

Repudiating the Criminology Licensure Examination: A Regional Case Study

Reynold Jay J. Bahunsua, Gerick O. Salig, Jonathan M. Saile, Lemuel Brian C. Gallo, Teopisto Y. Culanag Jr, Jose F. Cuevas Jr

*College of Criminology, Misamis University, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to explore the reasons and experiences of criminology graduates who decided not to take the criminology licensure examination in Misamis Occidental. The study utilized a regional case study approach, and data were collected through in-depth interviews with twelve participants who met the inclusion criteria. Due to the time-related restrictions of this study, it is imperative to note that the information provided is based on the scenario up until the time when the devastating effects of COVID-19 were lessened as it was one of the factors which led to the repudiation of the board exam. Given that circumstances, rules, and attitudes may change over time, it is essential to consider recent developments in the subject of criminology licensure as well as new information, changes in policy, and any subsequent developments. The main problematique impact for the profession and its practitioners is the primary concern with regard to the rejection of the criminology licensure examination. The licensure examination is a vital tool for determining whether aspirant criminologists have the knowledge, abilities, and competencies required to work in the discipline. The legitimacy and trustworthiness of the evaluation process, as well as the ramifications for public safety, professional standards, and ethical issues, are all called into question by rejecting the examination. Findings revealed that the participants' decision not to take the criminology licensure examination was influenced by various factors, such as lack of self-confidence, financial stability issues, unexpected parenthood concerns, and unforeseen world health crisis. Additionally, the study highlighted the current system's negative consequences that force graduates to take the licensure examination, such as the loss of opportunities to pursue other careers, discrimination, and stigma. Overall, this study suggests the need for a more flexible and inclusive system that provides opportunities for criminology graduates to pursue careers that match their interests and skills. This study also highlights the importance of understanding criminology graduates' diverse experiences and perspectives and the need for further research on the topic

Keywords: criminology graduates, criminology licensure examination, financial stability parenthood concerns, repudiating, self-confidence, world health crisis.

INTRODUCTION

1. There are numerous challenges and concerns associated with taking the board exam. Fear, issues, and concerns impede students from taking the Criminology Licensure Exam (Nawani, 2021; Duong et al., 2018). Therefore, the graduates can self-study and choose their preferred Review Center to refresh and enhance their knowledge and skills obtained in the formal school setting in preparation for the licensure examination (Lopez, 2019). However, during this period of six months, their fears, issues, and concerns started to arise and affect their decision to take the board exam because of doubts and mixed This results in the students having a negative perspective toward taking the board exam because of the fear of failing the said examination (Brahmi & Touil, 2022). According to Manalo and Obligar (2013), the decline in the percentage of Filipino graduates passing the various licensure exams is a sign of

the Philippines' higher education system's declining quality, which can be characterized by the variety and level of faculty competency.

2. A board exam serves as documentation of one's assessment of academic standards. According to the PRC, passing a board exam entitles one to the status of a respected professional who possesses moral convictions, a strong sense of self, and a competitive edge on the global One must pass the board exams to be granted a license to practice a certain profession. The authority in charge of administering, carrying out, and upholding regulations about licensing various professions in the Philippines is known as the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC). Out of 161,527 examinees who took the criminologists board examinations in 2018, 2019, and 2021, the Philippines produced 60,430 licensed criminologists, with an average national passing rate of 36.95 percent (Professional Regulation Commission, 2018a; Professional Regulation Commission, 2018b; Professional Regulation Commission, 2019a; Professional Regulation Commission, 2019b; Professional Regulation Commission, 2021)., (Espartero, 2021). The study will determine the causes of fears, issues, and concerns of graduates who repudiate the licensure examination. The presence of students' fears, issues, and concerns is a determining factor in their success in taking the Criminology Licensure Examination (Cox, 2011). They are interconnected with each other, and it is unavoidable. Fear, such as failure to pass the examination, CLE requirement issues, and financial concerns, all equate to changing the behavior of the board taker. Graduates must overcome these challenges in life to be prepared for the upcoming examination and decrease the chances of failure.

Republic Act No. 11131, also known as "The Philippine Criminology Profession Act of 2018," mandates that anyone wishing to practice criminology must pass the Criminologists Licensure Examinations administered by the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC), Professional Regulatory Board of Criminology (CLE). The Professional Regulatory Board for Criminologists will be managed by the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC), which will have administrative oversight and control over it. It will have a chairperson as a leader and four members who have been chosen by the president. (Asuncion, 2019; Cuiye & Junlin, 2021). The Criminology Licensure Examination has six (6) subjects which include Criminal Jurisprudence and Procedure (20%), Law Enforcement Administration (20%), Ethics and Human Relations (10%), Criminalistics (20%), Correctional Administration (15%), and Criminal Sociology (15%). In addition, before the examination, the student must acquire a Notice of Admission (NOA) with the following requirements; 1.) Original and Photocopy of Transcript of Records (TOR) from your school, 2.) Original and Photocopies of Authenticated Birth Certificate (NSO)/ PSA Marriage Contract for female applicants, 3.) Receipt of Examination Fee, 4.) Cedula (Photocopy), 5.) PRC Number.

The researchers conducted this study to look at a factor that discourages a lot of recent graduates from taking the licensing exam in Misamis Occidental during the COVID-19 pandemic. The goal was to pinpoint a particular cause or element that affects their reluctance. By comprehending this element, the researchers hope to offer perceptions and suggestions that can solve the problem and aid recent graduates in their licensure exam preparations despite the difficulties the pandemic poses.

This study's contribution will help determine the fears, issues, and concerns of the graduates in Criminology for repudiating the Criminology Licensure Examination (D'Souza, 2022). We can also identify the graduates who are not taking the exams and their life after graduation. Regarding the factors that influence the problems encountered when taking the CLE, which is the study's main focus, The academic leaders, faculty, criminology students, and criminology graduates who will take the Criminology Licensure Examination of Higher Education Institutions in the Philippines are predicted to find this study to be useful (Espartero, 2021). Additionally, administrators will receive assistance in creating procedures to improve the school's performance on the licensing test. It might also be the best way for curriculum designers, educators, school administrators, teachers, and recent criminology graduates to advance the field's professional standing and the nation's criminology profession (Jonson & Pratt, 2022).

Moreover, it helps the community, the criminology graduates, determine the possible problems they will encounter upon taking the licensure examination. In addition, this study can be a future reference for the educator, guiding them in partaking toward criminology graduates (Cascayan et al., 2021). Finally, the result of this study will encourage future criminology graduates to overcome their fears, issues, and concerns.

METHODS

Design

This research utilized the case study research design. A case study is an empirical investigation into a case or cases by answering “how” or “why” questions about the phenomenon of interest (Alam, 2020). It is a process of in-depth inquiry of a specific person, institution, community, or any group viewed as a unit that includes developing, adjusting, remedial, or correcting procedures that appropriately follow a diagnosis of the reasons for maladjustment or of positive behaviors. This method is appropriate for determining the fears, issue, and concerns of Criminology graduates who repudiates taking the Licensure Examination.

Setting

The study administered the entire Misamis Occidental, where the criminology graduates reside, where most of the participants reside in Ozamiz City. Misamis Occidental comprises 3 cities; Ozamiz City, Oroquieta City, and Tangub City, and the adjacent province of Misamis Occidental which is Lanao Del Norte. Northern Mindanao has a lot total of 2,049,602 hectares (5,064,680 acres) of land compose Northern Mindanao. More than 60% of this territory is designated as forest land. There are plenty of fish and other marine items in its oceans. The location has a pleasant, mild, and energizing climate thanks to the lush greenery, natural springs, and high elevation

Participants

The sample number of this study consists of twelve (12) participants who are Bachelor of Science in Criminology graduates. They were identified through the list of graduates with a Bachelor of Science in Criminology currently residing in Misamis Occidental. The sex of the participants was mentioned as it was related to one of the factors in the repudiation of the examination which was the unexpected parenthood concerns. The researchers chose the snowball sampling technique because it is frequently used when researching populations that are challenging to locate or reach using conventional sample techniques. The use of snowball sampling allowed the researchers to access these communities by way of recommendations from already-established social networks. It focuses on getting an in-depth understanding of a specific group’s experiences, viewpoints, or actions. The approach made it possible for researchers to establish rapport and trust with participants through recommendations, which can promote open and honest conversations. The participants were chosen based on the following criteria: 1.) A Bachelor of Science in Criminology graduate, 2.) Recent criminology graduate who repudiated the first Licensure Examination 3.) Willing to participate in the study.

Instruments

The researchers developed an interview that serves as a tool for gathering participant data. The participants are graduates of the Bachelor of Science in Criminology. Furthermore, they were asked about the main question concerning the repudiation of taking the Criminologist Licensure Examination and also the challenges experienced after graduation. The interview questions were determined based on their possible issues and concerns, experiences, and factors that might affect their decisions which can ultimately lead to the repudiation of the examination. The use of a recording device was also present, which recorded the

response of the participants during the interview.

Data Collection

The study was conducted by interviewing different participants. The participants were identified by their background profile, including their age, sex, address, school and year they graduated, and the expected results of the random question.

Before collecting the data, the researcher sought permission from the Dean of the College of Criminology at Misamis University. Following the approval of the letter request, the researcher requested permission from the Dean of the College of Criminology to conduct the study with the identified names of school heads and teachers in the division. The researcher then scheduled an interview with the selected individuals and presented the interview schedule. After informing them that the talk had been recorded, the researcher assured the participants that their comments would be maintained in the strictest confidence. Further, the minimum health protocol was observed during the interview, considering the pandemic.

Ethical Consideration

The researchers always adhered to the ethical norms in the ongoing study. The researchers respected the social indifferences of the participants, which the researchers guided. All participants' voluntary involvement was adhered to by the researchers. By allowing the participants to sign the informed consent form created by the researchers, the interview was conducted with their express approval. The researchers promoted privacy and confidentiality concerning the participants' identities by refraining from stating their identification while conducting the interview. Privacy and confidentiality were always observed, particularly the name of the participants and other information unnecessary to the study. The researchers adhered to the guidelines set by the Republic Act No. 10173, known as the "Data Privacy Act of 2012". The researchers also followed the minimum health protocols provided by the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) and the Department of Health (DOH).

Data Analysis

In this study, the data were analyzed using Yin's 5-step data analysis approach, which also enabled researchers to examine textual data. Five steps made up Yin's process: gathering the data, breaking it down, putting it back together, deciphering its significance, and drawing conclusions. The researchers initially gathered the data before creating the categories. In the second step, the researchers separate the data in order to identify and eradicate recurrent elements in the phenomenon being studied. After recreating the data in step three, the researchers next grouped the major themes. In step four, the researchers compared patterns to interview transcripts, reflective papers, and documents to assess the significance of the data. In step 5, the researchers came to a conclusion or organized the information into a separate structural description. Conclusions were drawn based on the major themes that appeared in the survey participants' diverse responses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Participant's Profile

The participant's profile was collected based on their age, sex, provincial address, year graduated, and the school graduated from. The data below shows the profile of the twelve participants given with their respective code names.

Code Name	Age	Sex	Provincial Address	Year Graduated	School Graduated
P1	25	F	Lanao Del Norte	2019	Christ the King College De Maranding
P2	26	F	Ozamiz City	2017	Misamis University
P3	27	M	Ozamiz City	2017	Misamis University
P4	22	M	Ozamiz City	2019	Misamis University
P5	24	M	Oroquieta City	2019	Southern Capital College
P6	22	M	Zamboanga Del Sur	2019	Misamis University
P7	25	M	Ozamiz City	2019	Misamis University
P8	25	F	Lanao Del Norte	2021	Gov. Alfonso D. Tan College
P9	23	M	Lanao Del Norte	2019	Misamis University
P10	28	M	Ozamiz City	2015	Misamis University
P11	24	F	Tangub City	2018	Pagadian Capitol College
P12	27	M	Tudela	2021	Misamis University

The study formulated four (4) themes based on the responses of the participants during the conduct of an interview with the researcher.

Lack of Self-Confidence

Lack of self-confidence was identified as one of the issues among the graduates in repudiating the Criminology Licensure Examination. It was a barrier for the graduates to achieve their goals, especially passing the licensure examination. Some graduates may doubt their abilities or feel intimidated by the exam, leading to anxiety and difficulty performing to the best of their abilities. However, it is important to note that other factors may also be at play, such as inadequate preparation, lack of study time, or difficulty with certain subject areas.

“I am practical to myself because if I take the exam, I am not sure if I can pass the board exam, and it will be a waste of time and also the money I spent.” (P2, 28-30)

“I am struggling with myself; I think I cannot do it.” (P6, 77)

Based on the participants’ responses, it is evident that their confidence is very low, resulting in the licensure examination’s repudiation. Therefore, it is important for individuals struggling with the licensure examination to identify the areas in which they need improvement and develop a targeted study plan to address those weaknesses. In addition to improving their knowledge and skills, individuals may also benefit from strategies to boost their self-confidence, such as positive self-talk, visualization techniques, and seeking support from friends, family, or a professional counselor (Singh & Patidar, 2018). Building confidence is a gradual process, but individuals can learn to overcome self-doubt and achieve their goals with practice and persistence.

In conclusion, this study determined that the lack of self-confidence plays a big factor in graduates’ repudiation of the Criminology Licensure Examination. It can create barriers to success and personal development, limiting opportunities and causing feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt. However, overcoming this lack of confidence can help graduates pursue their goals and succeed in their chosen careers.

Financial Stability Issues

Financial stability issues are one of the factors in repudiating the criminology licensure examination for graduates of criminology. Many criminology graduates are not yet taking the licensure examination because

of financial stability issues. It is one of the reasons why they tend to repudiate taking the board exam because some of them need help in terms of financial capability to undergo the said examination. Other graduates tend to look for a job first to earn and have savings to afford any review center to prepare for the board exam.

Filipino students are severely financially burdened by the cost of attending a review center, to start. The cost of joining a review facility ranges on average from 9,000 to 12,000 pesos. This sum may be burdensome for families that are struggling financially. Although many students find it challenging to get additional educational support and resources, the high cost of review center membership acts as a barrier for many of them. Since their main priority is education, the majority of these students lack employment, which makes it even more difficult for them to pay the costs of review center membership. Unemployed students who want to pay for their education and the costs associated with review centers must find other sources of income as they don't receive a salary. Additionally, the average tuition cost in the Philippines for students taking a criminology course is around 30,000 pesos. The financial burden on students and their families is further increased by this hefty sum.

“Financial problem.” (P8, 106-107)

“The issue that made me repudiate the exam that year is that I am struggling financially and I have a problem at that time.” (P9, 117-119) “I was experiencing financial problems” (P11, 151-152)

“I looked for a job the day after I graduated so that I can earn and save money for the preparation to take the board exam.” (P8, 107-109)

“I looked for a job because I was financially broke and it is impossible for me to afford a review center in that situation.” (P11, 158-159)

“My decision after graduation is that we lack finances and that's why I also relaxed at that time because I also support my younger sibling in his study.” (P9, 120-122)

Based on the participants' responses, it is clear that their financial situation affected their decision to repudiate the criminology licensure examination. Financial stability can certainly be a factor that affects a graduate's ability to take and pass the criminology licensure examination (Stogner, 2022). The cost of studying and preparing for the exam and the expenses related to taking the exam can be significant, and some graduates may need help to afford these costs. In addition, graduates struggling with income may have to balance the demands of studying for the exam with the need to work and earn an income, making it difficult to devote enough time and energy to their studies.

In conclusion, this study determined the impact of financial stability issues concerning the repudiation of the Criminology Licensure Examination. Financial stability, or the lack thereof, can significantly affect an individual's decision to take the licensure exam. The inability to pay for review classes or exam fees, financial dependence on family, or inability to find a job to support oneself may hinder an individual from pursuing their career goals in criminology. It may lead to the repudiation of the licensure exam and limit opportunities for career advancement.

Therefore, addressing financial stability issues in pursuing a career in criminology or any other field is important. Seeking financial assistance or exploring alternative options such as scholarships or grants may help overcome financial barriers.

Unexpected Parenthood Concerns

Another reason behind repudiating the criminology licensure examination in graduates is the unexpected

parenthood concerns. Being a student, criminology graduate, and parent can be more complicated than we imagine. Those who have not personally faced that kind of concern will not understand the difficulty of this situation. It is difficult for criminology graduates to have divided priorities between studies and parental responsibility. It should be separated to ensure full functionality in preparing for the licensure examination. When you are a parent and student, family will always prevail if you choose, which will result in repudiating the licensure examination for some criminology graduates. If you have parenthood concerns, you must set aside your wants and needs in life and put them to your offspring.

“I have just recently given birth to my child and had to take care of the child as a breastfeeding mother.” (P11, 152-153)

“The second reason is that my partner also gave birth.” (P7, 89-90)

Based on the participants’ responses during the interview, another reason behind the repudiation of the licensure examination is the unexpected parenthood concerns. It can significantly affect a graduate’s ability to prepare for and take the criminology licensure examination. The responsibilities of parenthood, such as caring for a child, can be demanding and time-consuming. As a result, it may make it difficult for some graduates to find the time and energy to study and prepare for the exam (Andrewartha et al., 2022). In addition, unexpected parenthood concerns can bring financial challenges, further compounding the difficulties graduates face trying to balance their responsibilities as a parent with the demands of preparing for the licensure examination.

In conclusion, this study discovered the effects of unexpected parenthood concerns towards repudiating the Criminology Licensure Examination among graduates. It suggests that unexpected parenthood can be a significant factor that affects an individual’s ability to take the licensure exam and pursue a career in criminology. Unexpected parenthood concerns such as lack of financial support, inadequate childcare arrangements, and difficulty balancing parental responsibilities with academic or professional obligations can create significant barriers to an individual’s ability to prepare for and take the licensure exam. These concerns may lead to the exam’s repudiation and may limit career advancement opportunities.

Unforeseen World Health Crisis

The unforeseen world health crisis we experienced in the year 2019 up to this date is another factor that has caused graduates to not take the criminology licensure exams. The epidemic has had an impact on a few graduates of criminology. They did not anticipate that the unforeseen global health crisis would force them to postpone their Criminology Licensure Examination (CLE) exam. All of the recent Criminology graduates were forced to accept their situation after the President ordered that all employees of the government and the private sector would stay at home until the health problem was rectified. In the end, the graduates of the criminology program developed a growing nervousness, which caused more issues that will hinder them from taking the criminology license exam. The schedule for the board exam among the participants unfortunately coincided with the peak of the devastating effects of COVID-19 which ultimately resulted in the postponement of their exams. The pandemic, which took effect still continues to bloom and affects the application of the interviewed participant during their time.

“I wasn’t able to take the board exam because of the pandemic. We were scheduled to take the exam in December but it was moved because of the said pandemic.” (P12, 172 – 174)

“There is covid that time and it is difficult to take since the board examination keeps getting postponed.” (P7, 88-89)

Based on the response from the participants during the interview, the reason behind the repudiation of the licensure examination is because of the postponement of their exam due to an unforeseen world health

crisis. The unforeseen world health crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, can affect an individual's ability to prepare for and take licensure examinations (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020). In addition, the pandemic has led to widespread educational disruptions, with many schools and universities forced to transition to remote learning, which can be challenging for some students.

In addition, the pandemic has caused significant stress and anxiety for many people, making it difficult to focus on studying and preparing for exams. The pandemic has also resulted in the closure of testing centers or limited seating capacity, which may have made it difficult for some graduates to schedule their licensure examination or forced them to delay their exams.

In conclusion, this study recognized the unforeseen world health crisis as an important factor affecting graduates' decision to repudiate the Criminology Licensure Examination. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic may have created significant barriers for graduates to take the licensure exam and pursue their career goals in criminology. In addition, the world health crisis may have affected graduates, such as health concerns, financial instability, and limited access to resources such as review centers and study materials. As a result, it may have hindered their ability to prepare for and take the licensure exam, leading to the repudiation of the exam and limiting opportunities for career advancement.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study's findings, the participants struggled to take the Criminology Licensure Examination because of the identified themes of the study, such as lack of self-confidence, financial stability issues, unexpected parenthood concerns, and unforeseen world health crisis, for graduates preparing for licensing tests, a lack of self-confidence can be a significant barrier because it can cause procrastination, self-doubt, and trouble paying attention to the subject matter. Graduates with low self-esteem may find it helpful to work with a counselor or coach to develop coping mechanisms for stress management, self-esteem enhancement, and exam focus. Graduates who are preparing for licensing examinations may find it challenging to pay for study materials, enroll in test preparation classes, or pay for transportation to the testing facility due to financial stability difficulties. Graduates who are struggling financially may find it beneficial to look for scholarships, grants, or other types of financial aid to help them pay for these expenses. Graduates preparing for licensing examinations may face additional difficulties due to unanticipated motherhood issues. The aims and plans for a criminology graduate's profession can be derailed by unanticipated parental worries. It may be difficult for them to manage their time and resources, including the preparation for the license exam if they have not planned or prepared for motherhood. Their mental and emotional health as well as their capacity to concentrate on studying for the exam may be negatively impacted by this, which can cause tension and anxiety. Graduates preparing for licensure exams may face additional difficulties as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and other unanticipated global health crises. They may find it challenging to access study materials, locate testing sites that are open, or feel confident in their ability to pass the exam given the uncertainty and disruption brought on by the pandemic. Graduates who are struggling with these issues could find it helpful to look for online or remote study resources, to keep up with testing center availability and safety procedures, and to ask their peers, mentors, or professors for support. This theme was derived through the interview each participant conducted based on their own decision and experience. They cope with this problem through the help and support of their family, peers, and guidance from the almighty God to fulfill their desire to take the criminology licensure examination.

It is recommended to monitor the preparedness of the graduates towards taking the Criminology Licensure Examination and also identify the different strengths and weaknesses of graduates in their subjects for preparation and enhancement of knowledge. Furthermore, the graduates are encouraged to focus on their strengths and conquer their weaknesses, as well as areas where they have received positive feedback.

Additionally, setting achievable goals and working towards them help build confidence. The graduates are also recommended to create a budget plan and prioritize spending based on their needs and values. Seeking additional income sources, such as part-time work or freelancing, can also help alleviate financial strain. Graduates who experience unexpected parenthood concerns are recommended to seek support from family, friends, or a parenting group to help navigate parenthood's challenges.

Additionally, exploring resources such as parenting classes or therapy can help build skills and confidence in your parenting abilities. Finally, in the unforeseen world health crisis, graduates must prioritize their physical and mental health by following recommended safety guidelines and seeking support from loved ones or a mental health professional. Focusing on things within your control, such as staying informed and practicing self-care, can help alleviate uncertainty and anxiety.

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