

Factors and Challenges Influencing the Criminologist Licensure Examination Performance in Central Bicol State University of Agriculture, Sipocot, Camarines Sur

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Abstract

This study examined the factors and challenges associated with the Criminologist Licensure Examination (CLE) performance of Bachelor of Science in Criminology graduates of Central Bicol State University of Agriculture–Sipocot Campus from 2021 to 2024. Guided by an Input–Process–Output perspective and Self-Regulated Learning, the study employed descriptive-survey and correlational research designs. From a population of 480 criminology graduates, 181 respondents were selected through simple random sampling. Data were gathered using a validated questionnaire supplemented by unstructured interviews and documentary analysis and were analyzed using percentage, weighted mean, Pearson’s product-moment correlation, and coefficient of determination. CLE performance remained generally below the national passing rate from 2021 to 2023 but improved substantially in 2024, when institutional passing rates reached 53.06% and 55.10% in the two examination periods. Among the perceived success factors, study and review practices obtained the highest mean (3.40), followed by academic preparedness (3.35) and institutional support (3.28). Social pressure was the most frequently encountered challenge (3.19), followed by home environment (2.87) and lack of preparedness (2.82). Academic preparedness showed a very strong positive and statistically significant relationship with CLE performance ($r = .979$, $p = .021$), whereas lack of preparedness demonstrated a very strong negative and statistically significant relationship ($r = -.983$, $p = .017$). Study and review practices, institutional support, social pressure, and home environment were not significantly related to CLE performance. The findings emphasize the importance of strengthening academic readiness and addressing preparation gaps through curriculum review, diagnostic and mock examinations, structured review activities, academic monitoring, mentoring, and student support under the proposed *Empowering Criminology Graduates Through Strategic Review Excellence* program. The study supports Sustainable Development Goal 4 on Quality Education by promoting competency development and professional readiness and contributes to Sustainable Development Goal 16 on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions by supporting the preparation of competent future criminology professionals. Its sustainability impact lies in strengthening evidence-based academic systems, continuous institutional quality improvement, and the long-term development of qualified professionals for public safety and justice institutions.

Keywords: Academic Preparedness; Home Environment; Institutional Support; Licensure Examination Performance; Social Pressure; Review Practices

1. Introduction

Professional licensure examinations serve as important mechanisms for determining whether graduates have acquired the minimum competencies required for entry into regulated professions. In criminology, professional competence has particular social importance because criminologists may work in law enforcement, criminal investigation, corrections, security, research, public safety, and other areas of the criminal justice system. In the Philippines, Republic Act No. 11131, or the *Philippine Criminology Profession Act of 2018*, recognizes the criminology profession as important to national security, public safety, peace and order, and nation-building and requires qualified applicants to pass the Criminologist Licensure Examination (CLE) before professional registration (Republic Act No. 11131, 2018). Licensure performance, however, cannot be attributed solely to knowledge acquired immediately before the examination. Research across Philippine professional programs indicates that academic achievement, pre-licensure assessments, study and review behaviors, preparedness, institutional support, social conditions, and other learner-related factors may be associated with examination readiness and performance (Amanonce & Maramag, 2020; Fiscal & Roman, 2022; Pangngay et al., 2023; Guardario et al., 2024). Evidence from other licensure contexts likewise demonstrates that graduates' academic characteristics and preparation are relevant to professional examination outcomes (Alhifany et al., 2020; Almotaury et al., 2023). Within criminology education, recent studies have further demonstrated that CLE preparation involves multiple academic and non-academic conditions. Albina et al. (2022) identified academic, family, personal, school, and review-related concerns among CLE non-passers, while Espartero (2022) examined factors and problems experienced by criminology examinees. Barreda (2022) also linked the academic performance of criminology graduates with subsequent licensure examination outcomes. More recent studies have extended this literature by examining motivation, mindset, preparation strategies, and the experiences of criminology graduates confronting the CLE (Agabon & Allanic, 2025; Bosito, 2025; Sande et al., 2026). These findings support a multidimensional examination of CLE performance rather than an explanation based on a single academic variable. Against this background, the present study examines the factors and challenges associated with the CLE performance of graduates of Central Bicol State University of Agriculture–Sipocot Campus from 2021 to 2024. It focuses on academic preparedness, study and review practices, and institutional support as perceived enabling factors and on social pressure, lack of preparedness, and home environment as perceived challenges. By combining institutional examination performance with graduates' experiences, the study seeks to provide evidence for improving academic preparation, review programs, student-support mechanisms, and institutional interventions for future CLE examinees. Criminology education has a critical role in preparing graduates for professional responsibilities involving crime prevention, law enforcement, investigation, correctional administration, public safety, and justice administration. These responsibilities require not only disciplinary knowledge but also analytical competence, ethical responsibility, adaptability, and readiness for professional practice. Republic Act No. 11131 establishes the professional standards governing criminology and prescribes the licensure examination as a condition for professional registration (Republic Act No. 11131, 2018). Correspondingly, Commission on Higher Education Memorandum Order No. 5, series of 2018, establishes the policies, standards, and guidelines for the Bachelor of Science in Criminology program and adopts an outcomes-based approach to the development of professional competencies (Commission on Higher Education [CHED], 2018). CLE performance therefore represents more than an individual examination outcome; it can also provide evidence relevant to curriculum implementation, instructional quality, student preparation, and institutional academic support. The Professional Regulation Commission (2024) reported that 11,121 of 22,539 examinees passed the July 2024 Licensure Examination for Criminologists, illustrating the demanding nature of the professional examination. Understanding the academic, institutional, social, and environmental conditions experienced by examinees is therefore important in designing evidence-based interventions that can strengthen professional readiness.

Academic preparedness is consistently identified as an important component of licensure examination readiness. Amanonce and Maramag (2020) found a significant relationship between academic achievement and Licensure Examination for Teachers performance, demonstrating that competencies developed throughout an academic program remain relevant in subsequent professional examinations. Similarly, Sawey-Ognayon and Afalla (2022) found that educational and admission-related indicators could predict licensure performance among graduates of a Philippine state university, while Pangngay et al. (2023) identified academic variables associated with performance in the Board Licensure Examination for Psychometricians. In criminology, Barreda (2022) specifically examined undergraduate academic performance in relation to the licensure examination for criminologists. Together, these findings reinforce the importance of a strong academic foundation before graduates enter intensive board-examination preparation. Evidence from other regulated professions supports the same general pattern. Alhifany et al. (2020) examined graduate-related factors associated with success in the Saudi Pharmacist Licensure Examination, showing that characteristics developed during professional education can be relevant to licensure outcomes. Such cross-disciplinary evidence should not be treated as directly equivalent to criminology; nevertheless, it demonstrates that professional licensure readiness develops over time through academic preparation rather than only during the final review period.

Academic knowledge must also be translated into effective preparation behaviors. Self-regulated learning provides a useful perspective for understanding this process. Panadero (2017) explained that self-regulated learning incorporates cognitive, metacognitive, motivational, behavioral, and emotional processes through which learners plan, monitor, regulate, and evaluate their learning. Within licensure preparation, these processes are reflected in creating study schedules, allocating review time, identifying areas of weakness, answering practice questions, monitoring progress, and adjusting strategies based on performance.

Recent licensure research further supports structured and sustained preparation. Fiscal and Roman (2022) demonstrated that pre-licensure examination performance can predict subsequent licensure examination results among Philippine teacher education graduates, supporting the use of diagnostic and simulated examinations. Villaflores (2023) likewise emphasized preparedness and confidence among graduating students preparing for professional licensure. Internationally, Almotairy et al. (2023) found that comprehensive licensure review combined with adaptive quizzing improved end-of-program examination performance among nursing students. These studies suggest that systematic review, formative assessment, practice testing, feedback, remediation, and continuous monitoring may provide stronger preparation than reliance on short-term or last-minute review alone. Institutional conditions also contribute to the environment in which licensure readiness develops. Higher education institutions provide the curriculum, faculty expertise, instructional resources, facilities, academic advising, learning materials, review activities, and student-support structures needed to develop professional competencies. Patalinghug et al. (2023), in examining quality assurance and program standards in Philippine criminal justice education, identified faculty, curriculum, instructional resources, facilities, laboratories, libraries, and other program requirements as important dimensions of institutional quality. These areas are particularly relevant because the CLE measures competencies acquired across several major areas of criminology education. Institutional support, however, should not be viewed as automatically producing examination success. Its effectiveness may depend on how well available resources are aligned with the actual academic needs of learners and how actively students engage with those resources. Madayag et al. (2024), although examining the nursing profession, highlighted the interaction of student and faculty characteristics in successful professional examination preparation. This reinforces the view that institutional preparation and individual learner engagement operate together rather than independently. Licensure examinations are also psychological and social experiences. Examinees may face expectations from parents, peers, faculty members, financial supporters, and their communities. Support from these groups may encourage persistence, but excessive expectations can contribute to anxiety, fear of failure, self-doubt, and difficulties in maintaining concentration. Guardario et al. (2024) demonstrated the relevance of social support and expectancy in professional licensure examination success, while the phenomenological findings of Olegario and Baluyos (2024) showed that support systems can be important to graduates confronting the pressures of licensure preparation. The relevance of such conditions is particularly evident in criminology. Albina et al. (2022) reported academic, family, personal, financial, and review-related concerns among CLE non-passers. Bangaysiso et al. (2024) similarly identified procrastination, review difficulties, test anxiety, financial problems, family problems, difficulty understanding examination questions, and disappointment related to failure. Recent criminology research has additionally emphasized motivation and mindset in board-examination preparation (Agabon & Allanic, 2025), while Bosito (2025) documented the broader experiences of criminology graduates navigating the licensure process. Sande et al. (2026) further examined preparation strategies, challenges, and support mechanisms encountered in becoming registered criminologists. Collectively, this evidence indicates that CLE readiness involves an interaction of academic competence, preparation behaviors, psychological readiness, motivation, and support systems. The home environment represents another contextual component of preparation. Because substantial review frequently occurs outside the formal classroom, examinees require adequate time, space, learning resources, concentration, and emotional support. Espartero (2022) identified home and family conditions among the factors relevant to CLE examinees, while Albina et al. (2022) documented family-related difficulties from the perspective of non-passers. Guardario et al. (2024) likewise demonstrated the wider relevance of interpersonal support to licensure success. Thus, household responsibilities, inadequate study space, financial constraints, competing personal demands, family expectations, and limited resources may constrain preparation, whereas encouragement and appropriate study conditions may facilitate sustained review.

At the local level, the present study addresses the need for institution-specific evidence concerning CBSUA–Sipocot graduates. Although existing studies provide useful explanations of licensure performance, higher education institutions differ in student characteristics, faculty composition, instructional practices, academic resources, curriculum implementation, review systems, and support mechanisms. Findings from another institution therefore cannot automatically explain the conditions experienced by CBSUA–Sipocot graduates. Within the Bicol context, Barrera and Barrera (2023) conducted a baseline analysis of CLE performance at an institution in Sorsogon, illustrating the value of institution-level examination analysis for program planning and improvement. The present investigation extends this localized perspective by examining not only institutional CLE performance but also graduates' perceptions of academic preparedness, study and review practices, institutional support, social pressure, lack of preparedness, and home environment. At the national level, the study operates within the regulatory framework established by Republic Act No. 11131 and CMO No. 5, series of 2018.

Republic Act No. 11131 establishes professional licensure as a mechanism for regulating entry into criminology practice, while CHED (2018) establishes competency-based and outcomes-oriented standards for BS Criminology education. The CLE therefore represents an important link between higher education outcomes and readiness to enter regulated professional practice. At the broader professional level, licensure research demonstrates that examination outcomes may reflect interactions among prior academic performance, structured review, assessment, learner self-regulation, confidence, motivation, and educational support (Alhifany et al., 2020; Amanonce & Maramag, 2020; Almotaury et al., 2023; Madayag et al., 2024). Nevertheless, findings from other professions and national contexts should be applied cautiously to Philippine criminology because the CLE assesses a distinct combination of professional competencies and operates within a specific regulatory and educational environment.

The study is organized through an Input–Process–Output perspective. The inputs include institutional CLE performance and the study variables of academic preparedness, study and review practices, institutional support, social pressure, lack of preparedness, and home environment. The process consists of systematically gathering and analyzing institutional records and respondents' perceptions, while the intended output is an evidence-based intervention strategy for strengthening the licensure readiness of future criminology graduates. Self-Regulated Learning provides additional theoretical support for the learner-centered variables. Panadero (2017) conceptualized self-regulated learning as involving cognitive, metacognitive, motivational, behavioral, and emotional processes that allow learners to plan, monitor, and regulate their learning. This perspective supports the examination of study scheduling, time management, review consistency, self-assessment, motivation, preparedness, and responses to examination pressure. More recent licensure studies concerning preparedness, structured review, diagnostic examinations, and adaptive assessment further demonstrate the relevance of systematic learner regulation to professional examination preparation (Fiscal & Roman, 2022; Villaflores, 2023; Almotaury et al., 2023). The institutional component is supported by the competency and quality-assurance requirements governing Philippine criminology education. CHED (2018) prescribes outcomes-based competencies for the BS Criminology program, while Republic Act No. 11131 (2018) situates professional licensure within the regulatory framework for criminology practice. Patalinghug et al. (2023) further demonstrate the significance of curriculum, faculty, learning resources, facilities, and program compliance within criminal justice education. The framework therefore recognizes CLE performance as an outcome associated with the interaction of learner readiness, preparation behaviors, institutional conditions, and environmental challenges rather than the product of any single variable.

Despite substantial Philippine research on professional licensure examinations, several gaps justify the present investigation. First, much of the empirical literature concerns teacher education, nursing, pharmacy, psychology, and other regulated professions rather than criminology (Alhifany et al., 2020; Amanonce & Maramag, 2020; Fiscal & Roman, 2022; Pangngay et al., 2023; Almotaury et al., 2023; Madayag et al., 2024). Although these studies provide useful comparative evidence, the CLE involves discipline-specific competencies and a distinct professional context. Second, criminology-specific research confirms that CLE preparation is multidimensional but remains highly context-dependent. Albina et al. (2022), Barreda (2022), Espartero (2022), Barreda and Barreda (2023), Bangaysiso et al. (2024), Agabon and Allanic (2025), Bosito (2025), and Sande et al. (2026) provide increasingly relevant evidence concerning academic preparation, motivation, examination experiences, challenges, and support mechanisms. However, findings obtained in one institution or group of examinees cannot be assumed to apply directly to CBSUA–Sipocot. Third, limited documented research has specifically examined CBSUA–Sipocot graduates across the 2021–2024 CLE periods. Examining several examination cohorts provides an opportunity to determine patterns in institutional performance and relate these patterns to the perceived experiences of graduates concerning preparation, review practices, institutional support, social pressure, preparedness, and home conditions. Fourth, an exclusive focus on academic predictors may overlook modifiable psychological, social, institutional, and environmental conditions. Recent CLE literature demonstrates that unsuccessful and successful examination experiences can involve preparation deficits, motivation, anxiety, family circumstances, financial concerns, support systems, and examination strategies (Albina et al., 2022; Bangaysiso et al., 2024; Agabon & Allanic, 2025; Bosito, 2025; Sande et al., 2026). A more comprehensive institutional response therefore requires attention to both academic readiness and the context within which graduates prepare. Accordingly, the contribution of the present study extends beyond identifying which variable receives the highest perception rating. Its central value is the development of an institution-specific evidence base for determining where realistic interventions may be introduced through instruction, curriculum enhancement, academic monitoring, review programming, diagnostic assessment, mentoring, student support, learning-resource provision, and appropriate preparation environments.

The study is primarily aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 4: Quality Education, particularly the promotion of relevant competencies for employment, professional practice, and lifelong learning. Strengthening academic preparedness, review systems, competency development, diagnostic assessment, and student support can help higher education institutions translate undergraduate education into demonstrable professional readiness. The study therefore contributes to educational quality by identifying areas in which preparation for professional

practice may be strengthened. The study is also aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. Criminologists may serve in law enforcement, corrections, criminal investigation, security, public safety, research, and other components of the criminal justice system. Strengthening the competence and professional readiness of criminology graduates can contribute to developing the human-resource capacity needed by justice and public-safety institutions. This connection is consistent with Republic Act No. 11131 (2018), which links the criminology profession to national security, public safety, peace and order, and nation-building. The study does not suggest that improved CLE performance by itself achieves SDG 16; rather, the preparation of competent and professionally qualified criminologists represents one educational contribution to stronger justice and public-safety institutions.

The significance of the study extends beyond improving examination passing rates. From an educational sustainability perspective, identifying recurring weaknesses in academic preparedness and review practices can help CBSUA–Sipocot establish systematic and evidence-based interventions that can be maintained across succeeding cohorts rather than implemented only immediately before a licensure examination. Recent evidence emphasizing sustained preparation, diagnostic assessment, structured review, and learner self-regulation supports such an approach (Fiscal & Roman, 2022; Almotairy et al., 2023; Villaflores, 2023). From an institutional sustainability perspective, the findings can support continuous quality improvement through curriculum review, faculty development, diagnostic assessment, academic advising, mentoring, review-program design, resource allocation, and student-support services. Patalinghug et al. (2023) underscores the importance of systematic quality-assurance mechanisms in criminal justice education, while current licensure literature emphasizes that successful preparation occurs through interaction between learner and institutional conditions. The study also carries implications for social and community sustainability because professional criminologists work within systems affecting public safety, security, justice, rehabilitation, and community well-being. Preparing graduates who possess stronger professional competencies, appropriate examination readiness, resilience, and ethical responsibility may contribute to the development of a more capable professional workforce. Finally, the study supports governance and policy sustainability by linking institutional decision-making with documented performance data and examinees' experiences. Evidence-based decisions concerning curriculum, review mechanisms, academic support, resource allocation, and student interventions can make institutional responses more systematic, accountable, and responsive. Thus, the study's broader value lies not simply in increasing CLE passing rates but in strengthening the educational processes through which competent, ethical, resilient, and professionally prepared criminology graduates are developed.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study employed descriptive-survey and correlational research designs. The descriptive approach was used to identify and describe the factors associated with CLE performance and the challenges experienced by respondents during their preparation for and actual taking of the examination. It provided information on the conditions perceived to support or hinder examination success. The correlational approach was used to determine the strength and direction of relationships between the identified factors and challenges and the respondents' licensure examination performance. Together, these approaches enabled the study to describe the respondents' experiences and examine relationships among the study variables.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at Central Bicol State University of Agriculture, Sipocot Campus, Camarines Sur, particularly among graduates of its Bachelor of Science in Criminology program. The investigation focused on graduates associated with the Criminologist Licensure Examination administered by the Professional Regulation Commission from 2021 to 2024.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents were graduates of the Bachelor of Science in Criminology program of CBSUA–Sipocot Campus who had direct experience in preparing for and taking the Criminologist Licensure Examination. The identified population consisted of 480 criminology graduates who took the licensure examination from 2021 to 2024. From this population, 181 respondents participated in the survey. Of these, 29 respondents or 16.02% were from the 2021 examination cohort, 59 or 32.60% were from 2022, 16 or 8.84% were from 2023, and 77 or 42.54% were from 2024. Including respondents from different examination periods allowed the study to capture variations in preparation experiences and institutional support across cohorts.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study used simple random sampling in selecting respondents from the identified population. Under this procedure, every qualified board examination taker within the population had an equal opportunity to be selected. The approach was intended to minimize selection bias and obtain a representative sample of graduates who had

experienced the licensure examination process. The final sample consisted of 181 respondents from the population of 480 criminology graduates.

2.5 Research Instrument

The study utilized a questionnaire as its primary research instrument, supplemented by an unstructured interview and documentary analysis. The questionnaire was developed based on the research objectives and related literature discussed in the earlier chapters of the study. The first part measured factors associated with success in the CLE in terms of academic preparedness, study and review practices, and institutional support. The second part assessed challenges experienced by examinees in terms of social pressure, lack of preparedness, and home environment. A four-point Likert scale was used. For factors associated with success, responses were classified as 4 for Always, 3 for Often, 2 for Sometimes, and 1 for Never. For challenges experienced, the corresponding descriptions were Slightly Encountered, Encountered, Least Encountered, and Not Encountered, respectively. The questionnaire underwent validation by an educator teaching in the College of Criminal Justice Education. After revision, it was pilot-tested among 10 selected examinees from another school who belonged to a comparable examination period. Their responses were subjected to reliability testing, which produced a rating described in the manuscript as “very good.” The unstructured interview supplemented information gathered through the questionnaire and was conducted without a predetermined interview guide. Documentary analysis was also used to examine the CLE performance of CBSUA–Sipocot criminology graduates from 2021 to 2024. Examination scores and passing rates were reviewed to identify patterns and trends in licensure performance.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher first secured approval from the Dean of the College of Criminal Justice Education at CBSUA before conducting the study. Following approval, coordination was undertaken with the Criminology Department to identify and contact qualified criminology graduates from CBSUA–Sipocot who belonged to the 2021–2024 examination cohorts. The structured questionnaire was administered primarily through Google Forms to provide respondents with convenient and flexible access, particularly those who were already employed or engaged in other post-graduation activities. Information from the questionnaire was supplemented through unstructured interviews and documentary analysis of relevant licensure examination performance records. After data collection, the responses were organized, tallied, processed, and analyzed to provide the basis for interpretation, conclusions, and recommendations.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The percentage technique was used to analyze the performance of CBSUA criminology board examination takers in the Licensure Examination for Criminologists from 2021 to 2024. Weighted mean was employed to determine the respondents’ assessments of the factors associated with success and the challenges encountered in preparing for and taking the CLE. Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the relationship between the perceived factors associated with success and CLE performance and to examine the relationship between examination performance and the challenges experienced by the respondents. The coefficient of determination was used to determine the reported extent of influence of the perceived factors and perceived challenges on CLE performance.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

The study observed ethical standards applicable to research involving criminology graduates. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the research, the nature of their participation, and their right to participate voluntarily or withdraw at any time without penalty or academic consequence. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the research process, no identifying information was disclosed in the research report, and all responses were treated with privacy.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Criminologist Licensure Examination Performance, 2021–2024

The CLE performance of CBSUA–Sipocot graduates varied across seven examination periods. In December 2021, 13 of 67 examinees passed, corresponding to a 19.40% institutional passing rate compared with the 34.19% national rate. The two 2022 examinations recorded passing rates of 26.09% and 26.98%, while the two 2023 examinations yielded 23.33% and 27.59%. A substantial improvement occurred in 2024, when 78 of 147 examinees passed the February examination, producing a 53.06% passing rate compared with the 48.27% national rate. In the July–August examination, 27 of 49 examinees passed, equivalent to 55.10%, compared with the 49.35% national rate. Thus, the institutional passing rate remained below the national rate from 2021 to 2023 but exceeded it in both reported 2024 examination periods. The improvement in 2024 reflects a favorable institutional performance trend, although the descriptive results alone cannot establish which specific factor produced the increase. Licensure research indicates that academic achievement and preparation developed throughout an undergraduate program can be associated with subsequent board examination performance (Amanonce & Maramag, 2020; Alhifany et al., 2020). Within criminology, Barreda (2022) likewise examined the relationship

between graduates' academic performance and the Licensure Examination for Criminologists. Patalinghug et al. (2023) further emphasized curriculum implementation, faculty, learning resources, facilities, and quality-assurance mechanisms as important dimensions of criminal justice education. These studies support continued institutional monitoring of academic preparation and program quality when interpreting changes in CLE performance.

3.2 Perceived Factors Associated with CLE Success

Respondents rated the three perceived success factors positively. Study and review practices obtained the highest composite mean of 3.40, followed by academic preparedness at 3.35 and institutional support at 3.28, all interpreted as "Always." The overall mean of 3.34 indicates that these dimensions were consistently present in the preparation experiences of the respondents. The findings suggest that respondents perceived CLE preparation as multidimensional rather than dependent on a single condition. Contemporary licensure research similarly indicates that academic preparation, learner behaviors, program characteristics, support systems, motivation, and readiness may interact in shaping professional examination experiences (Albina et al., 2022; Madayag et al., 2024). More recent criminology studies also highlight strategic preparation, motivation, mindset, and institutional or interpersonal support as relevant to board-examination readiness (Agabon & Allanic, 2025; Bosito, 2025; Sande et al., 2026).

3.2.1 Academic Preparedness

Academic preparedness obtained an overall mean of 3.35, interpreted as "Always." Practicing time management when answering examination questions ranked highest with a mean of 3.55, followed by maintaining a study schedule and avoiding procrastination at 3.42 and devoting sufficient hours to criminology subjects throughout the academic program at 3.35. Recall of previous lessons and participation in review classes, seminars, and workshops both obtained means of 3.32, while confidence in understanding criminology concepts registered 3.28. Previous mock-examination performance ranked lowest at 3.21 and was interpreted as "Often." Academic preparedness remained relatively stable across cohorts, with means of 3.35 in 2021, 2022, and 2023 and 3.38 in 2024. The findings emphasize the importance of sustained academic preparation throughout the undergraduate program. Amanonce and Maramag (2020) found a strong relationship between academic achievement and teacher licensure performance, while Sawey-Ognayon and Afalla (2022) identified prior academic indicators as predictors of licensure performance across professional programs. Pangngay et al. (2023) similarly reported that performance in relevant undergraduate courses predicted outcomes in the Board Licensure Examination for Psychometricians. More directly related to criminology, Barreda (2022) examined undergraduate academic performance in relation to the licensure examination for criminologists. These findings support the present result that academic readiness is developed progressively rather than exclusively during the final review period.

3.2.2 Study and Review Practices

Study and review practices obtained the highest factor-level mean of 3.40. Active learning techniques ranked first with a mean of 3.55, followed by self-assessment and quizzes at 3.47, creating and following a personalized study plan at 3.43, and regular attendance in study sessions at 3.41. Reviewing previous board questions and answer patterns obtained 3.38, while regularity and frequency of study sessions registered 3.32. Participation in structured review programs, including review centers and online courses, ranked lowest at 3.25 and was interpreted as "Often." Annual composite means showed minimal variation, ranging from 3.39 to 3.42. The pattern indicates that active engagement, self-monitoring, practice activities, and individualized preparation were prominent among respondents. Panadero (2017) described self-regulated learning as involving cognitive, metacognitive, motivational, behavioral, and affective processes through which learners plan, monitor, and adjust their learning. Fiscal and Roman (2022) found that structured pre-licensure examination performance predicted subsequent licensure results, while Almotairy et al. (2023) reported improved examination performance following comprehensive licensure review combined with adaptive quizzing. Villaflores (2023) likewise emphasized preparedness, disciplined study, and confidence among prospective licensure examinees. Recent criminology evidence also highlights strategic preparation and motivation as important aspects of successful board-examination experiences (Agabon & Allanic, 2025). These findings support the use of practice examinations, self-assessment, structured review, and continuous monitoring of preparation.

3.2.3 Institutional Support

Institutional support obtained an overall mean of 3.28, interpreted as "Always." Access to academic or career advisers who assisted students in planning examination strategies ranked highest at 3.35, followed by updated books, reading materials, and online resources at 3.32, institutional review programs at 3.31, and quality mock examinations at 3.27. Mentoring or coaching, affordable review resources, and workshops on test-taking strategies and stress management each obtained a mean of 3.23 and were interpreted as "Often." The results indicate that institutional resources were generally available, although mentoring, affordability measures, and specialized preparation support were experienced less consistently. Patalinghug et al. (2023) identified faculty, curriculum, instructional resources, laboratories, libraries, and facilities as important dimensions of quality assurance in Philippine criminal justice education. Madayag et al. (2024) similarly demonstrated the relevance of supportive

faculty and learning environments in professional licensure preparation. More recent criminology research has also emphasized the importance of support systems, mentoring, preparation strategies, and institutional assistance in helping graduates navigate the CLE (Bosito, 2025; Sande et al., 2026). Institutional support may therefore be most useful when it is responsive to identified academic and preparation needs.

3.3 Challenges Experienced in Preparing for and Taking the CLE

Among the three challenge dimensions, social pressure obtained the highest mean of 3.19, followed by home environment at 2.87 and lack of preparedness at 2.82. The overall challenge mean was 2.96 and was interpreted as “Encountered.” These findings indicate that CLE preparation involved not only academic concerns but also psychological, interpersonal, and environmental challenges. Recent criminology literature similarly demonstrates that board-examination preparation is multidimensional. Albina et al. (2022) identified academic, personal, family, financial, school, and review-related difficulties among CLE non-passers. Bangaysiso et al. (2024) reported procrastination, review difficulties, financial problems, family concerns, test anxiety, problems comprehending examination questions, and disappointment following failure. Bosito (2025) and Sande et al. (2026) further documented the complex preparation experiences and challenges encountered by criminology graduates pursuing professional registration. These findings support the consideration of both academic and non-academic conditions when examining CLE readiness.

3.3.1 Social Pressure

Social pressure obtained an overall mean of 3.19 and was interpreted as “Encountered.” Worry about being judged in case of failure ranked highest at 3.36 and was interpreted as “Highly Encountered.” Pressure from the community or social circle followed at 3.34, expectations from friends who had already passed at 3.33, and pressure from peers and financial supporters at 3.32. Self-comparison with high-achieving peers obtained 2.96, while competition with classmates ranked lowest at 2.71. Across cohorts, the overall mean declined slightly from 3.22 in 2021 to 3.17 in both 2023 and 2024. The findings indicate that respondents experienced stronger pressure from external expectations and fear of judgment than from direct competition with classmates. Garcia et al. (2023) identified peer, family, and academic pressures as relevant social conditions affecting students’ educational experiences. In the licensure context, Guardario et al. (2024) examined social support and expectancy in relation to examination success, underscoring the significance of interpersonal relationships during professional examination preparation. CLE-specific studies also document anxiety, family concerns, financial expectations, and disappointment associated with failure (Albina et al., 2022; Bangaysiso et al., 2024). Social pressure should therefore be understood as part of the broader psychological context of licensure preparation rather than assumed to produce examination failure directly.

3.3.2 Lack of Preparedness

Lack of preparedness obtained an overall mean of 2.82 and was interpreted as “Encountered.” Insufficient study hours because of poor time management ranked highest at 2.99, followed by difficulty balancing study time with work or personal responsibilities at 2.95. Failure to complete a formal review program obtained 2.81, reliance on last-minute cramming 2.80, difficulty retaining criminology concepts 2.74, incomplete academic foundation 2.73, and unfamiliarity with the examination format 2.72. The manuscript reports cohort means of 2.83, 2.79, 2.84, and 2.48 for 2021 to 2024, respectively. However, because the seven reported 2024 item means range from 2.74 to 3.02, the reported 2024 composite mean of 2.48 should be verified against the original dataset before final publication. The results emphasize time management, sustained study, academic foundation, and familiarity with examination procedures as important dimensions of preparedness. Bangaysiso et al. (2024) identified procrastination, review difficulties, and problems comprehending examination questions among CLE non-passers, while Albina et al. (2022) likewise documented preparation-related difficulties among unsuccessful examinees. Fiscal and Roman (2022) demonstrated the value of structured pre-licensure assessment, and Almotairy et al. (2023) found that comprehensive review and adaptive quizzing improved examination-related performance. Villaflores (2023) also highlighted preparedness and disciplined examination preparation. More recent CLE research emphasizes motivation, strategic preparation, and sustained effort as important aspects of board-examination readiness (Agabon & Allanic, 2025; Sande et al., 2026).

3.3.3 Home Environment

Home-environment challenges obtained an overall mean of 2.87 and were interpreted as “Encountered.” The absence of a quiet and conducive place to study ranked highest at 3.15, followed by lack of privacy or personal space at 2.99, household chores or caregiving responsibilities at 2.96, and insufficient access to computers, internet connectivity, or study tools at 2.95. Family conflict obtained 2.90, while unsupportive family members and lack of encouragement obtained the lowest means of 2.57 and 2.55, respectively. Annual means were relatively stable, ranging from 2.85 to 2.89. The findings indicate that physical and logistical conditions in the home were more prominent concerns than complete absence of family encouragement. Espartero (2022) identified home and family conditions among the factors relevant to CLE preparation, while Albina et al. (2022) reported family, financial, and environmental difficulties from the perspective of CLE non-passers. Bangaysiso et al. (2024) similarly documented family problems and financial constraints, while Guardario et al. (2024) emphasized the role of

interpersonal and family support in professional licensure preparation. Thus, a supportive home environment may involve not only encouragement but also adequate time, study space, learning resources, and assistance in managing competing responsibilities.

3.4 Relationship Between Perceived Success Factors and CLE Performance

Academic preparedness demonstrated a very strong positive and statistically significant relationship with CLE performance, $r = .979$, $p = .021$. Study and review practices showed a weak positive but non-significant relationship, $r = .134$, $p = .866$, while institutional support showed a weak-to-moderate negative and non-significant relationship, $r = -.335$, $p = .665$. Among the challenge variables included in the analysis, social pressure had a negative but non-significant relationship with performance, $r = -.587$, $p = .413$; lack of preparedness demonstrated a very strong negative and statistically significant relationship, $r = -.983$, $p = .017$; and home environment showed a weak positive and non-significant relationship, $r = .167$, $p = .833$. Thus, academic preparedness and lack of preparedness were the only variables that met the .05 significance criterion. The significant relationship between academic preparedness and CLE performance is consistent with evidence linking prior academic achievement with professional licensure outcomes. Amanonce and Maramag (2020) found a strong relationship between undergraduate academic achievement and teacher licensure performance. Sawey-Ognayon and Afalla (2022) likewise identified academic indicators associated with licensure outcomes, while Pangngay et al. (2023) found that relevant undergraduate-course performance predicted psychometrician licensure results. In criminology, Barreda (2022) specifically examined academic performance in relation to the licensure examination for criminologists. These studies support the observed importance of academic preparedness. By contrast, the non-significant results for study practices and institutional support indicate only that these variables did not demonstrate statistically significant associations with the performance measure used in the present dataset; they should not be interpreted as inherently unimportant to examination preparation.

3.5 Relationship Between Experienced Challenges and CLE Performance

Among the three challenge dimensions, lack of preparedness was the only statistically significant correlate of CLE performance, $r = -.983$, $p = .017$. Social pressure demonstrated a moderate-to-strong negative relationship, $r = -.587$, but was not statistically significant at $p = .415$. Home environment showed a weak positive relationship, $r = .167$, $p = .833$, and was likewise not statistically significant. The negative coefficient for lack of preparedness indicates that higher reported lack of preparedness was associated with lower CLE performance within the data analyzed. The result is consistent with recent CLE literature emphasizing inadequate preparation as an important difficulty experienced by examinees. Albina et al. (2022) documented academic preparation and review-related challenges among CLE non-passers, while Espartero (2022) identified student, family, school, review-center, and personal conditions associated with CLE experiences. Bangaysiso et al. (2024) further identified procrastination, review difficulties, test anxiety, and difficulty comprehending examination questions. Bosito (2025) similarly highlighted preparation experiences among criminology graduates. The present findings refine this literature by showing that, among the three challenge dimensions measured, only lack of preparedness demonstrated a statistically significant relationship with institutional CLE performance.

3.6 Explained Variance of the Perceived Success Factors

Academic preparedness produced $r = .979$ and $r^2 = .958$, indicating approximately 95.8% shared variance with CLE performance in the reported analysis. Institutional support yielded $r = -.335$ and $r^2 = .112$, corresponding to 11.2% shared variance, while study and review practices produced $r = .134$ and $r^2 = .018$, corresponding to 1.8% shared variance. Academic preparedness was statistically significant at $p = .021$, whereas institutional support and study and review practices were not significant. Therefore, the original manuscript statement that none of the three perceived success factors were statistically significant is inconsistent with the reported p -value for academic preparedness and should not be retained. The relatively large coefficient associated with academic preparedness reinforces the importance of prior learning and readiness observed in other professional licensure studies. Amanonce and Maramag (2020), Sawey-Ognayon and Afalla (2022), and Pangngay et al. (2023) consistently reported meaningful associations between academic indicators and licensure outcomes. Barreda (2022) provides corresponding criminology-specific evidence concerning academic performance and the CLE. Nevertheless, because the present study is correlational, the coefficient of determination should be interpreted as the proportion of variance statistically shared or explained within the analysis rather than evidence that academic preparedness caused 95.8% of CLE performance.

3.7 Explained Variance of the Perceived Challenges

Lack of preparedness yielded $r = -.983$ and $r^2 = .966$, representing 96.6% shared variance in the reported analysis and a statistically significant relationship at $p = .017$. Social pressure yielded $r = -.587$ and $r^2 = .345$, corresponding to 34.5% shared variance, but the relationship was not statistically significant. Home environment yielded $r = .167$ and $r^2 = .028$, corresponding to 2.8% shared variance, and was likewise not significant. Lack of preparedness was therefore the only challenge demonstrating both a very strong correlation and statistical significance. Recent criminology research supports the broader relevance of preparation deficiencies while also showing that examinees experience a wider range of psychological, social, and environmental difficulties. Albina

et al. (2022) and Bangaysiso et al. (2024) documented preparation deficits alongside family problems, financial concerns, anxiety, and unmet expectations among unsuccessful CLE examinees. Guardario et al. (2024) demonstrated the relevance of social support and expectancy in another professional licensure setting, while Sande et al. (2026) identified preparation strategies, challenges, and support mechanisms among criminology examinees. The present statistical results therefore suggest that lack of preparedness warrants priority attention in relation to performance, while social and environmental conditions remain relevant to the broader experience of preparing for the CLE.

3.8 Proposed Intervention Strategy

Based on the findings, the study proposed Empowering Criminology Graduates Through Strategic Review Excellence, a structured intervention intended to strengthen preparation before the CLE. The program includes orientation and initial review, repeated practice testing, pre- and post-graduation core-content review, assistance with examination requirements, intensive final review, predictor examinations, simulation activities, academic coaching, motivational preparation, and mentoring or counseling. These components address the study findings concerning academic preparedness, time management, review practices, social pressure, and home-related challenges. The proposed strategy is consistent with recent evidence supporting systematic and sustained licensure preparation. Fiscal and Roman (2022) found that pre-licensure examination performance could predict subsequent licensure outcomes, supporting the use of diagnostic and predictor examinations. Almotairy et al. (2023) reported improved examination performance following comprehensive review and adaptive quizzing, while Villaflores (2023) emphasized structured preparation and learner confidence. Patalinghug et al. (2023) further highlighted the need for systematic quality assurance, academic resources, and institutional support in criminal justice education. Recent CLE-specific studies also emphasize strategic preparation, motivation, mentoring, and support systems as important components of the licensure experience (Agabon & Allanic, 2025; Bosito, 2025; Sande et al., 2026). Accordingly, the proposed intervention is aligned with current evidence, although its effectiveness should be evaluated empirically following implementation.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concludes that the CLE performance of CBSUA–Sipocot graduates remained below the national passing rate from 2021 to 2023 but improved substantially in 2024, when the institutional passing rate exceeded the national rate in both examination periods. Study and review practices received the highest perceived success-factor rating, followed by academic preparedness and institutional support, while social pressure was the most frequently encountered challenge, followed by home environment and lack of preparedness. Despite these descriptive ratings, academic preparedness was the only perceived success factor significantly and positively associated with CLE performance ($r = .979$, $p = .021$), whereas lack of preparedness was the only challenge significantly and negatively associated with performance ($r = -.983$, $p = .017$). Study and review practices, institutional support, social pressure, and home environment were not significantly related to CLE performance. These findings indicate that sustained academic readiness and the reduction of preparation deficiencies are the most important considerations emerging from the study.

CBSUA–Sipocot, particularly the College of Criminal Justice Education and the Criminology program, may strengthen CLE preparation through curriculum review, diagnostic and mock examinations, regular academic monitoring, structured review activities, focused remediation in areas of weakness, and programs that develop time management and consistent study practices. Existing institutional support may be reinforced through mentoring, coaching, accessible review resources, test-taking and stress-management activities, counseling, peer support, and access to conducive study spaces. These measures may be incorporated into the proposed *Empowering Criminology Graduates Through Strategic Review Excellence* program, which includes orientation, repeated practice examinations, pre- and post-graduation review, predictor examinations, simulation activities, academic coaching, motivational preparation, and mentoring or counseling.

The study was limited to Bachelor of Science in Criminology graduates of CBSUA–Sipocot who took and passed the Criminologist Licensure Examination during the 2021–2024 examination periods. Graduates from other institutions or campuses, those who did not take the CLE during the covered period, non-passers, and respondents with incomplete questionnaire participation were excluded. Consequently, the findings reflect the perceptions and experiences of the selected CBSUA–Sipocot respondents and should be interpreted within the specific institutional and examination context of the study.

5. Compliance with ethical standards

The authors affirm that no conflicts of interest exist in relation to this study. The research was conducted in accordance with accepted ethical principles for human-participant research. Prior to data collection, the necessary institutional approval was secured from the appropriate authorities of Central Bicol State University of Agriculture–Sipocot Campus, and coordination was undertaken with the Criminology Department for the

identification and participation of qualified respondents and access to relevant licensure examination records. Participants were informed of the purpose of the study and the nature of their participation, and informed consent was obtained before the administration of the research instrument. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage without penalty or academic consequence. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the study, and no personally identifying information was disclosed in the presentation or interpretation of the findings. Data obtained through the questionnaire, interviews, and documentary analysis were used solely for research purposes and were reported in aggregated form to protect the privacy of the respondents. The study also observed applicable provisions of the Data Privacy Act of 2012 in handling participant information and research data.

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