



**TECHNIUM**  
SOCIAL SCIENCES JOURNAL

[www.techniumscience.com](http://www.techniumscience.com)



**Vol. 69/2025**  
**A New Decade for Social Changes**

**PLUS**  
**COMMUNICATION P**



**International**  
Communication & PR

## Unlocking the Path to Success: Exploring the Experiences of Criminology Graduates in Licensure Examination

**Romel R. Bosito**

University of Baguio, Baguio City, Philippines.

Email: [20239178@s.ubaguio.edu](mailto:20239178@s.ubaguio.edu)

**Abstract.** The licensure examination is one of the most crucial moments for graduates, as this examination will test their knowledge and skills. The study aims to explore the experiences of criminology graduates in taking the licensure examination that will serve as the basis for increasing the chances of passing the licensure examination. The study used a descriptive phenomenological design to understand the individual experiences of the participants better. The participants were the eight (8) graduates of the Bachelor of Science in Criminology from the selected universities and colleges in Isabela for the year 2021-2023. The participants are purposely selected based on the following criteria; first, the participants must be a graduate of criminology from the year 2021-2023; second, they must have experience in taking the licensure examination, be able to garner a minimum average of 85 percent, and lastly, participants who refuse to be interviewed were not considered. The study used an unstructured interview guide in gathering the necessary data, interviews, video calls, and google forms were the mode of data collection for this study. The study used thematic analysis to organize the gathered data. The result shows that the challenges faced by the graduates while preparing for the licensure examination are feeling exhausted, financial problems, noisy environment, changeable weather conditions, weak internet connection, lack of individualized guidance, limited and outdated materials, and managing time due to multiple responsibilities. The challenges they faced during the examination were emotional distress, environmental issues, and physical discomfort. The coping mechanisms they utilized while preparing for the licensure examination are time and stress management, social support, resourceful management, and personal well-being. During the examination, graduates cope with the challenges they experience by regulating their emotions and way of thinking, using cognitive and physical refreshments, adaptation, and self-management. To increase the chances of passing the licensure examination, different strategies and support systems are important. These include implementing effective study and review techniques, study attitude and commitment, managing examination questions effectively, and providing institutional support with access to different learning resources and materials. Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the study recommends that graduates should prepare updated review materials earlier. Educational institutions may also consider purchasing quality review material, offering scholarship grants for the less fortunate graduates, and implement programs to enhance the knowledge of the graduates on the licensure examination. The study also suggests that the Professional Regulation Commission should ensure that examination questions are readable, contain clear images and that the examination area is appropriate for the examinees. Moreover, proctors should be considerate of the personal needs of examinees, especially during lunch breaks and for special necessities.

**Keywords.** Experiences, Criminology, Criminology Graduates, Licensure Examination

### **A. Introduction**

Licensure examination is one of the requirements in almost all profession around the world which serves as a stepping stone to practice one's profession. However, challenges always part of every journey that even international and local graduates strive to attain their success in life.

Kana International, (2023) stated that the most important international entrance examinations are IELTS, GRE, TOEFL, SAT GMAT, Duolingo, PTE, MCAT and LSAT. These are necessary for skill assessments and admission to universities and colleges around the world. They are conducted to assess language and technical skills. While, in the Philippines, the Professional Regulation Commission is the regulatory body that assesses the knowledge and skill of graduates in their specific field of examination.

Passing the licensure examination is one of the most important accomplishments for all board program graduates in the Philippines. Both public and private schools strive to improve their educational systems in order to assist their students in preparing for and passing the licensure examination. Furthermore, Education institutions in the Philippines develop their educational quality brand based on their graduates' license examination performance. This requires the educational institution to synchronize their instructional offering with their specific licensure exams (Amanonce & Maramag, 2020).

The criminologist licensure examination is an examination that assesses the knowledge and the qualification of a graduate to practice the profession in the six (6) areas under Bachelor of Science in Criminology (Criminal Jurisprudence, Law Enforcement Administration, Criminal Detection and Investigation, Forensic sciences, Correctional Administration, and Criminology). Passing the licensure examination is the only way to earn a license to practice the profession as a criminologist in the Philippines under Republic Act No. 11131, also known as the Philippine Criminology Profession Act of 2018, a law that repealed the Republic Act No. 6506.

Moreover, Criminology Board Exam is a standardized test for Filipino individuals seeking to become licensed criminologists in the Philippines. This license allows for a career in law enforcement, government security, and academia, among other fields. In addition, in the practice of criminology, there are demands from government agencies such as the tri-bureau, which includes the Philippine National Police (PNP), the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), and the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology.

Villarmia J., (2018), stated that studying for four (4) years course is significant in preparing students for any jobs linked to their education. However, in terms of the licensure examination, enhancement review is not adequate to pass the board examination. Thus, a review program will help them prepare to be licensed criminologists.

Asuncion R., (2019) stated that graduates' difficulties in licensure examination, particularly those related to the criminology review program, are less serious when compared to review sessions focused on lecturers, teaching equipment and facilities, and personal preparations, notably in the physical component. The graduate's personal preparedness problems, particularly in terms of finances, are relatively substantial, as are the mental aspects. Furthermore, home and family factors have a strong influence on criminologist license exam results, but student factors, school factors, review center factors, and personal factors have an average impact. The examinees' obstacles in the licensure examination included a lack of preparation for the exam due to job, as well as personal and social demands.

Professional Regulation Commission, (2022) reveals that 12,698 out of 41,913 candidates passed the Criminologist Licensure Examination administered by the Board of Criminology in 19 testing venues throughout the Philippines in June 2022. The results of the

examination for twenty-two (22) examinees were withheld pending final determination of their obligations under the rules and regulations governing licensing examination, and one hundred three (103) were withheld pursuant to Board Resolution No. 09 dated July 25, 2022. The number of passers compared to the takers in the 2022 criminologist licensure examination is an indication that most examinees are struggling with the licensure examination despite numerous institutions that offer quality education. With this, the researcher was motivated to explore the experiences of the criminology graduates in taking the licensure examination that will serve as the basis for suggesting or recommending a program that will increase the chance of passing the board examination.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Self-Determination Theory.**

This theory discusses individual differences as well as the functions of the different extrinsic and internal sources of motivation in social and cognitive behavior. This helps examinees understand and evaluate the different types of stress they may encounter before and during the licensure examination and develop strategies to cope with it effectively.

### **Cognitive Behavioral Theory.**

This theory suggest that thoughts, emotions, bodily sensations, and behaviors are interconnected. This helps examinees understand the impact of both negative and positive thinking on their performance in the licensure examination.

### **Resilience Theory.**

This theory explains how individuals recover from setbacks and adopt strategies to remain sharp and motivated.

## **Objectives**

This study aims to explore the experiences of the criminology graduates in licensure examination. Specifically, it sought to answer the following objectives:

1. To determine the challenges experienced by the criminology graduates:
  - 1.1. While preparing for the licensure examination; and
  - 1.2. during the licensure examination.
2. To determine how the respondents cope with the challenges they experienced:
  - 2.1. While preparing for the licensure examination; and
  - 2.2. during the licensure examination
3. To suggest a strategy to increase the chance of passing the licensure examination.

## **B. Methodology**

### **Study Design**

The descriptive phenomenological method of qualitative research will be used in this study because the researcher wants to know the underlying factors affecting the licensure examination, the challenges, and the coping mechanisms used by the graduates to address the challenges they experienced in taking the licensure examination.

### **Population and Locale of the Study**

The respondents of this study were the eight (8) graduates of the College of Criminal Justice Education of the selected universities and colleges in Isabela, for the year 2021-2023. The study selects the participants based on these criteria: the participants must be graduates of criminology from the year 2021-2023; that said participants have experience taking the board examination, were able to garner a minimum average of 85, and participants who refuse to be

interviewed were not considered. The researcher contacts the participants of the study through messenger.

### **Data Gathering Tools**

An unstructured interview guide was used in this study to gather the necessary data. interviews, video calls, and google forms were the mode of data collection of this study.

### **Data Gathering Procedures**

For proper guidance and procedures, the researcher makes a letter addressed to the deans and program chairs of the criminology requesting permission to identify and recommend a licensed criminologist who attained a general weighted average of not less than 85% and graduated from the year 2021-2023. After approval, the researcher communicates with the participants to ask for their consent to avoid conflicts.

### **Treatment of Data**

The researcher used thematic analysis to organize the gathered data. The thematic analysis describes the process of coding data in which specific statements are analyzed and categorized into themes that represent the phenomenon of interest.

The researcher adopted the six steps by Braun and Clarke (2006) in treating the gathered data. The phases are:

1. Familiarization of data.
2. Generation of codes.
3. Combining codes into themes.
4. Reviewing themes.
5. Determine the significance of themes.
6. Reporting of findings.

### **Ethical Consideration**

This research paper is committed to following ethical guidelines in the conduct of the study. All information acquired is with the consent of the participants, and interviews are conducted without compulsion. All data acquired from participants are kept strictly confidential. In addition, the researcher respects the participants' right to privacy. Participants are allowed to engage in the study without pressure. Furthermore, the researcher ensured that data, results, methods, procedures, and publication are reported fairly and without manipulation or falsification, and the researcher expects objectivity in research and is not biased in the conduct of the study, analysis, interpretation, or other aspects.

## **C. Results and Discussions**

### **Challenges Experienced by the Criminology Graduates While Preparing for the Licensure Examination**

Preparing for the licensure examination is a critical phase for the criminology graduates as this will create a great impact in their future career as a criminologist. This preparation marks a significant challenge that will test their knowledge and determination to become a registered criminologist.

The first theme that derived from the challenges experienced by the graduates in the licensure examination is **Feeling Exhausted**. This theme reflects the intense experienced of the participants in terms of physical, mental and emotional difficulties exerted in preparing for the licensure examination. Preparing for the licensure examination contributes to physical exhaustions such as staying for long hours and sleepless nights that may lead to physical fatigue. Mental exhaustions in trying to master the different materials leading to difficulty in focusing and mental blocking. Emotional exhaustion results from the high expectations of the licensure examination and fears to fail leading to the feeling of anxiety and hopelessness.

K1 shared that:

*“Preparations for the licensure examination is physically, mentally, and emotionally exhausting. Sometimes I get sick due to pressure and stress in preparation for the licensure examination.”*

Mishra and McKean (2000) stated that high levels of academic stress may lead to physical exhaustion that significantly hinder the students’ ability to concentrate and retain information which greatly affect their performance in the examination. Graduates tend to experience the feeling of exhaustions as they strive for the licensure examination leading to multiple issues such as sickness, mental blocking and emotional anxiety which added to the burden of preparing for the examination.

The second theme that comes from the challenges experienced by the graduates while preparing for the licensure examination is **financial problem** and it is associated with the preparation for the licensure examination as it is very important in expense for the review classes, materials and incidental cost as a support for the preparation for the licensure examination. The financial stress often distracts graduates from focusing on their review as they are bothered about their financial expenses while preparing for the licensure examination.

K1 shared that:

*“...financial burden brought by the expenses required during review”*

As mentioned by K3:

*“While preparing for the licensure examination, I faced several challenges. Financially, it was tough since reviewing required full-time focus, and I had to rely on my family's support.”*

The necessity to depend on the support of the family creates a feeling of inadequacy and pressure affecting the emotional well-being of the graduates.

It is also supported by the statement of K4:

*“Financial problem affected my preparation. Sometimes I can’t concentrate in reviewing since I was bothered were to get money for the review fee and other incidental expenses.”*

Financial stress often leads to loss of focus in their preparations.

Consequently, K5:

*“Madami, kulang sa financial, hindi nakakaattend ng review center, halos puro self-review lang.”* (Many, lack financial resources, can't attend review centers, and mostly rely on self-study.)

limited access to formal review centers hinders them to comprehensively prepare for the examination.

K6 also shared that:

*“Financially, kailangan pa rin kasi ng pera kahit nagrereview na hindi ka nakakahingi ng allowance kaya kailangan na ng trabaho. Pag nagkatrabaho naman, bawas na yung time sa pagrereview.”* (Financially, you still need money even while reviewing, and you can't ask for an allowance, so you need to work. However, if you work, it reduces the time available for reviewing.)

It discusses the difficulty of working while preparing for the examination leading to lack of time for the preparation for the licensure examination.

Lastly, K8 shared: *“one of the most challenging on my part is the financial problem.”*

These statements reveal the intense impact of financial burden on the graduates who are preparing for the licensure examination. The participants’ experiences show how financial burdens contributes to developing stress, and distractions that affect their preparations in taking the licensure examination. Norazlan et., al. (2020) stated that financial problems are serious

issues that needs to be addressed that may lead to health and academic performance and their study also found out that it significantly affects the academic performance of the students.

The third theme under the challenges experienced by the graduates while preparing for the licensure examination is **Noisy Environment** which comes from the neighborhoods playing a loud videoke and dormitories with multiple occupants that resulted to the participants loss of concentration in studying. Noisy environment significantly affects the graduate's ability to concentrate and focus in studying their materials. The distractions make it hard to maintain a productive review and analyzing the information from their materials that leads to their frustrations and stress.

K2 shared that:

*“Ang mga challenges na naranasan ko while preparing for board exam ay, una maingay na kapaligiran during weekdays kasi nandito lang ako sa bahay nagkukulong nakafocus sa pagrereview then ang kapitbahay minsan nagvividuo oke sa hapon ng ilang oras or minsan ang aga aga magpapamusic na”* (The challenges I experienced while preparing for the board exam include, first, a noisy environment during weekdays because I am only at home, isolating myself to focus on reviewing. Sometimes, the neighbor plays videos loudly in the afternoon for a few hours or plays music early in the morning.)

Similarly, K3 stated that:

*“Living in a dorm with ten people made it hard to concentrate due to the noise, often forcing me to find quieter places to study.”*

It is also supported by the statement of K8: *“...Sometimes, I cannot focus reviewing because I was distracted by the noises of the surroundings and I spent a lot of time on social media.”*

Braat-Eggen et., al, (2021) discovered that students' performance on the logical reasoning problem was significantly impacted by sound. Moreover, a noteworthy impact of the auditory situations was discovered on the self-assessed performance and perceived disruption for every test, with the reading comprehension task including text memory exhibiting the highest level of disturbance. It is suggested that because task engagement and task complexity operate as a "shield against distraction," there is no discernible negative impact on students' performance when they work on reading comprehension tasks involving text memory. Instead, students are able to focus as a result. The constant exposure to a noisy environment may contribute to emotional and cognitive function of the graduates. Their inability to control the sources of noise creates a feeling of irritability and distractions that impede the graduate's ability to absorb the learnings from their materials.

The fourth theme that was derived from the challenges experienced by the graduates while preparing for the licensure examination is **Changeable weather condition**. This theme reflects the challenges that the graduates experienced while preparing for the licensure examination due to unpredictable weather conditions that disrupts them to continue their study routines. Changeable weather conditions lead to the participants health issues like catching a cold, further hindering their study efforts.

K2 Shared that: *“...tuwing weekends noong ber months madalas umulan ng umaga at hapon kaya kapag pumupunta ako ng review center minsan nababasa pagkarating ng review center, pangatlo ay yung init ng panahon kaya medyo hirap mag focus sa pagbabasa”* (During weekends in the 'ber' months, it often rains in the morning and afternoon, so when I go to the review center, my materials sometimes get wet upon arrival. Additionally, the heat makes it a bit difficult to focus on reading.)

Consequently, K3 also shared that: “...facing frequent changes in weather, such as sudden shifts from hot weather to rain, often resulted in catching a cold, further complicating my study routine.”

The unpredictable shift in weather conditions creates frustrations and loss concentration. The discomfort caused by the extreme weather or health issues like colds hinders the examinees’ ability to study harder affecting the outcomes of their studies.

The fifth theme that reveals from the study regarding the challenges experienced by the graduates while preparing for the examination is the **Weak Internet Connection**. During and in the post pandemic years, online classes and learning becomes a significant factor in transferring information. Many students, graduates and even professors embraced the assistance offered by the technology especially the platforms and the internet connections that makes teaching and learning more productive and easier. Different materials are accessible and are readily available online. However, issues like weak internet connections hinders the graduates to attend online lecture offered by the different review centers that added to their difficulty in embracing the benefits of the online classes and the technology in general. This can be seen on the response of K2:

“...last ang mahinang internet connection, sayang ang opportunity na makapag review online.”  
” (...lastly, the weak internet connection, wasting the opportunity to review online.)

Briant (2020). Stated that slow internet connection or limited access contribute to student falling behind academically and considered as a barrier to attain a high performance in school. The inability of the graduates to consistently attend to online review session due to poor internet connections creates a feeling of stress and anxiety as they become accustomed and consider it as part of their daily routines.

The sixth theme under the challenges experienced by the graduates while preparing for the licensure examination is **Lack of Individualize Guidance**. This theme highlights the lacks in the educational support system of an educational institution, where graduates who have a specific goal like aiming for top notcher do not receive individualize guidance from their professors. This gap in the support system impacts their motivation, performance and even their emotional well-being aiming for a better outcome. This can be seen on the response of K4:  
“Lack of individualize guidance from our professor. Our professor do guide us how to pass the board exam but none of them provide guidance to us who have other goal like acing the board examination.”

Ermenc et., al. (2020). Differentiating and individualizing measures is critical in optimizing students’ development with the educational settings. This is noteworthy as it serves students with varying educational aspirations, socio-economic backgrounds, and personal needs. According to one of the key informants, general guidance provided by the professors on how to pass the board examination and individualize guidance needed to achieve a higher result in the examination is different wherein, high-achieving graduates need more guidance to achieve their unique aspirations and reach their full potential in the licensure examination. With this, professors and educators need to recognize and address the individual differences of their graduates and help them achieve their personal best.

The seventh theme for the challenges experienced by the graduates while preparing for the licensure examination is **Limited and Outdated Review Materials**. This pertains to the struggles of the graduates in preparing for their licensure examination due to the inadequate and outdated resources which significantly affect their ability to study and prepare for the said

examination. The absence of review materials forces the graduates to rely solely with their own by compiling their available notes during their stay in their institution which make it more time consuming and harder. Furthermore, the compiled materials also had outdated contents that makes their reading confusing when compared to newer materials requiring more effort to update their learning. This can be seen on the responses of all the participants:

K1 shared that: *"Sometimes the review materials that I have is limited that also limits the information that I gain..."*

these limited materials serve as a barrier for the participants to acquire the necessary knowledge information in the licensure examination.

In addition, K2 also shared that: *"Ang pagkalito sa mga notes kasi minsan may mga outdated na nakasingit sa notes..."* (Sometimes, there are outdated materials that are mixed in the notes that make the information confusing)

Similarly, K3 shared that: *"...there were outdated pages in some of the review materials, making effective studying challenging..."*

The participants shared the struggles in determining the accurate and relevant information from the materials that creates a sense of confusion.

Furthermore, K4 stated: *"we were not provided with review materials, instead we are required to compile all our lecture notes since first year. The problem is some of the lecture notes are missing."*

Moreover, K5 also shared: *"Kulang kami sa review materials, what I mean is yung printed, yung mga book type reviewer. Kulang din kami sa mock board."* (We lack review materials, I mean the printed ones, the book-type reviewers. We also lack mock board exams.)

K6 also shared: *"may mga informations na hindi magkakapareho sa mga materials na nakuha/nahanap namin."* (There are information's that does not match in the materials we obtained/found.)

Additionally, K7 stated: *"...Some textbooks and reference materials may not have been readily available or may have lacked the depth needed to fully understand certain topics"*

Lastly, K8 shared: *"there are some instances wherein my review materials is different from other sources that makes confusion. I can't determine which one is right"*

The participants also experienced inconsistency in the information from the different review materials leading to confusion and doubt about the review materials they are using which greatly affects their overall learning experiences.

The limited and outdated materials are two interconnected factors which greatly affects the preparation of the graduates in the licensure examination.

Lastly, the theme for the challenges experienced by the graduates while preparing for the licensure examination is **Managing Time Due to Multiple Responsibilities**. This theme highlights the difficulties of the graduates in balancing their time for the review and their obligations. This can be seen on the responses of the Participants.

K1 shared that: *"Sometimes I experienced tight schedule specially I have also other work to do during those times."*

Similarly, K6 stated: *"Mahirap magfocus kasi marami ng ibang responsibilities. Gustuhin man magreview ng deretso pero marami ding gawaing bahay..."* ("It's hard to focus because there are so many other responsibilities. I want to review continuously, but there are also many household chores...")

Furthermore, k7 shared: *"Some of the main challenges I encountered while preparing for the licensure examination included managing time effectively to balance studying with other commitments like work."*

It emphasizes the need for the efficient time management to improve their knowledge and understanding on the different subjects in the licensure examination despite lots of responsibilities they have. Kearns & Gardiner (2007) asserts that individuals who have good time management skills believe they are more productive and less stressed. They also advise graduate students to avoid burnout by learning how to say no to unimportant assignments, assigning duties when appropriate, and taking breaks.

### **Challenges Experienced by the Criminology Graduates During the Licensure Examination**

During licensure examination, criminology graduates face different and unique challenges that reflects the rigorous demands of the examination and the complexity of the subjects. Understanding these challenges is important to develop effective strategies to support examinees and enhance their chances of success.

**Emotional Distress.** After analyzing the different codes that were derived from the data, emotional distress emerges as the first theme and it expresses the participant's anxiety, frustration, and sense of inadequacy when they faced the questions in the licensure examination that is not seen in their prior review sessions.

**Encountering unfamiliar topics** is one of the most highlighted topics that contributed to the challenges that the participants experienced during the licensure examination which added to their emotional distress. This code highlights the gap between the preparation and content of the examination of the participants that contributes to their anxiety, uncertainty, and sense of unpreparedness.

*K1 shared that: "Encountering unfamiliar topics that are in the question that I have never encountered since I was studying and during reviews.*

*K2 also shared that: "...may mga questions na talagang dun kolang na encounter na diko manlang nabasa sa aking notes..." ("...there were questions that I only encountered there and hadn't even read in my notes...")*

*On the other hand, K3 stated that: "One challenge I faced during the licensure examination was managing my time effectively, particularly during the 'unseen' or 'first view' questions..."*

*Similarly, k7 said that: "Some are unfamiliar topics, too complex questions and unfamiliar terminology: encountering legal and technical terms that you may not be familiar with can be daunting"*

*Additionally, k8 shared that: "The challenge was, the questions asked were not discussed in our review."*

The topic underlines the difficulty that the participants faced due to the irregularities between their preparation and the questions in the actual examination which intensifies their stress and feelings of unpreparedness. Cabahug et., al. (2024) stated that one of the primary causes of failing the licensure examination is the lack of focus on the different subjects and that poor examination performance and stress are a result of lack of preparation.

**Nervousness** was also identified to be contributory factor to emotional distress during the licensure examination. This emotional response emphasizes the difficulty of the examination questions during the licensure examination and the pressure it creates on the examinees, especially for those who are first time takers.

*K1 shared that: "Since it was my first time and I have no idea what it feels like to take board exam, I got nervous that somehow focus."*

*Likewise, K6 stated that: "sa sobrang kaba na mental block ako." (From being so nervous, I experienced a mental block)*

The topic reflects how nervousness, which is caused by pressure and unfamiliarity with the process of the examination added to the difficulties faced by the participants during the licensure examination which affected their performance. Anxiety and uneasiness are more common in students with low self-efficacy, and this might affect their performance. For those with less experience, the pressure of the licensure exam can intensify these emotions.

Another highlighted topic that derived from the emotional distress was **Pressure**. This factor stems from both external expectations and demands of the examination environment which added to their inability to perform effectively.

*K2 shared that: "Ang difficulties na naranasan ko during the actual licensure examination ay yung matinding pressure..."* (The difficulty I experienced during the actual licensure examination was the intense pressure)

*Similarly, k3 shared that: "...the late-night review sessions left me feeling fatigued, compounded by the absence of a visible clock to track time, which added to the pressure."*

The participants highlight how the actual examinations overwhelmed their feeling of being pressured due to fatigue and lack of visible clock that make it harder for them to manage their time and contributes to their overall stress. Van Der Linden et al. (2010) said that fatigue can impair attention, working memory and decision-making abilities.

In addition, **Rushed Mistakes** were also found to be a factor that added to the participants' feeling of emotional distress often due to the high pressure of examination, where running out of time or persistence to complete the task immediately leads to errors that might have been avoided if done cautiously.

*K2 shared that: "Ang problemang na encounter ko during examination ay masyado akong nagmadali sa pag fill up ng form ko at nagkamali ako sa pag fill up ng application number ko."* (The problem I encountered during the examination was that I rushed while filling out my form and made a mistake with my application number)

Rushed mistakes often occur due to the high pressure of the examination, where persistence to accomplished tasks immediately leads to errors that might have been avoided with more cautious approach. Beilock and Carr, (2005) implies that a decrease in performance may result from an increase in cognitive load brought on by time constraints. Examinees may find it difficult to properly digest information, make wise decisions, and avoid thoughtless errors if they feel hurried.

Furthermore, **Very Strict Policy** also contributed to the emotional distress of the participants while taking the examination. This stringent policies in the examination area heightened anxiety and create a sense of discomfort to the examinees that complicates their stressful situation.

*K6 stated that: "masyadong mahigpit at strikto sa examination room..."* (The rules in the examination room were too strict and stringent)

Hembree, (1988) discovered that strict regulations and constant observation, which characterize high-stakes testing situations, can generate a sensation of pressure that exacerbates test anxiety. Candidates may experience heightened self-consciousness and mistake-related anxiety if they believe they are under continual evaluation.

Moreover, **Anxiety Caused by unclear images in the Examination** also highlighted by one of the participants that contributes to emotional distress during the examination. This specific challenge highlights the difficulties of the examinees in determining the correct answers to the questions due to the unclear or similar-looking images in the examination questions that create confusion and frustration on the part of the examinees.

*K6 shared that: "...Nademoralize dahil halos magkakapareho ang mga picture sa pagpilian."* (I felt demoralized because almost all the pictures in the choices looked very

similar)

Carney and Levin (2002) discovered that effective visual aids can boost exam performance and learning. On the other side, applicants may find it more difficult to focus on the work at hand if they are presented with ambiguous or confused pictures, which can impede comprehension and increase cognitive load.

**Tricky Questions** also contribute to the emotional distress of the participants while taking the examination. Such questions create a significant challenge that tests not only their knowledge but also their ability to answer misleading questions which adds to their stress and frustration.

K3 stated that: *“During the exam, we faced unexpected challenges like tricky questions at the beginning...”*

Tricky questions can lead to feeling of frustration and demoralization among the examinees. Hembree (1988) states that feeling of frustration decreases the ability of the students to comprehend and analyze the examination questions which make it difficult for the examinees to perform well.

**Environmental Issue** is another theme that emerges from the data analysis which describes the challenges experienced by the participants during their licensure examination. This theme captures how factors related to the examination environment, such as examination area, weather conditions, and logistical issues contribute to the overall performance of the examinees.

The **uncomfortable examination room** is the most highlighted topic under environmental issues, which is a challenge experienced by the participants during the examination. This shows how different aspects of the examination environment negatively affect the performance of the participants.

K3 shared that: *“The exam setting posed challenges due to the absence of a fan and unstable chairs...”*

Similarly, K5 shared that: *“Hindi komportable yung mga upuan. Kasi nga pang elementary yung size tapos kalaki naming uupo. Tapos uncomfortable din kapag ihi ka kasi hindi malinis yung mga CR's nila”* (The seats were uncomfortable because they were sized for elementary students, but we were much larger. It was also uncomfortable when you needed to use the restroom because the bathrooms weren't very clean)

*“Yung exam room pa na ginamit ay pang bata, maliliit ang upuan, hindi kumportable”*

Furthermore, K6 shared that: *“The noise outside and the inadequate ventilation cause me physical discomfort, leading to my distraction and reduced focus.”*

As shared by the participants, the comfort of the examination room, especially the chairs used by the examinees is an important factor in maintaining focus and reducing physical discomfort during the licensure examination. Ansari et. al., (2018) found that poor sitting arrangements can cause more weariness and distraction, which can affect exam takers' performance.

**Bad Weather Condition** also contributes to the challenges experienced by the participants during the examination under the environmental issue. Bad weather conditions worsen the experiences of the examinees as it makes them sick during the examination which affects their performance in the examination.

K4 shared that: *“Typhoon, we took the examination amidst of the on going typhoon.”*  
*“the bad weather during our examination causes me to catch fever which also affected my focus.”*

Severe weather conditions can disrupt the examination process and negatively impact examinees performance and well-being. Techehs (2024) examines how bad weather affects a variety of industries, including education. It highlights how inclement weather can cause

problems for students' physical and mental health, which can eventually have an impact on their academic performance.

**Far Examination Area** was also identified by the participants as a challenge during the examination under the environmental issue. This challenge explains the burden of waking up early and traveling early to arrive at the examination area instead of having more time to rest before the examination.

K4 shared that: *"...our examination area is also far that's why we need to wake up early and travel early just to get there."*

This topic highlights the challenges experienced by the participants who need to travel long distance to reach the examination area that added to their stress and fatigue. Novaco et al. (1990) examined the relationship between commute time and stress levels among employees. Which are related to the experienced of the examinees that time and effort can contribute to increased stress and anxiety among the examinees.

**Physical Discomfort** is another theme that emerges from the analysis of the data that directly impacts the examinees' performance and well-being during the examination such as noise, inadequate ventilation, feeling exhausted, and illness making it a significant challenge for the examinees.

K7 stated that: *"The noise outside and the inadequate ventilation cause me physical discomfort, leading to my distraction and reduced focus."*

**Feeling Exhausted** is the most highlighted challenges that emerge from the theme of physical discomfort during the examinations. This described the culmination of different stressors that affect both the body and mind of the examinees leading to diminished performance and focus during the examination

K1 shared that: *"...nung last day of examination parang feeling ko wala na sa kondisyon ang katawan ko i feel like uhaw na uhaw ako then sumakit pa ang tyan ko ng lunch break."* (On the last day of the examination, I felt like my body was out of condition. I felt extremely thirsty and even had a stomachache during the lunch break)

In addition, K2 said that: *"...the late-night review sessions left me feeling fatigued..."*

Consequently, K8 shared that: *"Choosing the right answer. Maintaining my focus was really the hardest part because I'm tired and sleepy."*

Physical exhaustion can significantly impact cognitive performance of examinees during examinations and it may be difficult for candidates to stay focused and perform at their best during the exam if they are physically uncomfortable from weariness.

**Sickness** is another topic that is highlighted by the participants which contributed to their challenges during the examination under physical discomfort and it describes the significant impact on the ability of the examinees to perform effectively.

K4 shared that: *"the bad weather during our examination causes me to catch fever which also affected my focus."*

Similarly, K6 shared that: *"I suffered from a high fever and chills during the last day of the exam, which gave me discomfort throughout the entire day."*

### **Coping Mechanisms while preparing for Licensure Examination**

Preparing for a licensure examination is a long process that demands mental and physical endurance. Preparing for the licensure examination can cause stress, fatigue, and uncertainty which makes it crucial for examinees to adopt effective coping mechanisms to address those possible issues that might happen during the preparation. These mechanisms help the examinees manage stress, maintain motivation, and ensure a balanced approach to studying the materials.

**Time and Stress Management.** After a thorough investigation and analysis of the data. Time and Stress Management emerge as the first theme. This highlights the importance of effective time and stress management strategies in maintaining focus, well-being, and overall performance during these challenging times.

**Finding Time to Take a Break** is the most highlighted topic that contributes to the coping mechanisms of the participants while preparing for the licensure examination and it describes the importance of taking breaks as a comfort and approach in maintaining overall well-being and making a study habit more effective.

*K1 shared that: "Since preparations for the licensure examination is tiring, as much as possible I try to find time to take a break for me to be able to at least rest my mind and body for a while because for physical and mental health is also a big factor in preparation for the board exam..."*

*Similarly, K3 stated that: "To manage stress during my preparation, I adopted several strategies. Firstly, I listened to my body and took breaks when needed, especially if I felt a headache coming on. I made sure to keep my stomach satisfied, ensuring I was well-nourished for..."*

*Additionally, K6 stated that: "Kapag pagod na magreview kumakain or natutulog na lang ako para makapag rest din." (When I'm tired from reviewing, I either eat or just sleep to rest)*

*Consequently, K7 shared that: "Study with others for support and new insights."*

*furthermore, K8 shared that: "I spent time on things that doesn't involve review-related matters like reading manga, and watching anime. I also had rest day to lessen the stress."*

**Mindful Break** is another topic highlighted under the theme of time and stress management that contributed to the coping mechanism of the examinees while preparing for the licensure examination. This involves the intentional, thoughtful pauses from studying that aim to refresh the mind and body of the examinees and enhance their overall exam preparation and performance.

*K1 shared: "Minsan kapag nag sisimula ng magpa music or mag video oke ang mga kapitbahay lumalabas nalang ako ng kwarto ko at nagpapahangin sa labas at sinusubukang i recall ang mga naintindihan ko sa binasa ko..." (Sometimes, when the neighbors start playing music or making videos, I just step out of my room, get some fresh air outside, and try to recall what I've understood from my reading)*

Mindful break is a way of creating a mental and emotional rest to allow the individuals to process the information they encounter while preparing for the licensure examinations. It is a purposeful retreat from the stress of studying to reduce anxiety and to enhance cognitive processing. Smiling Mind. (2023). Mindfulness practices, including meditation and deep breathing, have been shown to significantly reduce stress levels among students. Engaging in these practices helps students maintain focus and emotional resilience, particularly during high-pressure periods such as exam preparation.

**Time Management** is also found to be a significant factor that contributes to the coping mechanisms of the examinees under the theme of time and stress management. This highlighted topic ensures that all areas of the review materials are covered and prevents any single material from being neglected or overly stressed.

*K7 shared: "Split study time evenly across topics."*

Time management is seen by the participant to be an important part of their coping mechanisms as it helps them to balanced their study schedule. Kearns and Gardiner, (2007). Found that there is a substantial correlation between perceived efficacy and decreased discomfort and efficient time management. Their study claims that people who manage their

time well perceive themselves to be more effective and feel less stressed.

**Social Support** is a second theme that emerged from the data that contributed to the coping mechanism of the examinees while preparing for the examination. This highlights the support experienced by the participants from their colleagues, family, friends, and mentors that helps them to be more motivated in preparing for the licensure examination.

*K1 shared: My colleagues, families, and mentors help me succeeding this journey, they provided me essential things such as emotional support, financial support, quality knowledge.”*

*Similarly, K3 shared that: “...What kept me going amidst the difficulties was the unwavering support of my family. Every day, as I poured over my notes and reviewed, I couldn't shake off the thoughts of the sacrifices my parents made just to ensure I had the resources and encouragement I needed...”*

*Additionally, K4 Stated that: “I was with a group of friends who has the same goals as me. We helped each other during review.”*

*Furthermore, K5 said that: “para iwas boring, nagreview ako together with my classmates.” (To avoid boredom, I review together with my classmates)*

*K6 also shared: “Tapos mga ibang kaklase namin ngsheshare sila kapag ng mga review material nila.” (Then some of my classmates share their review materials)*

*Moreover, K8 said that: “...My family and friends helped me build confidence.”*

These highlighted experiences of the participants shows that social support is not just a practical aid but a source of emotional and psychological reinforcement as it enhances the examinees motivation, sense of community and helps them to overcome the stress and challenges of preparing for the licensure examination.

**Resourceful Management** is a third theme that emerges from the data analysis under the coping mechanism of the examinees while preparing for the licensure examination. It encompasses strategies that help examinees to effectively manage their time, resources, and finances to improve their preparation efforts.

**Organizing a Schedule** is one of the most highlighted topics of the participants that contribute to their coping mechanisms under resourceful management. This emphasizes the importance of having an organized study plan and schedule by creating a detailed schedule to manage their study time effectively, monitor their progress, and adjust their strategies basing it from their strength and weaknesses. This strategy, helps them to stay focused and reduce the stress of last-minute studying makes the preparation more systematic and manageable.

*K1 shared: “I tried to make my schedule more organized so that I could avoid a hectic schedule. I prepared a to do list about the topics that I need to study and I also monitor my progress every single day if there are improvements or none, such as the mock boards that I took, I checked if i Improve or not and I check what specific areas are my strengths and weakness.”*

*Similarly, K6 also shared that: “gumagawa ako ng activity plan, at sinusunod ko naman. Para alam ko yung goal/target kong rereviewhin everyday.” (I make an activity plan and follow it. This way, I know my goals/targets for what I need to review each day)*

For the Participants, organizing a schedule is an important strategy in managing the demands of preparing for the licensure examination. It involves creating a structured framework that allows a systematic study, regular assessment of progress, and targeted improvements. This approach helps them to mitigate the stress with unplanned or disorganized studying.

**Being Resourceful** was also highlighted by the participants under the theme of time and stress management and it describes the participant's adaptability in dealing with weather conditions and noise during their exam preparation by borrowing raincoats and finding a shaded spot to study. This ensures that external factors won't be a factor to disrupt their study routine.

*K2 state that: "...nung umuulan lagi ng weekend humihiram ako ng kapote para di mabasa sa pagpasok sa review center, at kapag mainit naman lumalabas ako ng kwarto ko at nagbabas sa lilim ng puno."* (When it rains on weekends, I often borrow a raincoat to avoid getting wet while going to the review center. And when it's hot, I step out of my room and study in the shade of a tree)

*"Minsan naitataong mag online review kami tas nagpapamusic ang kapitbahay gumagamit ako ng earphone"* (Sometimes it's coincidental that we have online reviews while the neighbor plays music, so I use earphones)

This topic emphasizes the participants' ingenuity and flexibility in managing environmental factors that could potentially disrupt their routine. In addition, adaptation enables examinees to overcome obstacles and keep a positive outlook even in the face of adversity.

**Financial Management** was also identified by the participants as an effective way of dealing with their experiences while preparing for their licensure examination. This topic explains the importance of managing the expenses of preparing for the examination and the strategies of budgeting and saving to cover the necessary expenses that help reduce the potential financial burden in their preparations.

*K4 shared: "...I also took some time off from my review to side hustle to be able to help in providing money that I can use during my review."*

*K5 said that: "kailangan magtipid para magkasya ang allowance"* (we need to save money to make the allowance last)

Financial management is one issue faced by the participants in preparing for the licensure examination. The need to budget and save introduces an additional responsibility that could distract their focus on studying. Moore et., al. (2021). Financial strain makes it more difficult for the students to excel academically. The effect of finances can be difficult for students who are struggling financially to interact with their wealthier friends, which frequently results in feelings of embarrassment and loneliness.

**Personal Well-being** is the last theme that emerges from the data under the coping mechanisms of the participants while preparing for the licensure examination. This theme shows how self-determination, praying, staying healthy, and maintaining a positive mindset contribute to the overall well-being of the examinees and more effective and successful preparation.

**Self-determination** is the most highlighted topic of the participants under the theme of personal well-being which contributes to their coping mechanism while preparing for the licensure examination. This involves setting a clear personal goal, maintaining motivation, and managing stress effectively.

*K2 said that: "...minsang nagmumuni muni ako at tinatanim ko sa isip ko na kaya ko tong exam nato then ipahinga ang sarili kapag na i stress kasi hirap mag focus kapag stress kaya kinakalma ko muna sarili ko bago magbasa ng magbasa ulit."* (Sometimes I reflect and remind myself that I can handle this exam. Then, I take a break when I feel stressed because it's hard to focus when stressed. That's why I calm myself down first before reading again)

*K3 also shared that: "...I maintained a positive mindset, consistently affirming my belief in success throughout the journey."*

*In addition, K4 shared that: "I kept on reminding myself of my goals and aspirations. Sometimes I get tired and bored, but I manage somehow not to lose on my focus goal."*

Self-determination is perceived as a deeply personal process that includes goal-setting as well as ongoing efforts to maintain motivation and control stress. Participants examine the challenges of getting ready for the license exam by drawing on inner resources like goal orientation, self-affirmation, and reflection. Ackerman, (2018) said that self-determination is an

important piece of psychological well-being as individuals has the ability of making their own choice and controls their own life.

**Praying** was also highlighted by the participants as a coping mechanism while preparing for the licensure examination under the theme of personal well-being and it serves as a source of moral and emotional support that provides them comfort and strength during stressful times.

*K1 shared: "...of course prayers that also help me to boost my moral."*

*Consequently, K4 said that: I prayed that my financial problem be solved."*

*Lastly, K8 shared: "Praying to God to give me the knowledge and strength."*

Prayer is a profound and personal means of coping of participants who experienced a challenging situation. It provides them with a sense of connection to something who are greater to them. Which alleviates their feelings of isolation and overwhelming. Ellison et al. (2014) discovered that those who pray report feeling more emotionally well-off and having lower levels of anxiousness.

**Staying Healthy** is a fundamental aspect of the personal well-being of examinees that includes engagement in physical activity that has an emphasis on a balanced diet, exercise, and adequate sleep that helps in maintaining mental and physical health.

*K3 said that "...I prioritized both mental and physical readiness, incorporating activities like playing basketball in the early morning and afternoon to alleviate stress..."*

*Similarly, K7 stated that: "...Eat well, exercise, and get enough sleep."*

Staying healthy reflects a deeper understanding of the relationship between physical and mental well-being of the examinees, making it a fundamental component of the participants in preparing for the licensure examination. Burrows et al. (2017) discovered that university students who ate a healthy, balanced diet performed better academically. According to the scientists, eating a healthy diet promotes overall wellbeing and cognitive performance, which can be especially helpful when getting ready for an exam.

**Positive Mindset** also plays an important role in the personal well-being and exam preparation of the participants. This describes how affirming belief in success and maintaining optimism demonstrates a positive outlook can influence motivation and resilience.

*K3 shared: "...I maintained a positive mindset, consistently affirming my belief in success throughout the journey..."*

Positive mindset is experienced by the participant as a motivation that shapes their overall approach in preparing for licensure examination. This aspect enables them to approach their studies with determination and hope that enhances their readiness and confidence in facing the licensure examination. Seligman et al. (2009) discovered that students exhibited higher levels of academic accomplishment and well-being when they thought positively and were optimistic. They also contend that resilience, motivation, and general performance can all be improved by adopting a positive outlook.

### **Coping Mechanisms during Examination**

The licensure examination is often stressful for the examinees. The pressure to perform well can lead to multiple issues if not managed effectively and can hinder the ability of the examinees to focus and recall the information they study. Coping mechanisms are essential strategies that examinees use to manage stress, maintain focus, and enhance their performance during the examination.

**Emotional and Mental Regulation.** This theme was developed based on the data being analyzed in managing the challenges that the examinees experienced during the licensure examination. This theme shows how the participants employ different strategies in handling the stress and pressure of the examination.

**Grounding Techniques** is one of the most highlighted topics that the participants employed in coping with the challenges they experienced during the examination. This technique not only alleviates immediate anxiety but also helps in maintaining mental clarity throughout their examination.

*K2 shared that: "Kapag natataranta na tumitigil muna ako sa pagsasagot then hinga ng malalim at pakalmahin ang sarili dahil mahirap mag focus kapag natataranta."*

(When I start to panic, I stop answering for a moment, take a deep breath, and calm myself because it's hard to focus when you're panicking.)

*"Ang strategy na sa tingin kong effective to overcome yung mga challenges nayun ay pakalmahin ang sarili dapat relax kalang sa pagsasagot then wag magbabad sa isang question"* (The strategy that I think is effective in overcoming those challenges is to calm yourself and stay relaxed while answering, and don't spend too much time on one question.)

*Similarly, K3 shared that: "...deep breathing exercises provided immediate stress relief, and maintaining a positive mindset kept me focused and calm."*

*Furthermore, K6 said that: "basta hinga nlang ng malalim pag di na alam ang sagot."* (Just take a deep breath when you don't know the answer anymore.)

Grounding techniques, especially deep breathing, serve as an immediate intervention to examinees during the licensure examination that helps them manage the anxiety and difficulty in dealing with the examination questions.

**Calmness** is another topic highlighted by the participants which they believe to be an effective way of managing their problems during the examination. This illustrates that maintaining calm aids in better problem-solving and reduces feelings of being overwhelmed.

*K1 shared that: "I tried keep calm as much as possible for me to be able think properly." "Regulate my breathing (inhale and exhale) for me to be able to relax. Cheering up my self by telling to myself through my mind that I can do this such as "this is just a hundred question exam compare to the many questions that I have answered during my college year and reviews."*

*K7 also shared that: "I stayed calm and I concentrated on a single question at a time without getting overwhelmed."*

Calmness is experienced by participants as a foundational state that supports their problem solving during the licensure examination by maintaining calmness. This also enables them to approach each question methodically that can improve their overall performance and enhance their ability to manage the pressures of the licensure examination.

**Praying.** For some examinees, prayer is an important part of their coping mechanism as a way to seek support and calmness during the exam. Prayers offer emotional reassurance and help in managing anxiety by providing a sense of control and comfort.

*K2 said that: "...I always pray din halos mga diko alam na tanong ay pinapasa Diyos kona lang."*

*K8 also shared that: "I pray every time before I answer the exam."*

The participants believes that through prayers, they can find a moment of peace and clarity which allows them to approach the exam with greater confidence.

**Positive Reinforcement** was also highlighted by the participants as a way of coping with the challenges they experienced during the licensure examination. This includes encouraging themselves to have a positive mindset. It also highlights their abilities to help maintain focus and overcome stress.

*K3 shared that: "During the licensure exam, I kept my focus intact by staying positive..."*

Positive reinforcement is experienced by the participants as an important strategy in maintaining their motivation and resilience during the licensure examination.

**Cognitive and Physical Refreshment.** The third theme that emerges from the coping mechanisms of the participants during the licensure examination. This theme highlights how the examinees maintain their mental and physical well-being despite the problems they encounter during the examination. This includes strategies that ensure both the mind and body remain sharp, alert, and capable of handling the difficulty of the examination.

**Cognitive refreshment** is one of the highlighted topics under cognitive and physical refreshment that contributed to the coping mechanisms of the participants. This topic shows the importance of maintaining mental and physical well-being of the participants despite the challenges they encountered during the examination.

*K4 shared that: "taking a break is very important to keep your brain sharp."*

Cognitive and Physical Refreshment is an essential aspect of the participants performance during the licensure examination by incorporating breaks and other refreshing activities in their routine.

**Physical Alertness and Refreshment Break** is another topic highlighted by the participants as a coping mechanism under the theme of cognitive and physical refreshment and it is important in maintaining the energy and focus of the examinees throughout the examination.

*K3 shared that: "...indulging in small treats like candy to stay alert. Additionally, I made sure to keep myself active to ward off any feelings of sleepiness. These simple yet effective strategies helped me maintain composure throughout the exam."*

In addition, *K6 shared that: "inom nag tubig. Bathroom break para makapag unat unat at makahinga ng maluwag."*

Refreshment break are strategies that the participants employed to manage their physical and cognitive demands during the licensure examination, Physical alertness and regular refreshment breaks helps them to maintain high level of energy and concentration and helps them to handle the challenges brought by the licensure examination.

**Adaptation and Self-Management** is another theme that emerges from the data on the coping mechanism of the participants during the licensure examination as a response to the challenges they experienced. This theme shows how mental and emotional strategies help examinees maintain control over the situation by adapting to unexpected circumstances and managing their mindset effectively.

**Self-confirming** was highlighted by the participants as a powerful mental strategy to boost their confidence and determination during the licensure examination. This strategy involves self-affirmation and positive internal communication to boost self-assurance and resilience.

*K2 shared that: "Pinapatatag ko ang isip ko, awwSinasabi ko lagi sa isip ko na "kaya kotong exam nato di ako nagprepare ng matagal para lang matakot sa exam nato..."*

Self-confirming is a self-talk that the participants utilized to make a stronger sense of self-assurance, which supports their ability to handle the demands of the licensure examination.

**Adaptation** was also identified by the participants to be an effective way of managing unexpected or uncomfortable conditions during the examination. This reflects the participants' ability to adjust and make the best of challenging situations that arise during the licensure examination.

*K5 shared that: "yun nga very uncomfortable pero wla na kming magagawa kasi yun yung andun. Pinagkasya nalang namin ang sarili namin sa upuan."*

### **Suggested Strategy to Increase the Chance of Passing the Licensure Examination**

Passing the licensure examination is one of the most fulfilling and is considered the best

achievement for graduates. Overcoming unexpected conditions while preparing and during the examination is not an easy task, but with perseverance and focus these conditions become an extraordinary experience that once makes the graduates resilient and strong.

**Study and Review Techniques.** It is the first theme that emerges from the analyzed data and it is an important part of the preparation process for the licensure examinations. This theme covers the different methods and strategies used by the graduates to enhance their knowledge and boost their confidence in facing the actual licensure examination. **Mock Board Examinations** are one of the most highlighted suggestions of the participants to increase the chance of passing the licensure under the theme study and review techniques. It is a key component to their effective preparation in the licensure examination which offers a simulation or practice in the actual examination.

K3 mentioned that: *“mock board exams with rationalization per subject para mas ma validate yung mga answers”* (Mock board exams with rationalization per subject to better validate the answers)

K5 shared: *“More mock boards. Kasi during rationalization mas maaalala or maiintindihan mo na yung topic”* (More mock boards. Because during rationalization, you will remember or understand the topic better.)

Camacho et al., (2024) concluded that mock board examination can predict the performance of the graduates in the licensure examination and that educational institution should regularly improve their mock board examinations. Mock board Examinations and practice tests are different strategies that educational institutions and review centers employ to help the graduates familiarize themselves with the different examination formats, assess their readiness, and identify areas for improvement.

**Enhancement Program** is another highlighted suggestion of the participants as an important study rule in preparing for the licensure examination especially those who are already in their final year of study.

K2 said that: *“Ang suggestion kolang ay magkaroon ng enhancement program para sa mga 4th year dahil masyadong maluwa ang bakanteng oras kasi kung after graduation pa gagawin yun ay nakakatamad ng bumalik balik sa school kapag”* (My suggestion is to have an enhancement program for 4th-year students, as they have a lot of free time. If this program is conducted only after graduation, it can feel tedious to keep returning to school.)

**Reading and Understanding** is also suggested by the participants to increase the chance of passing the licensure examination as it serves as a foundation of their preparation in taking the licensure examination that focused on a thorough comprehension of the review materials.

K4 shared that: *“ilaan nalang ang oras sa pagbabasa ang pag intindi ng notes.”* (Just devote the time to reading and understanding the notes.)

And lastly, **Vocabulary building** which may increase the chance of the participants to pass the licensure examination by building a strong vocabulary and precise understanding of the different terminologies that they may encounter in the examination questions.

K5 mentioned that: *“They must also wider their vocabulary”*

**Study Attitude and Commitment** is the second theme that emerges from the suggestion of the participants in increasing the chances of passing the licensure examination. This theme highlights the important role of dedication, consistency, and mindset in preparing for the licensure examination. This emphasizes the importance of taking studies seriously, and maintaining a well-planned review routine. **Being serious in studies** is one of the most highlighted topics under this theme and it is essential for long-term success, especially in preparing for the licensure examinations.

*K1 said that: "Be more serious with their studies because it would serve as their foundation for their preparation for their board exam..."*

*K4 suggest that: "They must take their lesson study seriously from first year to fourth year so that they will have a good foundation during their review."*

**Early Preparation** is also highlighted by the participants to be an effective way of dealing with the examination and it is a key strategy in managing ample materials covered in the licensure examination. Madanan (2024) stated that one of the biggest mistakes graduates make when preparing for the examination is waiting until the last minute to start studying. She suggested that they begin preparing earlier to give themselves enough time to understand the topics and avoid last-minute stress.

*K1 mentioned that: Early preparation, as much as possible they should prepare themselves as early as possible since the review period is very limited and it's very difficult to put up all of the knowledge they gain for 4 years in just a few months of review.*

*K7 said that: "Have your own review routine"*

**Importance of Basics** is also suggested by the participants to increase the chance of passing the licensure under the theme study attitude and commitment. It emphasizes the importance of learning the basics thoroughly to ensure a strong understanding of the basic concept.

*K1 shared: "...also to don't forget to learn first the basics before moving on a more complicated topic."*

**Examination Questions and Management** is the third theme that was developed from the data on the suggested strategy to increase the chances of passing the licensure examination. This theme addresses the critical aspects of how examination questions are presented and how time and institutional support are managed to ensure that examinees have the best possible condition for success. **Improved the Picture in the examination** is the first topic highlighted by the participants to be recommended to the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) to provide a clear and quality image in the exams, particularly in subjects like forensic sciences where examinees found it difficult to differentiate the answer to the questions.

*K1 shared: "for me it's more on the minimal aspect which in the area of Forensic Science on the part where there are pictures on the question, because the quality of the image is, institutional support not that so good so instead of focusing on the question itself I tend to focused more on the image which is quite difficult to distinguish."*

**Institutional Support** is the fourth theme that was developed from the data on the suggestion of the participants to increase the chances of passing the licensure examination. This theme emphasizes the role of educational institutions in providing necessary resources and guidance to ensure graduates are prepared and supported throughout their journey toward licensure examination. **Scholarship** is one of the highlighted topics under this theme that can significantly impact the ability of the less fortunate graduates to enroll in a review center without becoming stressed about its financial burdens.

*K4 shared: "Schools should offer scholarship for less fortunate graduates who desires to take their licensure examination."*

**School Monitoring** was also highlighted by the participants to maintain contact and support with the graduates. This is to ensure that graduates remain on track with their preparation for the licensure examination. School monitoring provides the institution the chance to keep contact with their graduates while preparing for the examination and on the other hand, this activity also creates psychological support for examinees as they will feel more motivated when they are being monitored and guided by their professors.

*K5 mentioned that: "maganda siguro may monitoring pa din mula sa school kung saan"*

*grumaduate to make sure na nagrereview ba or may pinagrereviewhan ba yung kanilang mga graduates.”* (It might be good if there is still monitoring from the school where they graduated to make sure that their graduates are reviewing or have a place to review.)

**Learning Resources and Materials** is the fifth and last theme that emerges from the data and it is integral to the successful preparation for the licensure examination. This theme emphasizes the availability of the quality review materials for the graduates. **Review Materials** is the highlighted topic under this theme and it emphasizes the importance of having access to a wide range of review materials. Review materials are one of the best things that graduates must prepare when preparing for the licensure examination as this would help them to refresh their knowledge on the different topics that were discussed during their stay in college.

*K5 said that: “More review materials. The more, the better.”*

*K8 shared that: “Siguro si school librarian pwede magproduce nang books na for review purposes lang talaga. gaya ng mock boards, pure terminologies ganun”* (Perhaps the school librarian could provide books specifically for review purposes, like mock boards or collections of terminologies.)

Understanding the challenges and coping mechanisms of examinees in taking the licensure examination is important to help educators and institutions strategize and implement programs that would create better chances of producing quality graduates. Furthermore, exploring the experiences of the examinees in the licensure examination provides real-life data to help future examinees prepare for the possible challenges that they may encounter when dealing with the licensure examination which will lead to an increased chance the of success.

#### **D. Conclusion**

Based form the results and findings of the study, it founds out that the challenges faced by the criminology graduates while preparing for their licensure examination which affected their mental, physical, and emotional well-being, include exhaustion, financial difficulties, distractions, changeable weather conditions, weak internet connections, lack of individualized guidance and outdated review materials.

During the licensure, additional challenges were identified like emotional distress stemming from unfamiliar topics, tricky questions, pressure, and strict policies that worsen the examinee's feelings of anxiety and inadequacy. Environmental issues like uncomfortable examination rooms and bad weather also add to their difficulties, and physical discomfort including exhaustion and illness further impairs their performance.

In response to these challenges, the findings show that criminology graduates utilized different coping mechanisms while preparing for the licensure examination. These include time and stress management that emanates from the breaks and mindful pauses they use to alleviate their mental fatigue and maintain focus. Social support from their family and friends helps graduates to become more resilient. In addition, Resourceful management helps the examinees manage their time, resources, and finances, while personal well-being helps them to address the emotional and physical difficulty of preparing for the licensure examination.

During the licensure examination, the study revealed that graduates employed emotional and mental regulation techniques, particularly grounding techniques such as deep breathing to alleviate their anxiety and maintain focus during the licensure examination. It also revealed that through calmness, they can easily manage pressure which helps them effectively solve unexpected problems. Additionally, graduates sustain motivation and a positive mindset through prayers and positive reinforcement. Cognitive and physical refreshment strategies helped them to be alert and energetic. Lastly, adaptation and self-management enhance their

resiliency in overcoming the difficulties brought by the examination.

To increase the chances of passing the licensure examination, different strategies and support systems are important. These include implementing effective study and review techniques, study attitude and commitment, managing examination questions effectively, and providing institutional support with access to different learning resources and materials.

### **E. Recommendation**

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are hereby made:

For the graduates and future examinees. They should ensure that updated and well-organized review materials are thoroughly prepared. Additionally, they must be ready for potential physical, emotional, and financial exhaustion to address these challenges effectively.

For the educational institutions. Administration may consider purchasing quality review materials to provide students accurate information. Additionally, they should consider offering scholarship grants to graduates who cannot afford to enrol in review centers.

For the instructors/professors. They may consider implementing programs that support and enhance the knowledge of their graduates. Furthermore, motivational and individualized strategies should be provided to students aiming to become top performers, as well as to graduates who are struggling with the licensure examination.

For the Professional Regulation Commission. They should ensure that all examination questions are legible and images provided are clear and identifiable. Additionally, the designated examination areas should be appropriate for examinees to ensure that they can concentrate effectively during the licensure exam.

For the proctors. They should be considerate to the personal needs of the examinees, especially during lunch breaks.

### **References**

- [1] Kanan International. (2023). Entrance exams to study abroad. Kanan International. <https://www.kanan.co/blog/entrance-exams-to-study-abroad/>
- [2] Amanonce J.T., & Maramag A. M. (2022). Licensure Examination Performance and Academic Achievement of Teacher Education Graduates. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1274723.pdf>
- [3] Villarmia, J. C. (2017). Perception of graduates in their educational experience and readiness to take the Criminology Licensure Examination. *SMCC Higher Education Research Journal*, 5, 190, 194.
- [4] Asuncion, R. L. (2019). Hitches encountered by criminology graduates of Isabela State University in the criminologists licensure examination: A basis for proposed program enhancement. *International Journal of Advanced Research in Management and Social Sciences*, 8(10), 323-363.
- [5] Misra, R., & McKean, M. (2000). College students' academic stress and its relation to their anxiety, time management, and leisure satisfaction. *American journal of Health studies*, 16(1), 41.
- [6] Norazlan, Nurhidayah & Yusuf, Sarina & Al-Majdhoub, Fatima. (2020). THE-FINANCIAL-PROBLEMS-AND-ACADEMIC-PERFORMANCE-AMONG-PUBLIC-UNIVERSITY-STUDENTS-IN-MALAYSIA. *The Asian Journal of Professional & Business Studies*. 1. 10.61688/ajpbs.v1i2.52.
- [7] Braat-Eggen E., Reinten J., Hornikx M., & Kohlrausch A., (2021). "Studying for an Exam" Task in an Open-Plan Study Environment: A Laboratory Study.

- <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/builtenvironment/articles/10.3389/fbuil.2021.687087/full>
- [8] Briant, C. (2020). Poor internet connection leaves rural students behind. MSUToday. <https://msutoday.msu.edu/news/2020/poor-internet-connection-leaves-rural-students-behind>
- [9] Ermenc, K. S., Štefanc, D., & Mažgon, J. (2020). Challenges of differentiated and individualized teaching in vocational education: The case of Slovenia. *Problems of Education in the 21st Century*, 78(5), 815-831. <https://doi.org/10.33225/pec/20.78.815>
- [10] Kearns, H., & Gardiner, M. (2007). Is it time well spent? The relationship between time management behaviours, perceived effectiveness and work-related morale and distress in a university context. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 26(2), 235-247.
- [11] Cabahug, M. M., Bonghanoy, S. M. A., Tubog Jr., J., Asingua, A. B., Chen, Q., & Tul-id, C. S. (2024). Graduates are failing in the examination: An ethical investigation on the experiences of board licensure examination for professional teachers (BLEPT) takers. *American Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Innovation*, 3(2), 1-6. <https://doi.org/10.54536/ajmri.v3i2.2514>
- [12] Van der Linden, D., Frese, M., & Meijman, T. F. (2010). Mental fatigue and the influence of cognitive load on performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 95(3), 607-618. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0019530>
- [13] Beilock, S. L., & Carr, T. H. (2005). When high-powered people fail: Working memory and "choking under pressure" in math. *Psychological Science*, 16(2), 101-105. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0956-7976.2005.00789.x>
- [14] Hembree, R. (1988). Correlates, causes, effects, and treatment of test anxiety. *Review of Educational Research*, 58(1), 47-77. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543058001047>
- [15] Carney, R. N., & Levin, J. R. (2002). Pictorial illustrations still improve students' learning from text. *Educational Psychology Review*, 14(1), 5-26. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1013176309260>
- [16] Ansari S., Nikpay A., & Varmazyar S., (2018). Design and Development of an Ergonomic Chair for Students in Educational Settings. *Health Scope*.;7(4):e60531. <https://doi.org/10.5812/jhealthscope.60531>.
- [17] Techehs. (2024). Inclement weather & incidents: How it affects different industries. Retrieved from <https://techehs.com/blog/inclement-weather-incidents-how-it-affects-different-industries>
- [18] Novaco, R. W., Stokols, D., & Milanese, L. (1990). Objective and subjective dimensions of travel impedance as determinants of commuting stress. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 18(2), 231-257. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00931303>
- [19] Smiling Mind. (2023). 10 mindfulness strategies to prevent stress at exam time. Retrieved from <https://blog.smilingmind.com.au/10-mindfulness-strategies-for-students>
- [20] Moore A., Nguyen A., Rivas S., Banny-Mohammed A., Majeika J., & Martinez L. (2021). A qualitative examination of the impacts of financial stress on college students' well-being: Insights from a large, private institution. *SAGE Open Med*. doi: 10.1177/20503121211018122
- [21] Ackerman, C. E. (2018). Self-determination theory and how it explains motivation. *PositivePsychology.com*. <https://positivepsychology.com/self-determination-theory/>
- [22] Ellison, C. G., Bradshaw, M., Flannelly, K. J., & Galek, K. C. (2014). Prayer, attachment to God, and symptoms of anxiety-related disorders among U.S. adults. *Sociology of Religion*, 75(2), 208-230. <https://doi.org/10.1093/socrel/srt079>
- [23] Burrows, T., Whatnall, M. C., Patterson, A. J., & Hutchesson, M. J. (2017). Associations

- between dietary intake and academic achievement in college students: A systematic review. *Healthcare*, 5(4), 60. <https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare5040060>
- [24] Camacho, Y. P., Oberes, M. P., Tina, D. M., Pepania, A. D., Alfanta, M. P., & Sumicad, E. H. (2024). Mock board examination results as predictors in the Licensure Examination for Certified Public Accountants. *Journal of Global Education and Research*, 8(2), 180-193. <https://www.doi.org/10.5038/2577-509X.8.2.1349>
- [25] Madanan S. (2024). How to Prepare for a Board Exam: Essential Tips and Strategies? <https://setmycareer.com/blog/how-to-prepare-for-a-board-exam.php>