

Lived Experiences among Repeaters in the Criminologist Licensure Examination: A Phenomenological Study

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on understanding the unique experiences of individuals who repeated the Criminologist Licensure Exam, shedding light on the challenges they faced and the strategies they employed to succeed. Using purposive sampling, seven board passers from Mindanao were selected. Data from interviews were analyzed using Moustakas' methods to determine the participants' profiles, strategies for passing the exam, challenges faced, and coping mechanisms. The findings revealed themes of academic pressure and performance anxiety, external distractions, time management issues, financial constraints, emotional struggles, and family expectations. Participants commonly experienced self-doubt, fear of failure, and the pressure to meet familial expectations, all of which affected their mental health and academic performance. External distractions, poor time management, and financial insecurities further hindered their preparation. Despite these challenges, participants drew strength from family support, which provided motivation and resilience. The study concluded that these challenges significantly impacted students' well-being and academic success, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions and holistic support strategies.

Keywords: academic pressure, external distractions, financial constraints, time management issues

INTRODUCTION

Rationale of the Study

Despite their achievements, many criminologists still have difficulties in keeping up with changing criminal patterns and upholding justice in a constantly shifting environment (Bhowmik, 2023; Lord & Levi, 2023). In addition to putting their knowledge to the test, these difficulties highlight the dynamic nature of the discipline and push accomplished criminologists to constantly adapt and innovate in their request for a safer society. Successful criminologist passers remain constant, exhibiting persistent dedication to uncovering the mysteries of crime and making a positive contribution to the improvement of our communities, despite the demanding nature of criminology which can be a tough struggle (Canning et al., 2023).

Successful criminologists who have overcome these obstacles serve as role models for others, demonstrating that even in the face of hardship, their dedication to comprehending and preventing crime remains unwavering, making them great assets to the field of criminal justice. Their courage and unshakable dedication not only show their crucial role in determining the direction of crime prevention, law enforcement, and justice systems around the world, but also solidify their status as successful criminologists (Burns, 2023; Stein & Levi, 2023).

Criminologists who actively research the distinction of criminal behavior, apply critical thinking to difficult cases, and never stop to comprehend the complicated nature of crime and its causes to excel in their course (Ozer & Akbas, 2023). This comprehensive approach, linked with their dedication to staying up to date on the most recent research and methodologies, empowers criminologists to make significant contributions to society by advocating evidence-based strategies for crime prevention and justice (Agar et al., 2023).

They also excel through active engagement in practical exercises, cultivating a deep empathy for both victims and offenders. As a result, criminologists not only complete their coursework successfully but also continue to

have a positive influence on society by assisting in the development of laws and other interventions that address the complex of criminal conduct and its effects on society. Criminologists continue to develop a crucial role in the ongoing effort to create a society that is safer and more just because of their commitment to continual professional growth and their aptitude for bridging the gap between theory and practice (Rossner & Taylor, 2023).

Successful criminologists effectively handle the demands of their challenging careers by controlling stress and anxiety, especially during the pandemic, thus enabling them to remain focused and achieve success in their work (Cohen-Louck & Levy, 2023). They place a high priority on self-care techniques and employ coping methods to make sure their mental health can withstand arduous investigation and complex cases. They not only succeed professionally but also lead successful lives outside of their demanding roles by developing a healthy work-life balance and seeking support when necessary (Rodriguez, 2023; Grekul et al., 2023). These techniques of managing stress, balancing work-life, and knowing when to ask for help will result in improved performance on the job, thus securing long-term success and personal fulfillment in the study of criminology (McEady, 2023; Santos et al., 2023). This balancing of professional pressure while ensuring one's well-being has become an inspiration and a great example to follow by many other aspiring professionals seeking a career in criminology.

This very important for those working towards becoming competent criminologists, though the role of performance reviews should be put in the context of career development (Weis, 2023; Blomberg et al., 2023). The professional growth of a criminologist is mostly influenced by helpful hints and appraisals that come from experienced mentors and peers, to eventually contribute to the success in one's profession. The illuminating comments in their career as a criminologist are shaped by offering crucial viewpoints and feedback that helped sharpen comprehension of criminal behavior and its complexities (Diko et al., 2019; Richards et al., 2020). These reviews offer great insights and guidance and should be seen in a broader strategy to advance one's career in criminology. However, these factors also go beyond education and research, networking, practical experience, and sustained commitment to the field to make a successful criminologist. Ultimately, a criminologist's ability to make meaningful contributions to creating a safer society through the understanding, prevention, and treatment of the complex causes of crime defines their success.

You can advance your career in this profession by laying a solid foundation in these areas and using feedback for improvement and decision-making. Aspiration to navigate challenges to shape success among criminologists plays a huge role especially to the new rule of passing licensure examination which is RA 11131. Criminologist skillfully negotiate a maze of difficulties to carefully carve a route toward success in passing the licensure examination then comprehending and preventing crime. Criminologists are aware that people's diverse life struggles frequently manage a crucial part in determining whether they will succeed in life or engage in criminal activity (Carlsson et al., 2020). Criminologists contribute to a deeper knowledge of the variables influencing both criminality and resilience by examining the intricate teamwork between these difficulties and their influence on people's decisions.

The ability of criminologists to contribute to a safer society by understanding, preventing, and treating the complex causes that lead to criminal activity defines their success. According to Suresh Javvaji (2023), Development Criminology is an interdisciplinary field that seeks to understand the relationship between crime and social progress. It explores how social, economic, political, and cultural factors contribute to criminal behavior and how crime, in turn, affects the development of societies. It is supported by Anthony A. Braga & David M. Kennedy (2021), this strategy seeks to change offender behavior by understanding underlying crime producing dynamics and conditions that sustain recurring crime problems, and implementing a blended set of law enforcement, community mobilization, and social service actions. The approach builds on recent theorizing on optimizing deterrence, mobilizing informal social control, enhancing police legitimacy, and reducing crime opportunities through situational crime prevention.

The intention is to give ambitious criminologists an outline of their career path by emphasizing the difficulties they might incur and revealing how successful people have surpassed them. Future criminologists may benefit from better training and support systems as a result, ultimately advancing the discipline. The importance is to know how to support and advance criminology practices and policies while also contributing to a better understanding of the challenges that effective criminologists must overcome. By illuminating light on matters

that may not have been thoroughly covered or assessed in the preceding effort, this exploration may help us better comprehend the difficulties that effective criminologists must overcome. It can offer pertinent details to aspiring criminologists, supporting them in preparing for probable challenges and possibly resulting in a better conclusion.

It may provide suggestions for enriching criminology practices, education, or policies by analyzing difficulties and methods for subsequent results. Could influence criminology education, training, and professional support policies, potentially enhancing efforts at crime prevention and law enforcement. It might also be a source of inspiration as well as guidance for people who are presently pursuing professions in criminology, supporting them in navigating challenges and continuing to become victorious criminologists.

This study intends to bring into focus the ever-changing challenges facing criminologists and their strategies in meeting these challenges as a source of guidance for those who wish to achieve success in this field. It underlines the dynamic nature of criminology and the vital role of criminologists in advancing crime prevention, law enforcement, and justice systems worldwide. The study is important because not only does it identify the hurdles criminologists face but also provides a practical solution and examples of successful criminologists who could navigate through these problems. This aspect of resilience and adaptability within a rapidly changing environment fills an existing gap within the current literature, providing guidelines and motivation to future criminologists. The importance of this research study is that it may motivate, educate, and enhance the careers of those interested in the field of criminology. Secondly, the paper may be misconstrued as a literature review because of its exhaustive discussion of the previous works and theories, but it more resembles an introductory overview of criminological success and development.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on the Theoretical Foundation of Criminology (Mooney, 2019) and Social Theory and the Challenge and Practice (Garland & Sparks, 2000).

Theoretical Foundation of Criminology, established in the year 2019 by Jayne Mooney, is to address the insights from the experience to determine how to address the dilemmas that criminologists face nowadays and to adequately assess the theories that underpin criminology. Giving both the theorist and the theory context is necessary (Blomberg, et al., 2023). This work, which is written from a critical stance, constitutes a criminological theory of life. It portrays criminology's core concepts as historical and cultural artifacts and philosophers as creators of humanity active in certain historical eras, networks of thought, and philosophical arguments (Moore, 2020).

It is an example of how theory does not just appear out of thin air and emphasizes the significance of knowing the way ideas originated in the course of time, why they became popular, and the impact they have had. A solid foundation in these criminological theories is necessary for attaining success as a professional criminologist. Criminologists can create successful plans for crime reduction, justice system reform, and social transformation by applying these theories to actual situations (Kaushal, 2020).

To address current difficulties in the profession, it is also valuable to stay relevant with criminology's shifting theories and perspectives which will provide the foundation for researching, examining, and dealing with criminal activity and the criminal justice system (Laub & Sampson, 2020). It follows the trajectory of criminology from pre- Enlightenment society through to the present day and the proliferation of criminological thinking (Mooney, 2019).

On the other hand, Criminology, Social theory and the Challenge and Practice according to Garland and Sparks that it is possible that some of the societal presumptions and conceptual methods which have been useful for passing generations of criminologists are less applicable (Islam et al., 2022). As they will address in a moment, the societal shifts of the past few decades have already forced a reconsideration of the presumptions popular in the mid-1900s, when academic criminology initially emerged as a field of study. Criminologists of all kinds have started to look “beyond the state” in ways that reflect this shifting nature, whether they are studying victims, police, prevention, or criminal justice (Bowden, 2021).

Although this is a significant advancement within itself, the outcome is more than just criminology that is more capable to handle the ethical and regulatory concerns raised by this redistribution of social authority (Reiner, 2020). As a variety in this collection demonstrate, criminologists have improved their understanding of some of the most basic problems of social control and social order as a result of reliving these challenging concerns.

Recognizing the changing environment is essential to navigate the success of registered criminologists. Traditional assumptions need to be reevaluated as criminology adjusts to changing social dynamics. Modern criminologists are learning more about the underlying problems with social control and order as well as the ethical and regulatory dilemmas brought about the changes in social power (Chriss, 2022). In considering the current issues, registered criminologists must possess this adaptable mindset in order to actively contribute to the field (Bennell et al., 2021). From the perspective of criminal law policy, initiatives aimed at avoiding crime throughout an operational process, which integrates efforts to defeat crime through both criminal and non- penal means as well as between criminal justice and social affairs (Loeffler & Bovaird, 2020).

To offset crime, criminologists serve an integral part in providing information regarding crime, offenders and how the society reacts to crime. Such information allows for the preparation and management of suitable strategies within the scheme of the efforts of the criminologists (Heap & Waters, 2019). The theoretical foundations of criminology and the incorporation of social theory and the challenge and practice, established how criminologists are changing in response to alterations in society.

To succeed among registered criminologists, individuals must comprehend the cultural and historical background of criminological opinions. To cope with the moral, legal, and basic concerns of social control and order, it accentuates the necessity for criminologists to think outside of the box and collaborate with the flexible environment of social authority.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for the study titled “Lived Experiences among repeaters in the Criminology Licensure Examination: A Phenomenological Study” structured around four key themes: Academic Pressure and Performance Anxiety, External Distractions and Time Management Issues, Financial Constraints and Insecurities, Emotional Struggles and Family Expectations. These themes provide a comprehensive basis for understanding and analyzing the challenges faced by criminologists in the context of the board examination.

Academic Pressure and Performance Anxiety. Academic pressure, which can originate from a variety of sources like family, friends, or personal objectives, is the stress and expectations placed on people to achieve well academically. Stress and anxiety might be intensified by the value of passing the test and the motivation to achieve success after failing past attempts (Ronnie & Philip 2021). Academic pressure during a criminologist licensure examination can take many forms, such as the pressure to pass the test in order to become licensed, live up to one’s own or other people’s expectations, or succeed to a particular degree (Pueblo et al., 2024).

Contrarily, performance anxiety is the worry that one will do poorly in a specific circumstance, like an exam. This anxiety can cause both psychological and physiological symptoms, such as trembling, perspiration, or trouble focusing (Damuag et al., 2024). Anxiety levels can be raised by the fear of failing and by comparing oneself to others. Performance anxiety may surface during a criminologist licensure examination because of the exam’s high stakes and the potential consequences of failing (Beck, 2019).

When combined, performance anxiety and academic pressure be quite taxing on those getting ready for and taking the criminologist licensure examination. This can make it difficult for them to focus throughout the test, study efficiently, and provide their best effort (Albina, et al., 2022). These difficulties can be lessened by employing tactics like stress management, asking for advice from peers or experts, and keeping a healthy work-life balance. The key to overcoming these obstacles is to set reasonable objectives, take the lessons from previous experiences, and engage the help of the person you love. Lowering stress and the development of a positive attitude may be achieved by valuing self-care, sticking to a disciplined study schedule, and applying methods of relaxation (Seaward, 2020).

It's important to understand that treating stress and anxiety in criminology exam repeaters requires a multifaceted

method. Getting help from loved ones can offer priceless emotional support and motivation, in addition to helping you create realistic goals and learn from the past (Wall, et al., 2020). Incorporating relaxation techniques, keeping a disciplined study schedule, and placing a high priority on self-care are all crucial tactics for stress management and cultivating an optimistic outlook during the exam preparation process (Seaward, 2020)

These emotions can be increased by peer pressure, fear of failing, and a tendency to compare oneself to others (Laursen & Veenstra, 2021). Nevertheless, there is a route to achievement despite these obstacles. They must learn to identify and deal with their emotions, ask family and friends for help when needed, and create a solid support system of accountability and encouragement (Frey et al., 2019). Furthermore, cultivating resilience and motivation can be achieved by embracing a mindset that sees mistakes as chances for development and progress. Stress and anxiety can be effectively managed by incorporating relaxation techniques, leading a healthy lifestyle, and getting professional help when necessary (Pueblo et al., 2024). This will ultimately prepare the individual for success in their criminology exams. Resilience emerges as the guiding principle in the process of conquering the difficulties associated with retaking criminology exams (Diaz-Fernandez et al., 2023).

People who prioritize self-care, embrace support, and maintain an optimistic outlook not only overcome challenges with grace but also come out stronger and better equipped for what is ahead (Maxi, 2022). As individuals effectively navigate the difficult conditions of criminology exam retakes, they show the way to success by being resilient and determined (Dueggeli, 2021). Through establishing relationships, encouraging development, and taking care of themselves along the journey, they not only overcome the obstacles in their path but also lay the groundwork for a future marked by success and fulfillment.

External Distractions and Time Management Issues. When getting ready for the criminologist licensing exam, external distractions might be anything that diverts your attention from your studies, such as loud surroundings, interruptions from loved ones, notifications on social media, or even housework (Basadre et. al., 2024). Environmental elements like uncomfortable work areas, dim lighting, or awkward sitting configurations can also be sources of external distractions. Personal problems like health issues, money problems, or relationship problems can also be major sources of distraction when studying for an exam (Pueblo et. al., 2024).

Creating a supportive study space, establishing limits with friends and family around study time, utilizing devices like noise-canceling headphones, and engaging in mindfulness exercises are common strategies for addressing external distractions. External distractions and time management issues have an impact on the criminology retaker preparing for the board examination (Bangaysiso et. al., 2024). This distraction can take many different forms, such as social activities, responsibilities, individual tasks, and internet distractions. Criminology retakers may experience emotions of shame, irritation, or stress because of having to choose between studying for the test and taking care of personal or family obligations (Basadre, et al., 2024). Furthermore, social media, entertainment, and unrelated work are only a few examples of digital distractions or social activities that may quickly eat up crucial study time and reduce productivity (Yemoh & Amitai, 2022).

Problems with time management include finding efficient ways to divide up your study time. This can involve putting off tasks the last minute, talking on too much at once, underestimating the amount of time required for preparation, or just not having a well-organized study schedule in place. These problems may result in a waste of study time and more anxiety as the test date draws near (Zimmerman et. al., 2023). Lack of prioritizing can also lead to time management problems, as candidates may devote too much effort to unimportant subjects while ignoring crucial ones. Prioritizing topics according to their importance in the exam syllabus and allocating time appropriately are crucial (Albina et. al., 2022). Additionally, dividing up study sessions into more manageable, smaller chunks can enhance information retention and help avoid burnout. For those who are retaking the criminology board examination, mastering time management skills and navigating outside distractions are essential elements of preparation (Ogunlowo, 2021). The variety of distractions, from social obligations to household responsibilities to digital diversion, makes it difficult to stay focused and productive (Malan, 2019). When people struggle to balance their obligations to their studies and their personal lives, they may experience feelings of stress, embarrassment, or frustration (Peterie, et al., 2019). In addition, the attraction of entertainment, social media, and other side projects makes it even harder to manage your time effectively. A disciplined approach is necessary to overcome these challenges, one that involves defining limits, prioritizing tasks, and putting techniques in place to reduce distractions.

Through the development of a disciplined study schedule and the utilization of strategies to improve focus, criminology reviewers can maximize their study sessions and succeed in their examination attempts (Blomberg, et al., 2024). Individuals find it difficult to set aside sufficient time to go over important concepts again, practice ways to solve problems, and take examinations to see how they're doing. Furthermore, problems with time management enhance the negative effects of outside distractions on exam preparation (Pueblo, et al., 2024). Without good time management techniques, people could find it difficult to set priorities, stick to study plans, and stay focused throughout study sessions. These difficulties can be made worse by procrastination and bad study habits, which cause tension, anxiety, and frustration (Yasmin, et al., 2020).

In conclusion, while time management problems along with external distractions provide significant challenges for those preparing to retake the criminology board exam, defensive efforts can lessen the impact of these issues (Bangaysiso, et al., 2024). Examination retakers can improve their focus, efficiency, and chances of success by setting limits on external distractions, practicing disciplined time management techniques, and creating a supportive study environment. Individuals who are determined and persistent enough can overcome these obstacles and come out on top, better equipped to succeed in their exam preparations (Wyner, 2019).

Financial Constraints and Insecurities. Insecurities and financial restrictions are two connected but different ideas that frequently have an impact on people, organizations, and even governments. Financial constraints are limits or obstacles that prevent a person, group, or government from making the desired financial decisions or investments (Besley & Hillman 2002). A state of uncertainty or instability about one's financial status is known as financial insecurity, and it is frequently characterized by a lack of trust in one's capacity to fulfill financial commitments or reach financial objectives. A mix of risk management, financial planning, and social support networks—such as emergency funds, insurance, investments in education and skill development, and access to reasonably priced healthcare—are frequently needed to address financial uncertainties. Furthermore, measures to improve financial literacy, advance economic opportunity, and lessen income inequality can all assist lessen financial concerns on an individual and social level (Hacker, 2008).

Financial constraints and insecurities can significantly compound the already daunting task of exam preparation (Mamuod, et al., 2021). Tuition and study materials may be expensive, which frequently leads people to make difficult decisions between funding their education and other essentials (Albanese & Tartaro, 2024). Furthermore, the requirement to set aside money for lodging and transportation to exam locations puts further burden on already scarce resources. Their capacity to concentrate on their studies and provide their best effort on the test may be hampered by this stress.

It presents considerable obstacles to those preparing for board examination, adding further stress to an already difficult endeavor (Zhang & Bray, 2020). Due to the high expense of study materials and payment for the review, they frequently must choose between paying for their review and taking care of other necessities. In addition, the requirement to budget for accommodation and travel expenses to review centers adds to the strain on limited resources, especially for individuals who are already experiencing financial difficulties (Fitch, et al., 2021). Retakers capacity to obtain the tools they need to prepare adequately for exams is made difficult by this financial hardship, which also has an adverse effect on their general wellbeing especially for their exam preparation.

The stress of financial insecurity can lead to anxiety, sleep disturbances, and decreased concentration, hindering their capacity to focus on their studies and perform well in their examination (Yasmin, et al., 2020). Despite these challenges, individuals may seek out alternative learning methods to mitigate the impact of financial constraints, although these alternatives may not always provide the same level of support or quality instruction as limited review resources. Ultimately, addressing the systemic issues underlying financial constraints in examination preparation is essential to fostering equitable access to this opportunity in reviewing and leveling the playing field for all individuals, regardless of their socioeconomic background (Alam & Mohanty, 2020).

Feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt can be fueled by the need to make ends meet and provide for oneself or loved ones, especially if they believe their financial status reflects their worth or ability. Financial limitations might be worsened by personal concerns resulting from past traumas, low self-esteem, or fear of failure (Downey & Crummy, 2022). These fears can show up as a reluctance to ask for assistance or pursue chances that could lighten financial loads, which would keep people in a state of distress and immobility. This could entail giving

them access to tools for financial literacy, mental health support, and chances for skill-building and empowerment. Resilience, self-assurance, and a sense of agency are qualities that help them to be better negotiate the challenges of financial limits and forge ahead with stronger personal and financial wellbeing (Kurete, 2020).

Emotional Struggles and Family Expectations. The term "emotional struggles" describes the internal disputes, unrest, or difficulties people have controlling their emotions. These difficulties might show themselves as a variety of symptoms, including tension, worry, despair, anger, or even a feeling of emptiness. They could be the result of challenging relationships, unsolved traumas, previous experiences, or social pressures. In contrast, family expectations refer to the views, norms, or standards that families have about the roles, duties, behavior, and accomplishments of its members. These standards may pertain to relationships, education, careers, personal conduct, cultural customs, and relationships in general. Cultural, social, economic, and generational variables frequently impact them.

The psychological difficulties and internal conflicts that people go through when they study for the criminologist license exam are referred to as emotional problems. These include stress, worry, self-doubt, and failure-related terror. These difficulties may result from the competitive and high-stakes nature of the test, as well as the pressure to perform well and live up to social or personal expectations. Emotional difficulties can impair motivation, focus, and general wellbeing, which may have an impact on test performance and preparation (Rosenberg, 2018). Family expectations include all of the social and familial pressures—such as academic accomplishment, professional success, and financial stability—that are put on those who want to become licensed criminologists. These expectations could be a result of social mobility desires, intergenerational aspirations, or cultural conventions. Family expectations can affect a person's educational goals, career choices, and degree of support for those getting ready for license exams (Jones, 2014).

People planning to retake their criminology board examinations may find it difficult to overcome emotional challenges and expectations from family and friends (Yale, 2019). In addition to internal pressure, family members' expectations of those who may have contributed time, money, and emotional support also contribute to the pressure to perform well (Mangoma, et al., 2019). Anxiety, self-doubt, and even guilt can result from the worry of failing loved ones or not living up to their expectations (Fimiani, et al., 2021). This may increase the stress of studying for a test by establishing a sense of duty and responsibility.

It navigates a difficult path full of emotional difficulties and expectations from family members. They struggle emotionally with strong emotions such as disappointment, discomfort, and self-doubt, which are made worse by the pressure to perform well on the retake (Durstun, 2022). As they get prepared, anxiety and stress consume them, making it difficult for them to focus and give their best work because of their dread of failing and uncertainty about their future in the field of criminology, retakers frequently experience feelings of isolation or loneliness because of this burden of emotion. Relationships with family and friends may suffer as they dedicate all their efforts to preparing and becoming ready, retakers become agitated because of their stress (Garland, 2022).

The family has high expectations for their sons or daughters' performances and sees passing the examination as a source of pride in the family (Ng & Wang, 2019). The struggle for the retakers is increased by the possibility that this expectation originates from a family history of police enforcement or similar professions. But for some families, comprehending the difficulties their loved ones have during the retake process can prove difficult, which can cause tensions and disputes when expectations collide with reality. Retakers frequently feel pressured to live up to their family's expectations despite these obstacles, which further complicates their emotional struggle and quest for achievement (Magolda, 2023). Therefore, retaking the criminology board exam is a test of resilience in the face of emotional and established challenges in addition to academic ability.

In the face of emotional struggles and familial expectations, retakers of the criminology board examination stand resilient, fueled by a deep-seated determination to overcome obstacles and realize their aspirations. As they press forward, they embody the spirit of perseverance, demonstrating their unwavering commitment to their chosen profession (Millenia & Wardaningsih, 2023). With each setback and triumph, they forge a path towards their dreams, proving that resilience and resolve can conquer even the most formidable challenges.

Anchoring Strength through Supportive Connections. The deep concept of "anchoring strength through

supportive connections" emphasizes how crucial interpersonal ties are for overcoming obstacles in life. Obtaining an understanding of the idea of "Anchoring Strength through Supportive Connections" within the family might be an important component of academic achievement. Realizing how important family cohesiveness and support are, repeaters can use their family networks' strength to overcome the difficulties of exam preparation (Dy, 2019). These relationships provide a feeling of safety, acceptance, and emotional support, acting as pillars of stability (Shean & Mander, 2020).

Relationships that are supportive can take many different forms, from friendships and family ties to community connections and mentorships (Goldner & Ben-Ellyahu, 2021). These relationships are connected by their ability to offer comprehension, compassion, and support. Those who communicate openly and encourage one another can find comfort in the knowledge that they are not alone in their challenges (Solomon & Theiss, 2022). Strength is often found in unity, and this common experience strengthens the idea that unity breeds solidarity.

Empathy is essential to the concept of anchoring strength through relationships of support. People are only able to genuinely comprehend and relate to one another's experiences when they possess empathy. Supportive relationships affirm the variety of human feelings and experiences by showing compassion and validation (Paakkanen, et al., 2021). People can heal and grow because of this validation, which gives them the resilience and confidence to deal with life's ups and downs.

In the end, the idea of finding strength in supportive relationships highlights the significant influence that interpersonal relationships have on people's wellbeing (Waters, et al., 2022). People create bonds that endure hardship and the passage of time by fostering and maintaining these relationships. These relationships act as rays of hope during difficult times, pointing people in the direction of a better tomorrow. As such, they serve as pillars of resilience and sources of strength that people may rely on in trying times.

Moreover, supportive relationships not only provide emotional stability but also serve as a foundation for personal growth and development. Through encouragement and shared experiences, these bonds foster a sense of belonging and self-worth, empowering individuals to navigate challenges with confidence. They offer opportunities for collaboration, mutual learning, and the exchange of ideas, which can lead to innovative solutions and improved coping mechanisms. In this way, supportive relationships are not merely a source of comfort but also a catalyst for transformation, enabling people to emerge stronger and more capable in the face of adversity.

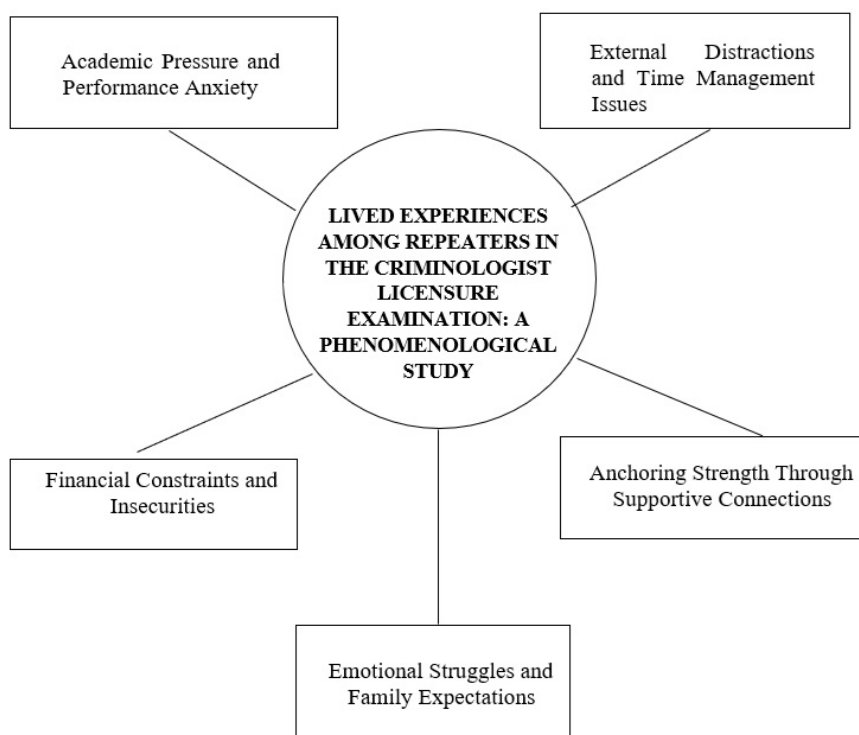


Figure 1. Schematic Diagram of the Study

Statement of the Problem

The study aimed to explore the experiences of individuals who repeated the Criminologist Licensure Examination.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

What is the profile of the participants in terms of gender, civil status, and the number of times they took the examination?

What challenges were encountered by the successful criminologists during their preparation for the board examination?

What coping strategies did the participants use to pass the licensure examination?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Design

This research utilized a qualitative research design using phenomenological methodologies to explore and characterize individuals' lived experiences in the context of criminology. Specifically, the research followed Moustakas' transcendental phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994), which is grounded in Husserl's philosophical principles. This approach was used to gather and analyze data from participants to identify meaningful themes related to their experiences in the field. This research study's underpinning theoretical framework is rooted in Moustakas and Husserl's phenomenological methodologies, serving as a platform to understand the essence of experiences from participants and how these understandings are crucial for the field of criminology. Its purpose was to help people comprehend the essence of experiences more deeply. Because of its systematic and rigorous nature, it was applicable to a wide range of research, including those related to professional licensure exams, such as those taken by criminologists. This research design was well-suited to explore the challenges encountered by successful criminologists.

Settings

The study was conducted in one of the cities in the Province of Misamis Occidental. Misamis Occidental served as a transportation hub, providing access through land, sea, and air. It was located in the northern part of Mindanao and was known for its accessibility and vibrant culture. Ports regularly saw barge loads of people, vehicles, and business products traveling daily. The province also featured several tourist attractions, including the famous Cotta Fort and Shrine in Ozamiz, built during the Spanish colonial period, and the Caluya Shrine in Lopez Jaena, Misamis Occidental. A significant place of worship was the Immaculate Conception Cathedral, also referred to as the Ozamiz Cathedral. Moreover, the province was home to a variety of educational institutions, including colleges and universities, which provided locals with opportunities for high-quality education and underscored the community's aspiration for personal and societal growth.

Participants

The participants of the study were passers of the criminology board exam from a province in Misamis Occidental. Seven participants were purposefully identified and selected for interviews. The inclusion criteria required participants to be graduates of a prominent university in Misamis Occidental, retakers of the licensure examination, registered criminologists, and willing to participate in the study.

Instrument

The study used an interview guide prepared by the researchers. The interview guide was reviewed by the adviser and approved by the panel members before being administered to the participants. This tool contained open-ended questions that could help explore the challenges faced by successful criminologists. The guide contained introductory questions that elicited the demographic information of the participants and core questions focusing

on their experiences, perspectives on crime, and insights into criminology as a profession. The interview guide also consisted of closing questions so that participants can share their last thoughts. The semi-structured approach gave participants the freedom to elaborate on the responses they had given, hence providing richer qualitative data for analysis. Additionally, the researchers prepared a recording sheet to document important points shared by the participants.

Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection was vital in every research endeavor. Before the actual conduct of the interviews with the participants, the researcher sought permission from the Dean of the College of Criminology at Misamis University through a formal letter. After receiving approval from the Dean, the researcher also requested permission from the criminologists via a formal letter. The researcher then scheduled appointments with the identified participants and proposed an interview schedule. Participants were informed that the conversations would be recorded, and they were assured that their responses would be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Ethical Considerations

In conducting this qualitative research, specific ethical measures were addressed, particularly in selecting participants and conducting the interviews. The researcher adhered to the ethical protocols set by the university. Participation was strictly voluntary, and no interviews were conducted without the participants' personal consent, which was obtained through signed informed consent forms. Participants were assured that refusal to participate would not result in any penalties or loss of benefits, and signing the consent form did not waive any legal claims, rights, or remedies.

To promote anonymity and confidentiality, the participants' names were not mentioned during the interviews; instead, the researcher referred to them as "sir" or "ma'am." No identifying information about the participants appeared in the study's results or manuscript. Their attendance and signed consent forms were securely stored in a locked cabinet and kept confidential until the appropriate time for disposal (Cuevas, 2020).

Throughout the study, the participants' welfare was prioritized. Privacy and confidentiality were consistently observed, particularly regarding names and other information unrelated to the study. The researcher complied with the guidelines of Republic Act No. 10173, known as the Data Privacy Act of 2012, ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of the research process.

Data Analysis

The study employed Moustakas' (1994) data analysis technique of phenomenological reduction. The transcripts gathered from the participants were analyzed using this method. The following steps, outlined by Moustakas, guided the analysis process: (1) Bracketing, (2) Horizontalization, (3) Clustering into Themes, (4) Textural Description, (5) Structural Description, and (6) Textural-Structural Synthesis.

Bracketing: This approach was used to mitigate preconceived notions and biases before the study commenced. It involved suspending judgments or engaging in "epoche" to facilitate a deeper inquiry into topic selection, interview design, data collection, interpretation, and findings dissemination.

Horizontalization: All verbatim expressions relevant to the study were listed and initially assigned equal value. Irrelevant, repetitive, overlapping, or out-of-scope statements were discarded. The remaining meaningful sections, known as "horizons," were considered constituents of the phenomenon.

Clustering into Themes: The invariant horizons were reduced and clustered into themes, each representing a single meaning. Validation was performed using multiple data sources such as observation, field notes, focus groups, and related literature, ensuring accuracy and clarity.

Textural Description: This step described participants' perceptions of the phenomenon using verbatim excerpts and narrations derived from the themes.

Structural Description: This involved integrating imaginative variation into the textural description to explore the structures of participants' experiences. Imaginative variation served as a mental experiment detached from natural inclinations through "epoche."

Textural-Structural Synthesis: The meaning units of each participant were collated to develop composite textural and structural descriptions, creating a narrative synthesis that represented all participants from a third-person perspective. This step aimed to capture the essence of the phenomenon.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the results of the study and its detailed discussions after the conduct of data collection through interview. There are 5 identified emerging themes which are presented and discussed in this chapter, derived from the different responses of the participants of the study during the conduct of the interview. The emerging themes were identified through Moustakas and Husserl's phenomenological methodologies.

Table 1. Profile of the Participants

Code name	Civil Status	Sex	No. of Retakes
P1	Single	Female	2
P2	Single	Male	2
P3	Single	Male	2
P4	Single	Female	2
P5	Single	Male	3
P6	Single	Male	2
P7	Single	Female	3

The table above shows the profile of the 7 identified participants involved in the study. The researchers included the civil status, sex, and numbers they took the board examination. Based on the data gathered, the civil status of the participants is all single; four participants were males, and three participants were females. Five of the candidates took the exam two times, while the two participants took the exam thrice. Furthermore, the five emerging themes identified are the following: Academic Pressure and Performance Anxiety, External Distraction and Time Management Issue, Financial Constraints and Insecurities, Emotional Struggles and Family Expectation, and Anchoring Strength Through Supportive Connections.

Academic Pressure and Performance Anxiety

In Theme 1, several participants shared common experiences related to academic pressure and performance anxiety while preparing for the criminology board examination. Participants 1, 4, and 7 all expressed feelings of extreme nervousness and stress associated with the examination. They described worrying about whether they had studied enough and whether they would remember everything during the test. This indicates a shared sentiment of pressure to perform well, both internally and from their families. Additionally, Participants 3 and 5 shared similar struggles with confidence and self-doubt. Participant 3 mentioned experiencing temptations and overconfidence, which ultimately led to disappointment and low morale upon failing the examination. Similarly, Participant 5 expressed feeling stressed out and doubting themselves, fearing that they weren't good enough to pass the examination.

These responses highlight the emotional toll of preparing for the criminology board examination and the impact of self-doubt on performance. These common responses underscore the pervasive nature of academic pressure and performance anxiety among individuals preparing for the criminology board examination. Despite differences in personal experiences, such as coping mechanisms and support systems, these participants all grappled with similar challenges related to self-confidence, fear of failure, and the intense pressure to succeed in their academic endeavors.

These are evident in the response of the participants during the conduct of the interview:

"The examination to become a criminologist is tough, and it makes you feel super nervous. I kept worrying if I studied enough and if I'd remember everything during the examination." (P1)

"I experienced a lot; there are so many temptations and overconfident that's why I failed. The moment I failed the licensure examination, I am disappointed, having low morale." (P3)

It is imperative that those studying for the criminologist licensure exam emphasize self-care and seek support in order to overcome these issues. This could entail forming constructive study habits, establishing reasonable objectives, asking mentors or support groups for advice, and engaging in stress-reduction activities like mindfulness or relaxation training. Important roles in helping candidates are also played by licensing authorities and educational institutions. Academic pressure and performance anxiety can be reduced by offering exam preparation workshops, mental health resources, and a supportive learning environment.

"The examination to become a criminologist is stressful. I was so scared of failing and felt like I had to be better than everyone else. Sometimes, I doubted myself and worried a lot about the examination." (P4)

"Studying for the criminology examination is tough, and it made me feel really stressed out. I was always worrying if I'd do well enough. But I kept going because I really wanted to pass and become a criminologist." (P5)

"The examination to become a criminologist is really hard, and it made me doubt myself a lot. I felt like I wasn't good enough, and I was really scared of not passing." (P7)

Academic pressure and performance anxiety are common challenges faced by students preparing for high-stakes examinations, such as the criminology board examination (Pueblo, et al., 2024). Research in educational psychology suggests that the fear of failure and the desire to meet external expectations can contribute to heightened stress levels among students. This pressure often stems from the perceived importance of the examination in determining future career prospects and academic success (Schreiner, et al., 2020). Furthermore, studies have shown that individuals may experience symptoms of anxiety, such as increased heart rate, difficulty concentrating, and negative self-talk, which can further exacerbate their performance-related concerns (Rowland & Lankveld, 2019). These findings underscore the need for effective stress management strategies and support systems to help students cope with the rigors of examination preparation.

In addition to academic pressure, individuals preparing for the criminology board examination may also contend with self-doubt and feelings of inadequacy (Burt, 2021). According to psychological research, self-doubt can arise from various factors, including past academic experiences, comparison with peers, and unrealistic expectations. Such feelings of inadequacy may lead to a lack of confidence in one's abilities, hindering effective study habits and performance on the examination.

Moreover, studies have highlighted the detrimental effects of negative self-talk and perfectionism on academic performance, suggesting that individuals who engage in self-critical thoughts may be more susceptible to anxiety and decreased motivation (Block, 2018). Recognizing and addressing these underlying psychological factors is crucial in supporting students' holistic well-being and fostering a positive mindset conducive to successful examination outcomes.

The implications of academic pressure and performance anxiety on individuals preparing for the criminology board examination are profound and multifaceted. Firstly, these challenges can significantly impact students' mental health and well-being, potentially leading to increased stress, anxiety, and even burnout. Such negative psychological outcomes not only affect students' immediate examination preparation but also have long-term implications for their overall academic success and professional development.

Furthermore, the presence of performance-related stressors may impede students' ability to effectively engage with their studies, leading to reduced concentration, motivation, and retention of information. Addressing these

implications requires a comprehensive approach that prioritizes the provision of mental health support services, stress management strategies, and academic accommodations to ensure that individuals preparing for high-stakes examinations can navigate these challenges successfully while maintaining their well-being

External Distractions and Time Management Issues

Participants 1, 2, and 4 share common struggles related to external distractions and time management issues while preparing for the criminology examination. They all express challenges in staying focused amidst various distractions, whether it's from technology, household responsibilities, or social commitments. Participant 5 also echoes similar sentiments, citing temptations in reviewing, sleepless nights, and worries about failing the examination. These shared experiences highlight the pervasive nature of external distractions and time management difficulties faced by individuals preparing for high-stakes exams like the criminology board examination. It underscores the importance of implementing effective strategies to minimize distractions and manage time efficiently to optimize study efforts and improve overall preparedness for the examination.

These are evident in the response of the participants during the conduct of the interview:

"Sometimes, it's hard to stay focused on studying for the criminology examination when there are so many distractions around me. I often find myself getting sidetracked by my phone or other things happening around me. It's a struggle to manage my time effectively and prioritize studying over other activities." (P1)

"I often struggle with managing my time effectively when preparing for the criminology examination.

There are so many things vying for my attention, like work, family responsibilities, and social commitments. It's challenging to find a balance and dedicate enough time to studying while also fulfilling my other obligations." (P2)

"External distractions can really impact my ability to concentrate on studying for the criminology examination. Whether it's noisy neighbors, household chores, or social media notifications, it's hard to stay focused. I try my best to create a study environment free from distractions, but it's not always easy to avoid interruptions." (P4)

"I have so many challenges that I have encountered as a successful criminologist during my preparation, like the temptation in reviewing which I can't manage, sleepless nights, worries, and doubts thinking about what if I will fail again the board examination." (P5)

Participants in the criminology board examination, as described in their accounts, face significant challenges related to external distractions and time management. These challenges are consistent with existing literature on the impact of distractions on academic performance and the difficulty of managing time effectively amidst competing responsibilities (Solmiano, et al., 2022). Research suggests that external distractions, such as social media, household chores, and other commitments, can impair concentration and hinder learning outcomes. Furthermore, time management issues, including difficulties prioritizing tasks and allocating sufficient study time, are common among students preparing for rigorous examinations. These findings underscore the importance of implementing effective time management strategies and creating conducive study environments to mitigate the impact of external distractions and optimize academic performance.

Moreover, the experiences shared by participants highlight the need for tailored interventions to address external distractions and time management challenges in the context of criminology board examination preparation. Literature on academic performance suggests that proactive strategies, such as setting specific study goals, establishing a structured study routine, and minimizing distractions, can enhance focus and productivity (Calonia, et al., 2023). Additionally, research emphasizes the importance of self-regulation skills, such as self-monitoring and self-control, in managing distractions and maintaining study momentum. By incorporating evidence-based time management techniques and fostering self-regulatory skills, educational institutions can better support students in navigating external distractions and optimizing their study habits. These insights underscore the significance of holistic approaches to academic support, which consider both the academic and non-academic factors influencing student performance in high-stakes examinations like the criminology board examination.

The responses provided by participants regarding external distractions and time management issues during criminology board examination preparation underscore the importance of implementing targeted interventions to support students in managing these challenges effectively. The implications of these findings suggest the need for educational institutions to prioritize the development of time management skills and provide resources to minimize external distractions. By offering guidance on effective study techniques, fostering self-regulatory skills, and creating conducive learning environments, institutions can enhance student preparedness and resilience in facing high-stakes examinations. Moreover, addressing external distractions and time management issues not only improves academic performance but also contributes to students' overall well-being and confidence in their abilities to succeed in challenging academic endeavors.

Financial Constraints and Insecurities

Participants P2, P4, and P7 share a common response regarding the financial constraints and insecurities they face while preparing for the criminology board examination. They all express concerns about balancing the expenses associated with review materials, classes, and daily living costs. Additionally, they highlight the stress and distractions caused by financial instability, which can affect their confidence and focus during preparation. These responses underscore the significant impact of financial constraints on the ability to fully invest in exam preparation and the challenges of navigating these insecurities amidst the already demanding process of studying for the board examination.

These are evident in the response of the participants during the conduct of the interview:

"I can relate to feeling financially constrained during my preparation for the criminology board examination. It's tough when you have to balance paying for review materials, review classes, and other expenses while also managing daily living costs. Sometimes, worrying about money can add extra stress and distractions to an already challenging time." (P2)

"Financial insecurities have been a significant challenge for me as I prepare for the criminology board examination. I often worry about not having enough resources to afford review materials and classes, which can impact my confidence and focus. It's frustrating when financial constraints hinder my ability to fully invest in my preparation for the examination." (P4)

"The challenges that I have encountered as a successful criminologist during my preparation for the board examination are being financially unstable and my body insecurities which make me unconfident in taking the board examination." (P6)

"Being financially unstable adds an extra layer of stress to an already nerve-racking time preparing for the criminology board examination. It's disheartening when you want to dedicate all your time and energy to studying, but financial constraints limit your access to resources and support. Finding ways to overcome these challenges and stay motivated despite financial insecurities is an ongoing struggle." (P7)

Participants in the study highlighted the pervasive challenges stemming from financial constraints and insecurities during their preparation for the criminology board examination. These narratives align with existing literature on the impact of socioeconomic factors on academic performance and success. Research indicates that students from low-income backgrounds often face heightened stress and barriers to accessing necessary resources for exam preparation, including review materials and classes. Financial insecurities can exacerbate feelings of anxiety and self-doubt, ultimately hindering academic performance and outcomes (Musau, 2023). Therefore, addressing these financial challenges through targeted support programs and resources is crucial to ensuring equitable opportunities for all aspiring criminologists.

Furthermore, the participants' experiences shed light on the broader societal issue of economic inequality and its implications for educational attainment. Studies have shown that students from disadvantaged backgrounds are disproportionately affected by financial barriers, leading to disparities in academic achievement and career opportunities. The narratives emphasize the need for systemic interventions to address structural inequalities and provide equitable access to educational resources and support services. By addressing financial insecurities

among aspiring criminologists, policymakers and educational institutions can foster an environment conducive to academic success and promote diversity and inclusion within the field of criminology.

The participants' shared experiences underscore the pressing need for comprehensive support mechanisms to address the multifaceted challenges of financial constraints and insecurities among aspiring criminologists. These findings highlight the importance of implementing targeted interventions and support programs aimed at mitigating the adverse effects of economic disparities on academic performance and success (Stevens, et al., 2018). By addressing financial barriers and providing equitable access to resources such as review materials, classes, and support services, institutions can foster a more inclusive and supportive environment for aspiring criminologists. Moreover, efforts to promote socioeconomic diversity and equity within the field of criminology are essential for ensuring equal opportunities and enhancing overall educational outcomes. Therefore, policymakers and educational stakeholders must prioritize initiatives that alleviate financial insecurities and create pathways for academic success among aspiring criminologists, ultimately contributing to a more equitable and inclusive society.

Emotional Struggles and Family Expectations

Participants 1, 3, 4, and 6 all shared similar experiences regarding emotional struggles and family expectations while preparing for the criminology board examination. Each participant expressed feelings of fear, pressure, and self-doubt stemming from the weight of familial expectations and the fear of disappointing their loved ones. Despite facing setbacks and moments of anxiety, all four participants drew strength from the unwavering support and encouragement of their families. This support served as a crucial source of motivation, enabling them to persevere through adversity and ultimately achieve their goals. Additionally, Participant 7 also mentioned feeling nervous and disappointed after failing the licensure examination but highlighted how the support of their family helped to boost their confidence and maintain a positive mindset throughout the process. These responses underscore the significant role of family support in navigating the emotional challenges associated with preparing for the criminology board examination.

These are evident in the response of the participants during the conduct of the interview:

"The emotional toll of preparing for the criminology board examination cannot be understated. The fear of failure and the weight of familial expectations loomed large, often overshadowing my confidence and motivation. Despite moments of doubt, I drew strength from my family's belief in me, allowing me to persevere through adversity and ultimately achieve my goal." (P1)

"Emotional struggles were a significant part of my experience preparing for the criminology board examination. The pressure to succeed weighed heavily on me, especially considering my family's expectations. Each failure felt like a blow to my confidence, but with the support of my loved ones, I found the strength to persevere and eventually succeed." (P3)

"Facing the criminology board examination brought up a whirlwind of emotions for me. The fear of failure and disappointing my family added to the already intense pressure of the examination itself. Despite setbacks and moments of self-doubt, I leaned on my family's encouragement and belief in me to keep pushing forward and eventually achieve success." (P4)

"Preparing for the criminology board examination was emotionally challenging, particularly when faced with the prospect of failing. Each setback felt like a personal defeat, amplifying feelings of disappointment and anxiety. However, with the unwavering support of my family, I found the resilience to keep going, ultimately emerging stronger and more determined." (P6)

"I felt very nervous in taking the board examination. The moment I failed the licensure examination twice, I feel very disappointed. My preparations affect my performance in the board examination, which help to boost my confidence and give me positive thoughts which help me to pass the board examination." (P7)

Preparing for the criminology board examination often entails confronting a myriad of emotional struggles and

familial expectations. Participants commonly report feelings of fear, anxiety, and self-doubt as they grapple with the weight of these expectations. The pressure to succeed can be particularly daunting, compounded by the fear of disappointing loved ones and the desire to meet familial aspirations. Despite facing setbacks and moments of uncertainty, many individuals find solace and motivation in the unwavering support of their families, which serves as a source of strength during challenging times (Garcini, et al., 2022). This familial encouragement becomes a cornerstone in their journey, providing the resilience needed to persevere through adversity and ultimately achieve success.

Moreover, the emotional toll of preparing for the criminology board examination extends beyond individual experiences, impacting familial dynamics and relationships. Family members often share in the anticipation and anxiety surrounding the examination, amplifying the emotional stakes for both candidates and their loved ones. The fear of failure becomes a shared burden, as families navigate the uncertainties and pressures associated with the examination process together. However, amidst these challenges, familial bonds strengthen as individuals lean on each other for support and encouragement (Mapp & Bergman, 2021). These shared experiences foster a sense of solidarity within families, highlighting the profound impact of familial dynamics on the emotional well-being and resilience of aspiring criminologists.

The responses of participants grappling with emotional struggles and familial expectations during the preparation for the criminology board examination underscore the need for comprehensive support systems within academic and familial contexts. Recognizing the profound impact of emotional well-being on academic performance, institutions and families alike must prioritize fostering environments that promote resilience and holistic development. Emphasizing open communication, encouragement, and empathy can alleviate the burden of academic pressure and instill confidence in aspiring criminologists, empowering them to navigate challenges with resilience and determination. Additionally, by acknowledging the interconnectedness of familial dynamics and academic pursuits, stakeholders can work collaboratively to create nurturing environments that foster growth, success, and emotional well-being among aspiring professionals in the field of criminology.

Anchoring Strength Through Supportive Connections

"Anchoring Strength Through Supportive Connections" highlights the vital role of social and emotional support in the journey of repeaters in criminology licensure examinations. Repeat examinees often face significant stress, self-doubt, and societal pressure, which can impact their performance and mental well-being (Lain, 2022). Supportive connections whether from family, friends, mentors, or peers provide emotional encouragement, practical advice, and a sense of belonging that can help them persevere through repeated attempts (Takimoto, et al., 2021). These connections can boost confidence, reduce anxiety, and foster a resilient mindset, ultimately contributing to better preparation and a greater likelihood of success in subsequent exams (Tabibnia & Radecki, 2018).

In the study, Participant 1 statement reflects the social theory of symbolic interactionism, where individuals create meaning based on their interactions with others. The participant's sense of obligation and the internalization of family expectations illustrate how social influences shape personal identity and behavior. This also relates to the challenge and practice theory, where the challenge of meeting familial expectations drives the practice of persistent effort and focus.

Participant 3 This highlights the emotional toll and social pressure associated with perceived failure, which can be understood through the lens of social strain theory. The participant experiences stress and a sense of shame due to the disparity between their goals (success in the exam) and their achievements. This situation exemplifies the challenge in challenge and practice theory, where the perceived failure motivates a reassessment of strategies to meet social and personal expectations.

Participant 4 response demonstrates the importance of social support networks in reinforcing resilience, aligning with social capital theory. The participant's perseverance is bolstered by external support, emphasizing the practice aspect of challenge and practice theory, where sustained effort is maintained through social encouragement and resources. Participant 5 Similar to Participant 4, states the highlights of the significance of social support in maintaining mental strength and determination. From a social theory perspective, it illustrates

how social bonds and networks provide emotional and motivational reinforcement. The challenge and practice theory is reflected in the ongoing practice of drawing strength from these supportive relationships to overcome difficulties. Participant 7: “But I tried to stay positive and focused on what I was good at to get through it.” This comment highlights the individual's adaptive strategies, resonating with positive psychology and resilience theory. The focus on personal strengths and maintaining a positive outlook are practices that help navigate the challenges faced. In challenge and practice theory, this represents the continuous effort to adapt and utilize personal strengths to achieve goals despite external pressures.

“I felt a lot of pressure from myself and my family to do well, but I tried my best to stay focused and not give up.” (P1)

“Being ashamed to my parents because of the support that they give to me especially in financing my review are wasted.” (P3)

“But I kept studying hard and had people supporting me, which helped me stay strong.” (P4)

“Having people support me helped me stay strong.” (P5)

“But I tried to stay positive and focused on what I was good at to get through it.” (P7)

Repeat examinees often face significant stress, self-doubt, and societal pressure, which can impact their performance and mental well-being. Studies indicate that these pressures are widespread and can lead to increased levels of academic stress, affecting both mental and emotional health (Ramachandiran & Dhanapal, 2018). Self-doubt can further exacerbate these feelings, making it challenging for repeat examinees to maintain their confidence and focus (Chong, 2018). Supportive connections, whether from family, friends, mentors, or peers, provide emotional encouragement, practical advice, and a sense of belonging that can help them persevere through repeated attempts.

Such support is crucial in reducing feelings of isolation and boosting morale. Studies have shown that perceived need support, particularly in academic environments, significantly enhances resilience and coping mechanisms among students facing repeated challenges (Permatasari & Ismail, 2021). These connections can boost confidence, reduce anxiety, and foster a resilient mindset, ultimately contributing to better preparation and a greater likelihood of success in subsequent exams. The presence of a strong support network has been linked to improved academic outcomes and reduced stress levels, indicating the power of social bonds in academic success.

The theme Anchoring Strength Through Supportive Connections highlights the importance of creating a supportive and inclusive educational environment for repeaters of the criminological licensure examination. This implies that educators and institutions should prioritize the establishment of strong support networks comprising peer study groups, mentorship programs, and counseling services. By fostering a community of encouragement and practical assistance, educators can help students manage stress and self-doubt, enhancing their resilience and perseverance.

This approach not only aids in academic preparation but also promotes mental well-being, ultimately contributing to improved performance and higher pass rates. Integrating collaborative learning activities and providing continuous emotional and academic support can significantly empower repeaters, enabling them to navigate the challenges of repeated exam attempts more effectively.

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The study aimed to explore the challenges faced by successful criminologists in Ozamiz City, specifically focusing on their profile, strategies in passing the licensure examination, challenges encountered during preparation for the board examination, and coping strategies employed. Utilizing a qualitative approach, the research involved seven participants from Misamis University, purposively identified for their success in the

field. Data collection was conducted through interviews guided by a structured interview guide. Through this study, a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted experiences and strategies of successful criminologists in navigating challenges related to licensure examination preparation was sought.

Findings

Based on the responses of the participants during the interview conducted, the following findings were crafted by the researchers:

The responses of participants reveal the pervasive nature of academic pressure and performance anxiety among individuals preparing for the criminology board examination. Participants expressed feelings of extreme nervousness, self-doubt, and fear of failure, highlighting the emotional toll of examination preparation. Additionally, common themes such as the desire to meet familial expectations and the struggle to maintain confidence underscore the complex interplay of internal and external factors influencing examination readiness.

The participants in the criminology examination preparation expressed common struggles with external distractions and time management issues, affecting their ability to focus and prioritize studying effectively. These challenges reflect broader trends in academic performance literature, highlighting the pervasive impact of distractions on learning outcomes and the difficulty of managing time amidst competing responsibilities.

Participants preparing for the criminology board examination commonly face financial constraints and insecurities, which hinder their ability to afford necessary review materials, classes, and daily living expenses, adding stress and distractions to their preparation process. These challenges reflect broader socioeconomic disparities that impact access to resources and support for exam preparation among aspiring criminologists.

Participants preparing for the criminology board examination commonly face emotional struggles and family expectations, experiencing fear, pressure, and self-doubt amidst the weight of familial aspirations. However, they draw strength from familial support, which serves as a crucial source of motivation and resilience during challenging times.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers crafted the following conclusions:

The findings suggest that academic pressure and performance anxiety are significant challenges faced by aspiring criminologists during the examination preparation process. These challenges can have detrimental effects on students' mental health and academic performance, highlighting the need for targeted interventions and support services. Moreover, the narratives of participants underscore the importance of holistic approaches to examination preparation that prioritize students' emotional well-being alongside academic readiness.

Addressing external distractions and time management issues is crucial for optimizing student performance in high-stakes examinations like the criminology board examination. The findings underscore the need for tailored interventions and holistic approaches that integrate evidence-based strategies to support students in managing these challenges effectively.

The responses of participants underscore the significant impact of financial constraints and insecurities on the preparation process for the criminology board examination, highlighting the need for systemic interventions to address these barriers to equitable educational opportunities. These findings emphasize the intersectionality of socioeconomic factors with academic success and the imperative for targeted support programs to mitigate the adverse effects on aspiring criminologists.

The responses of participants highlight the significant impact of emotional challenges and familial dynamics on the preparation process for the criminology board examination, underscoring the importance of holistic support systems within academic and familial contexts. These findings emphasize the need for nurturing environments that prioritize open communication, encouragement, and empathy to alleviate the burden of academic pressure and foster resilience among aspiring criminologists.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were crafted by the researchers considering the significant findings and the conclusions of the study:

It is recommended that educational institutions and support organizations implement comprehensive mental health support services tailored to the unique needs of students preparing for high-stakes examinations. Additionally, fostering open communication channels and providing opportunities for peer support and mentorship can help alleviate feelings of isolation and promote a sense of belonging among students. Furthermore, integrating stress management techniques and resilience-building strategies into academic curricula can empower students to navigate examination-related challenges more effectively and sustainably.

Educational institutions should prioritize the development of time management skills and provide resources to minimize external distractions for students preparing for rigorous examinations. Incorporating proactive strategies, such as setting study goals, establishing structured routines, and fostering self-regulatory skills, can enhance student preparedness and resilience in facing academic challenges.

Educational institutions and policymakers may prioritize initiatives aimed at reducing financial barriers for aspiring criminologists, including providing subsidies for review materials and classes, offering financial aid programs, and enhancing access to support services. By addressing financial insecurities, institutions can create a more inclusive and supportive environment that fosters academic success and promotes diversity within the field of criminology.

Educational institutions and families may collaborate to create supportive environments that emphasize open communication, encouragement, and empathy can empower individuals to navigate academic challenges with confidence and determination, ultimately promoting success and well-being within the field of criminology.

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The Researchers

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to all those who have been a source of inspiration, encouragement, and support

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To the researchers' family, whose unwavering love and belief in my abilities have been their driving force. Their constant support and understanding have been invaluable, and we are forever grateful.

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Lastly, we dedicate this research to the pursuit of knowledge and the advancement of the field. May the findings and contributions of this study serve as a steppingstone for further exploration and progress in the subject matter.

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The Researchers

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Appendix A

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Before the interview begins, the participants will be informed that:

1. The interview will be digitally recorded.
2. Their identity will remain confidential during the whole course of the study and in writing the report of the study.
3. They can discontinue their participation any time.

Opening Questions

1. What is your name?
2. What is your age?
3. Determine the gender of the participants.
4. What year have you passed the board examination?

Core Questions

1. How did you prepare for the board examination?
2. What are your experiences taking the board examination for the first time?
3. What did you feel at the moment you failed the licensure examination?
4. How did your preparations affect your performance in the board examination?
5. Why are you willing to take the licensure examination again despite your failure?
6. How will you prove that this time, you will pass the CLE?
7. What are the challenges you have encountered as a successful criminologist during your preparation for the board examination?
8. What are the coping strategies you employ to overcome the challenges?

Closing Questions

1. What advice can you share for those criminologists who want to become a successful criminologist in the future?

Appendix B

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

1. I, _____, volunteer to respond in the research undertaking conducted by **Geraga, Mykel M., Paronda, Camille Victoria L., Del Castillo, Mitzi Mae C., Kilat, Rhod** from Misamis University, Ozamiz City. I understand that the research is designed to gather data about **Lived Experiences Among Repeaters in The Criminologist Licensure Examination: A Phenomenological Study**. I will be one of the respondents who shall answer this research;
2. My response in this research is voluntary. I understand that I will not be paid for my participation. I may

withdraw and discontinue at any time without penalty. If I decline to respond or withdraw from the study, no one will be told;

3. Upon filling out the questionnaire, the name is optional, the signature will safeguard my identity and my name will not be revealed in the analysis and report. If, however, I feel uncomfortable in any way in answering the questionnaire, I have the right to decline to answer any of the questions;
4. I am given ample time to answer the questions for at least one (1) week. Participation in this survey is voluntary thus, I am free to refuse to participate, stop the survey administration and skip any item I am uncomfortable with;
5. I understand that the information to be gathered will be treated with confidentiality. I will not be identified in the paper. Only the researchers their adviser will have access to the data of the research;
6. I understand that this research has been reviewed and approved by the College of Criminology of Misamis University;
7. I have read and understood the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study; and
8. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

Respondent's Signature

Date

For further information, please contact:

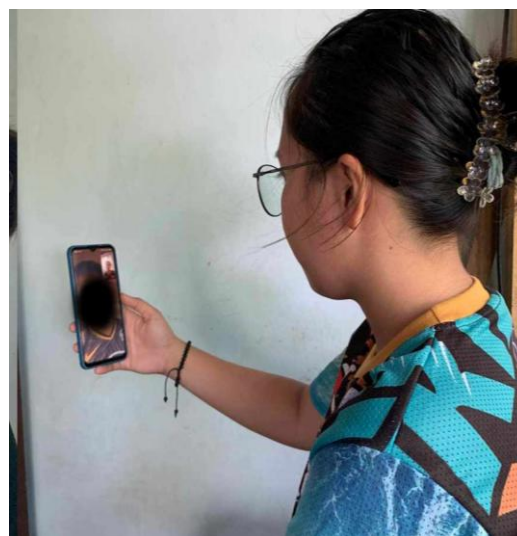
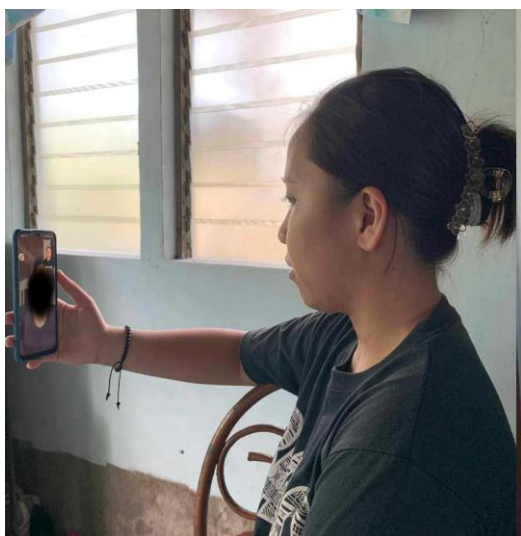
Mykel M. Geraga

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Cellphone Number: +639079302724

Appendix C

DOCUMENTATION



Online interviews offer flexibility and accessibility, ensuring valuable insights from participants anywhere.

Clarifying the interview's purpose ensures participants feel informed and comfortable before data collection begins.



Conducting real-time interviews with participants via Messenger's video call feature for seamless data collection.

Expressing gratitude to the participant for their time and effort before concluding the interview.

Appendix D

TRANSCRIPTION OF INTERVIEW

Participant 1; Single; Female; 2

In preparing the board exam, I gathered lots of review materials, enroll in a review center and online review center and of course reading the books that I have acquired. Taking the board examination for the first time, I experienced having a mental block and had to deal with my nervousness during the exam. The examination to become a criminologist is really tough, and it makes you feel super nervous. I kept worrying if I studied enough and if I'd remember everything during the examination. I felt a lot of pressure from myself and my family to do well, but I tried my best to stay focused and not give up. The moment I failed the licensure examination, I feel devastated and depressed and disappointed especially when I did not see my name in list of passers. My preparations affect my whole being when I failed my board examination. My willingness to take the licensure examination again despite my failure is to prove that I can do more and surely passed the second time I took the board examination. I prove that by that time I take the examination, I always reminded myself that I can do better than the first time that I took the board exam. Sometimes, it's hard to stay focused on studying for the criminology examination when there are so many distractions around me. The emotional toll of preparing for the criminology board examination cannot be understated. The fear of failure and the weight of familial expectations loomed large, often overshadowing my confidence and motivation. Despite moments of doubt, I drew strength from my family's belief in me, allowing me to persevere through adversity and ultimately achieve my goal. I often find myself getting sidetracked by my phone or other things happening around me. It's a struggle to manage my time effectively and prioritize studying over other activities. During the preparation for the board examination, I faced a lot of challenges like doubting about myself if I can pass the board exam, I experienced a lots of anxieties and lots of crying during my review seasons but despite all of these challenges that I faced my family, friends and lover to all the people that had put their faith in me believe that I can do well and surely passed the exam and lastly without the everlasting faith and guidance of our dearest Lord I am nothing. In overcoming the challenges, you must always remind yourself that you are worthy of everything, and someone believes in you especially your family. Sharing my advice to all the takers of CLE, always remind yourself that you can do better and always pray and surrender everything to our heavenly above. And of course, please be reminded of the Verse Isaiah 60:22 When the Time is Right, I the Lord will make it happen. This verse really helps me a lot to encourage myself during my review season.

Participant 2; Single; Male; 2

In preparing the board examination, I deleted all online games especially mobile legends to avoid temptation and just to focus to my review. Then discipline yourself and be consistent in reviewing. Study smarter not harder. Taking the board examination for the first time, I am nervous because many what ifs comes to my mind if I pass or fail the board examination. The moment I failed the licensure examination; I am disappointed and ashamed to go outside because of my failure. I feel pressured because I am always compared to my siblings. Because all my siblings are all first takers in board examination and a Cum Laude graduates. It really affects my preparation which I can say that all my hard work, effort and sleepless night really paid off. I can say that all of what I studied during review was worth it because mostly of what I studied appears in the board exam. My willingness in taking the board examination again despite my failure is I don't like to be the failure of the family. That's why I try my best to take the board examination again and not the time to give up. I can say that I will really pass the board examination because all the lesson I studied appear in the actual examination and I am very thankful to the amici because it really helps me and make me pass the board examination. I often struggle with managing my time effectively when preparing for the criminology examination. I can relate to feeling financially constrained during my preparation for the criminology board examination. It's tough when you have to balance paying for review materials, review classes, and other expenses while also managing daily living costs. Sometimes, worrying about money can add extra stress and distractions to an already challenging time. There are so many things vying for my attention, like work, family responsibilities, and social commitments. It's challenging to find a balance and dedicate enough time to studying while also fulfilling my other obligations. The challenges that I encountered as a successful criminologist during the preparation of the board exam are the pressure and doubt of myself and this mindset will not go away no matter how much you prepare for the exam, I always overthink "What if I fail the exam again?" I'm afraid that I might disappoint my family, especially my mom. I can't afford to fail again. And I want to pay off all the sleepless nights. The coping strategies I employ to overcome those challenges, I always pray and asked for strength and guidance from above, I will strengthen my faith in him even more. And luckily, I have a supportive family that always reminds me that I can do it all, they are my pillars. Trying is not enough without them, because they are the reason why I never give up and I focus more on my goal, and I try not to waste all my efforts. Remember, in your journey to become a successful criminologist, each experience, whether big or small, contributes to your growth and expertise. Stay curious, embrace challenges as opportunities for learning, and never underestimate the value of hard work and determination. Your passion for understanding and addressing crime can drive meaningful change in the world. Keep pushing forward, and never lose sight of the impact you can make. And you also need motivation and don't forget this quotes I hope this can help you, "If you feel like you are losing everything, remember trees lose their leaves every year, yet they stand tall and wait for better days to come".

Participant 3; Single; Male; 2

In preparing the board exam, in my first take is I am too confident to pass the exam that's why I failed. But in my second time, I prepare myself to be a better. I review in the morning and listening lectures on online and at night I take down notes and pray and asking for guidance to Our Heavenly Father to pass the board examination. Taking the board examination for the first time, I experienced a lot there are so many temptations and overconfident that's why I failed. The moment I failed the licensure examination, I am disappointed, having low morale, and being ashamed to my parents because of the support that they give to me especially in financing my review are wasted. But after how many days, I accept the reality that I really failed the board examination. It really affects my performance especially in my preparations, I think all my efforts are wasted because I failed the examination. My willingness in taking the licensure examination again despite my failure is because I sacrifice my four years to study this course and why giving up is the solution. That's why I really grab the chance to take the board examination again because failure is part of our success and to have a license to apply for our chosen profession. I prove that by that time I take the examination; I always tell myself that if you are willing to pass, you will pass and don't forget to pray and trust God always. Emotional struggles were a significant part of my experience preparing for the criminology board examination. The pressure to succeed weighed heavily on me, especially considering my family's expectations. Each failure felt like a blow to my confidence, but with the support of my loved ones, I found the strength to persevere and eventually succeed. I have many challenges to encounter at that time because, as an online reviewer, I cannot focus because they always ask me in our house

to do this or that. Sometimes the internet is weak, and as an online reviewer, it is one of my problems, and I have a hard time managing my time because of all those problems. My strategy at that time was to delete my Mobile Legends so I could focus and not be tempted to play. I studied every evening, and I also wake up at dawn to read because in the morning I'm having a hard time reading and understanding my books and online class due to distractions. One month before the board examination, I ask my mother to not interrupt me or order me to do something. I have no time to go outside or travel; I'm always in my room reading. I am happy if I sleep only 3 hours and then wake up to read again. No matter what people tell you, just keep doing what you are doing. Don't give up if you want to achieve your dream. Always think of your family, because they made sacrifices just so you could learn and go to school. Trust yourself, especially in God, and learn to discipline yourself and be consistent, because that's one of the ways to be successful.

Participant 4; Single; Female; 2

In preparing for the board examination, I studied hard, I repeated what I studied so that I wouldn't forget it for the upcoming board examination, and by that I wouldn't have any difficulties. Taking the board examination for the first time, I can say that it's not easy, I'm nervous and worried because I always thinking what will happen if I'm going to pass the board examination or not. My nervousness is ahead of me. The moment I failed the licensure examination, I feel disappointed. The examination to become a criminologist is really stressful. I was so scared of failing and felt like I had to be better than everyone else. Facing the criminology board examination brought up a whirlwind of emotions for me. The fear of failure and disappointment in my family added to the already intense pressure of the examination itself. Despite setbacks and moments of self-doubt, I leaned on my family's encouragement and belief in me to keep pushing forward and eventually achieve success. Sometimes, I doubted myself and worried a lot about the examination. But I kept studying hard and had people supporting me, which helped me stay strong. Financial insecurities have been a significant challenge for me as I prepare for the criminology board examination. I often worry about not having enough resources to afford review materials and classes, which can impact my confidence and focus. It's frustrating when financial constraints hinder my ability to fully invest in my preparation for the examination. My preparation affects my performance which helps me very well because what I study hard and spent sleepless nights are all worth it. External distractions can really impact my ability to concentrate on studying for the criminology examination. Whether it's noisy neighbors, household chores, or social media notifications, it's hard to stay focused. I try my best to create a study environment free from distractions, but it's not always easy to avoid interruptions. My willingness in taking the board examination again despite my failure, I always remind myself that I want to become a Professional Criminologist. I prove that by that time I take the examination; I confidently know and 100% believed to myself, that I will pass the examination because what I studied before the examination almost everything came out. During the preparation for the board examination, I faced a lot of challenges, I experience sleepless nights, I was struggling when it comes to study, and I couldn't eat at the right time but after all of that it was all paid off. In overcoming the challenges, I just study hard, pray to God, and encourage myself to overcome those challenges. Sharing my advice to all the takers of CLE, to never lose hope, don't surrender if you failed once don't be scared to try again just believe to your ability and don't let anybody let you down. Always remember God is always with us he never fails us so do I. I always put God in the center so if I can do you will too.

Participant 5; Single; Male; 3

In preparing the board examination, I review all the subjects. But I don't pressure myself, and I didn't memorize all in the book, I just understand all the readings and always read because it can help me remember those topics. Taking the board examination for the first time is very pressured and nervous, but I know that it will always be there in comes to this kind of situation. But I advise you not to pressure yourself because that is the time you might lose your focus in reviewing for board examination. The moment I failed the board examination, I feel disappointed. I have the thought not to take the board examination again. While the examination is coming, you must review while you have long time to review. My preparations affect my performance in the board examination, which make me confident in taking the examination and helps me remind that this is very important in achieving my dream. Despite my failure, my willingness in taking the board examination is because of my family who supported me even in my doubtful and weakness experience. I really try my best and I don't want to waste their sacrifices for me. By that time, I am proudly to say that I can pass the examination, because of the

preparations and efforts that I have been waiting to show all the people who trust and supported me that I can pass the examination. I have so many challenges that I have encountered as successful criminologist during my preparation is the temptation in reviewing which I can't manage, sleepless nights, worries and doubts thinking about what if I will fail again the board examination. Overcoming the challenges during my preparation, I just review and review all over again and don't forget to pray for his guidance. To share my advice to all the takers of CLE, is just don't give up failure are not the end it is a lesson to learned and achieve success.

Participant 6; Single; Male; 2

In preparing for the board examination, I enrolled in a review center, scanning and skimming watching "Chapopoy". Taking the board examination for the first time, I feel so nervous. The moment I failed the licensure examination; I am frightened and disappointed. My preparation affects my performance which helps me boost my confidence to take the board examination. Despite my failure, my family inspired me to take the board examination again. I prove that by that time I take the examination because I study well the topics and praying to God for his guidance. Preparing for the criminology board examination was emotionally challenging, particularly when faced with the prospect of failing. Each setback felt like a personal defeat, amplifying feelings of disappointment and anxiety. However, with the unwavering support of my family, I found the resilience to keep going, ultimately emerging stronger and more determined. The challenges that I have encountered as a successful criminologist during my preparation for the board examination is being financially unstable and my body insecurities which make me unconfident in taking the board examination. In overcoming the challenges, I always pray to God to help me achieve my goals in life. Sharing my advice to all the takers of CLE, to study in a long period of time and never forget to pray always to God.

Participant 7; Single; Female; 3

During my preparation for the board examination, I really don't know if I'm totally prepared or not, but I enrolled at ARC and self-reviewing, that's only my source. I felt very nervous in taking the board examination. The moment I failed the licensure examination twice, I feel very disappointed. The examination to become a criminologist is really hard, and it made me doubt myself a lot. I felt like I wasn't good enough, and I was really scared of not passing. But I tried to stay positive and focused on what I was good at to get through it. My preparations affect my performance in the board examination, which help to boost my confidence and give me positive thoughts which help me to pass the board examination. I am willing to take the licensure examination again despite of my failure because there is still a chance to take again and why not to grab the opportunity. Also, for my family who supported me even in my failure and waiting for me to achieve which is passing the licensure examination. By that time, I don't have the courage or to prove that I can pass, if what's the result then that's it because the exam is hard. I just don't want to expect because I failed twice already. That's why I just accept what will happen if I pass or not. I have many challenges that I have encountered during the preparation for the board exam specifically my time, workloads at home and because of that I can't focus and can't join the online quizzes. Being financially unstable adds an extra layer of stress to an already nerve-wracking time preparing for the criminology board examination. It's disheartening when you want to dedicate all your time and energy to studying, but financial constraints limit your access to resources and support. Finding ways to overcome these challenges and stay motivated despite financial insecurities is an ongoing struggle. I also struggle my signal because I enrolled online review. Overcoming the challenges, I just watch again the lesson videos that they sent and then take note and study. Sharing my advice to all future criminologists, just fight for your dream even you are trying so hard just don't feel disappointed because maybe God give you those failure, because he has a better plan for you. Trust God and trust His process. Good luck to all first timer and retakers like me and God Bless, Future RCrim.

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