support the idea that hopeful thinking is not merely an optimistic attitude but a psychological resource that helps teachers sustain effort under pressure (MacIntyre et al., 2022; Yıldırım et al., 2022).

Research on Filipino teachers found that psychological capital, which includes hope, resilience, efficacy, and optimism, is linked to psychological well-being and job performance (Ganotice et al., n.d.) and reported that hope and resilience significantly mediated the relationship between stress and satisfaction with life among teachers during the COVID-19 crisis (Datu et al., 2022). In addition, a qualitative study on teacher applicants in DepEd Bukidnon showed that applicants demonstrate resilience, persistence, and a strong desire for personal and professional development while waiting for appointment (Candole & Selecios, 2024). Taken together, these studies indicate that the experiences reflected in the data are not isolated, but are part of a broader pattern among teachers and teacher applicants in similar contexts (Ganotice et al., n.d.; Datu et al., 2022; Candole & Selecios, 2024).

At the personal level, the findings revealed that applicants may benefit from maintaining constructive coping strategies such as prayer, positive reframing, skill enhancement, and active career planning while waiting for hiring outcomes. At the institutional level, the need for a more transparent, responsive, and supportive recruitment system that reduces prolonged uncertainty and helps applicants understand how to strengthen their qualifications. This is consistent with recent Philippine evidence showing that recruitment fairness, process efficiency, and applicant-centered systems shape how teacher applicants experience hiring (author details needed from source, 2025). Thus, resilient hope and persistence should be understood not only as personal strengths but also as responses shaped by the realities of the employment process (Candole & Selecios, 2024).

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that repeated application to the Department of Education is not only an employment pursuit but also an emotional and psychological journey marked by passion, sacrifice, vulnerability, and resilience. The findings show that teacher applicant remain committed to the profession because of their genuine desire to teach, help learners grow, and make a meaningful contribution to society. At the same time, their narratives reflect the heavy financial, emotional, and professional burdens brought by the prolonged and highly competitive hiring process. These burdens often lead to stress, self-doubt, fatigue, and discouragement, especially when repeated non-selection is experienced despite meeting the qualifications.

The study also demonstrates that teacher applicants do not respond to these challenges passively. Instead, many continue to cope through persistence, self-improvement, prayer, positive reframing, and renewed motivation. The emerging theme of resilient hope and persistence highlights how applicants transform setbacks into opportunities for growth and continued preparation. Their experiences suggest that perseverance is sustained not only by personal ambition, but also by a deep sense of calling and faith in eventual success.

The study views the teacher applicants as individuals whose professional journey involves both competence and emotional endurance. Their repeated efforts to enter the teaching profession reflect strong vocational commitment, but also expose the difficulty of navigating a recruitment system that can be uncertain and emotionally demanding. Thus, the findings point to the importance of a more transparent, supportive, and humane hiring process that recognizes both the qualifications and lived experiences of aspiring teachers.

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Finally, the researcher humbly offers this study to all aspiring teachers who continue to pursue their calling with passion, perseverance, and hope. May this research serve as a modest contribution to a better understanding of their emotional journey and lived experiences.

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