

Combating Challenges of Becoming a Registered Criminologist: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

The Criminologist Licensure Examination (CLE) is a critical gateway to professional practice, underscoring the importance of examining the preparation, challenges, and support systems that shape examinees' success. This study aimed to explore the academic strategies employed by CLE passers, the challenges they faced, the ways they overcame these, the institutional and peer support they received, and the lessons they could share with future examinees. Using a qualitative design, interviews were conducted with five (5) CLE passers, two (2) academic instructors, and one (1) review coach. Results revealed that passers relied on structured study schedules, participation in review centers, varied resources, and exam-oriented practices. At the same time, challenges included financial constraints, emotional and psychological pressures, and weak academic areas. These were overcome through family and institutional support, faith and motivation, discipline, stress management, and focused review strategies. Support from institutions, peers, and family provided academic guidance, counseling, logistical help, and moral encouragement. Overall, CLE success was shaped by preparation, resilience, and support systems. It is recommended that institutions enhance academic and psychological support, while future examinees adopt disciplined study habits, a positive mindset, and effective use of support networks.

Keywords: Examination; Preparation; Resilience; Success; Discipline; Strategies; Mindset; Motivation; Spirituality; Well-Being; Guidance.

1. Introduction

Registering as a criminologist in the Philippines is more than just a professional achievement; it marks a meaningful milestone that opens doors to fulfilling careers in law enforcement, corrections, and the justice system (Ates et al., 2024; Robinos et al., 2024; Nayoyos-Refugia, 2024). At the heart of this process lies the Criminologist Licensure Examination (CLE), a national benchmark that measures competence, dedication, and professionalism among criminology graduates. In February 2025, the examination yielded encouraging results, with 60.50% of examinees passing, totaling 22,245 new criminologists out of 36,768 takers (Professional Regulation Commission, 2025). Beyond the numbers, this success reflected the perseverance, sacrifice, and determination of aspiring criminologists during their preparation (Colanggo et al., 2024). While statistics highlight the outcomes, it is the personal journeys of these passers that offer important lessons, stories that can guide future test-takers and help academic institutions strengthen their support systems.

Effective preparation for the CLE relies heavily on a solid level of academic readiness. Barreda and Barreda (2023) found that passers benefited from well-designed curricula that aligned with CLE competencies and from active participation in review programs. Many complemented these with their own strategies, mock exams, group discussions, and self-testing, to master key concepts and maintain study discipline (Bosito, 2025). These habits, supported by structured review schedules and faculty mentoring, created a learning environment that built confidence and enhanced knowledge retention. Academic readiness, therefore, extended beyond intellectual preparation; it was also about developing consistency, perseverance, and the discipline to sustain motivation until exam day.

Equally vital were psychological motivation and emotional resilience, which have been identified as key factors influencing licensure examination performance (Colaljo & Cuevas Jr., 2024). Family-related and socio-cultural

factors influenced examinees' emotional experiences during the review period, shaping how they coped with stress and pressure (Albina et al., 2022). Words of encouragement from loved ones, prayers, or quiet moments of reflection often renewed their spirit and drive (Eulogio et al., 2025). These insights show that success in the CLE is not only an academic achievement but also a human experience, shaped by faith, perseverance, and the collective support of one's community.

Socioeconomic realities likewise influenced how examinees prepared for the CLE. Those with greater access to academic and review resources often had access to review centers, updated materials, and conducive learning environments, which are associated with higher levels of examination preparedness (Barreda & Barreda, 2023). Others, however, found creative ways to overcome limitations, borrowing books, sharing notes, joining peer study groups, or relying on institutional support, such as in-house review sessions and mock exams (Barreda, 2022). The pandemic era further underscored the importance of accessibility, as online platforms opened new learning opportunities while challenging schools to provide equitable digital resources. These experiences show that while financial stability offers certain advantages, determination, creativity, and institutional support serve as important equalizers that can help every student reach their potential (Colanggo et al., 2024).

Although previous studies and institutional reports have examined the performance trends and challenges of CLE takers, there remains a noticeable empirical gap in understanding the lived experiences of those who successfully passed the exam. While existing CLE studies and institutional reports commonly emphasize passing rates, performance trends, and institutional outcomes, the lived experiences of CLE passers, particularly their motivations, coping strategies, learning habits, and sources of support, have received comparatively less attention. Addressing this gap is vital to providing deeper insight into how academic readiness, psychological resilience, socioeconomic realities, and institutional guidance interact to shape the success stories of criminology graduates who achieved their professional goal of becoming registered criminologists.

This research, therefore, aimed to explore in depth the various challenges and success factors experienced by criminology graduates who passed the CLE. It focused on four interconnected dimensions that influence licensure performance: academic preparation, including the quality of education, review programs, and mastery of criminological concepts covered in the CLE; psychological resilience, involving motivation, adaptability, and persistence under pressure; socioeconomic realities, which consider financial capacity, access to resources, and competing personal responsibilities; and institutional support, encompassing faculty mentorship, review assistance, and the creation of supportive learning environments. Through this, the study hopes to give voice to the experiences of successful individuals and provide meaningful insights for future criminologists and educational institutions alike.

1.1. Study Objectives

1. Identify the academic preparation strategies employed by CLE passers;
2. Examine the challenges they faced in passing the CLE;
3. Determine how the passers overcame the challenges they encountered;

4. Assess the forms of institutional and peer support that contributed to their success; and
5. Extract the lessons from their experiences that can guide future examinees.

2. Methods and Materials

This study used a qualitative case study design to explore in depth what criminology graduates experience on their journey to becoming registered criminologists. Following Yin's (2018) approach, the research focused on real-life experiences rather than numerical data, allowing participants to describe their struggles, motivations, and coping strategies. Conducted in Ozamiz City, the study highlighted the everyday realities faced by aspiring criminologists, including financial limitations, emotional stress, and limited access to review resources. Five CLE passers, along with a review coach and two criminology instructors, participated in the study. Semi-structured interviews served as the primary instrument, allowing participants to tell their stories while guiding the discussion toward academic, emotional, financial, and institutional challenges.

Data collection involved securing institutional approval, obtaining informed consent, and conducting respectful, face-to-face interviews, which were recorded and transcribed, with strict confidentiality measures in line with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic of the Philippines, 2012). The analysis followed Yin's systematic process of compiling, breaking down, reorganizing, and interpreting the data to uncover meaningful patterns. By weaving together personal narratives and institutional insights, the study created a clear picture of how graduates overcame barriers and of the forms of support that helped them succeed. Ethical safeguards, voluntary participation, and careful handling of sensitive information ensured that the research upheld both integrity and participant well-being while producing a grounded explanation of the factors that contribute to CLE success.

3. Results and Discussion

This study explored the lived experiences of Criminologist Licensure Examination (CLE) passers to understand the challenges they encountered and the strategies they employed in preparation for the examination. Five recent CLE passers from Ozamiz City shared their personal experiences through face-to-face interviews, providing insights into the dedication, discipline, and resilience required to navigate this high-stakes exam. In addition to the passers, perspectives from one review coach and two academic instructors from the same locality were included, shedding light on how guidance, mentorship, and institutional support contribute to examinees' readiness.

From these interviews, five key themes emerged that describe key aspects of CLE preparation: (1) Structured and Supported Academic Preparation; (2) Multidimensional Challenges in CLE Preparation; (3) Strategies and Support Systems that Fostered CLE Success; (4) Institutional and Social Supports; and (5) Lessons for Future CLE Examinees.

3.1. Structured and Supported Academic Preparation

Participants' experiences show that doing well in the CLE goes beyond reading and memorizing lessons; it requires a strategic, well-supported, and organized approach to preparation. Their success was built on effective time management, guidance from review programs, the intentional use of reliable learning materials, and regular

practice with board-type questions. When combined, these efforts create a strong foundation that deepens understanding, sharpens test-taking skills, and boosts the confidence needed to face a high-stakes exam like the CLE. Participants described their preparation as a journey shaped by discipline, structure, and a strong support system. They highlighted the importance of time management, noting that they relied on daily study schedules, written plans, and consistent routines to stay focused and on track.

These were clearly reflected in the participants' responses during the interviews conducted:

"I studied 13-14 hours daily with short breaks and no distractions. I set fixed hours for review, chores, and relaxation." (P1)

"I divided my day into 2-3 hour review sessions, chores, meals, and short breaks." (P2)

"I used an itinerary outlining which subjects to study at specific times." (P3)

"I followed the Pomodoro technique with a written study plan posted as my guide." (P4)

Guided preparation through review centers also emerged as a crucial support system. Examinees credited these programs for providing structure, expert guidance, and peer motivation.

Participants expressed these in the following responses:

"I joined a review center to be properly guided in my preparation." (P1)

"Self-study was difficult, so I joined a review center for guidance and peer support." (P3)

"I attended both face-to-face and online review centers to access multiple sources." (P4)

Participants also highlighted the importance of varied review materials, including questionnaires, mock exams, reviewers, online lectures, and digital resources.

Interview excerpts reveal:

"I used test papers, questionnaires, and books." (P1)

"I relied on note-taking, online Q&A, and review center materials." (P2)

"I used flashcards, recorded lectures, and reviewers from the center." (P5)

Finally, exam-oriented practice, mock boards, quizzes, and timed assessments played a vital role in building test-taking confidence.

The following statements from participants illustrate this:

"Mock exams and alumni support helped boost my confidence." (P5)

"We conduct subject exams, comprehensive exams, and mock boards to train students in time management and exam readiness." (A11)

The participants' stories show that their CLE readiness grew from a mix of structure, support, and steady practice, an experience that research strongly backs up. Studies on time management highlight how helpful organized

routines can be. Pueblo et al. (2024) found that examinees who managed their time well-handled stress more effectively; and Geraga et al. (2025) reported that intentional scheduling helped repeat takers stay focused. Research also affirms the value of guided reviews. Camañero et al. (2024) noted a positive relationship between review center attendance and board performance; Ramirez et al. (2024) reported that successful topnotchers used structured preparation strategies, participation in review programs, and confidence-boosting practices that fostered familiarity with exam content and enhanced motivation; and Galumba (2025) found that simple habits like note-taking and timed drills boosted licensure ratings. The use of diverse materials further strengthened preparation, as shown by Dulipas (2024), who found that systematic use of reviewers improved CLE outcomes; Camacho et al. (2024), who highlighted the benefits of repeated exposure to sample questions; and Almario et al. (2024), who reported that digital review applications, including those utilizing spaced and repeated practice, enhanced learner engagement and supported memory-related learning processes. Finally, engaging in exam-focused practice is crucial, given the demonstrated correlation between pre-licensure test scores and teacher licensure outcomes (Fiscal & Roman, 2022).

The experiences of CLE passers suggest that success in the licensure exam is not a product of luck but of intentional effort, structured planning, and consistent practice. Their stories show that organizing study time, attending guided reviews, using diverse learning materials, and engaging in mock exams all contribute to greater focus, reduced stress, and more substantial confidence. This implies that aspiring examinees can enhance their readiness by creating balanced routines, seeking guidance, and practicing strategically, turning preparation into a manageable, purposeful, and confidence-building journey.

3.2. Multidimensional Challenges in CLE Preparation

For many CLE examinees, the path to passing the board examination is challenging and emotionally exhausting, as academic, financial, and personal pressures often overlap during the preparation period. Many struggle with limited finances that force them to cut back on review materials, skip sessions, or constantly worry about how to afford the next expense. At the same time, emotional and psychological pressures, like anxiety, self-doubt, and the fear of disappointing loved ones, gradually chip away at their motivation and concentration. Added to this are the academic hurdles of recalling old lessons, understanding complex concepts, and keeping up with the breadth of the exam, which can leave them feeling overwhelmed and inadequate. These challenges are interconnected and shape aspiring criminologists' preparation for the examination. This highlights the need to examine their experiences and the factors that shape readiness and confidence in preparing for the Criminologist Licensure Examination.

Participants first highlighted the economic pressures that limited their ability to fully engage in the review process.

This challenge is evident in the participants' own words:

“My main challenge was financial difficulty during the review.” (P1)

“I also faced financial constraints, struggling with travel and exam requirements, which cost around 20–25 thousand pesos.” (P2)

“I also faced financial struggles at home and had difficulty paying for the review center.” (P3)

Beyond financial concerns, several examinees emphasized how these pressures contributed to heightened anxiety, self-doubt, and mental fatigue during the preparation period.

The depth of this theme is reflected in the following responses:

“I experienced often worrying about whether I would pass or not.” (P1)

“I dealt with anxiety, pressure, and constant ‘what if’ thoughts about passing or failing.” (P2)

“I experienced anxiety, self-doubt, and burnout, especially as the exam date drew closer.” (P5)

These emotional strains were further compounded by academic challenges that made it difficult for examinees to master the broad scope of the CLE.

Participants expressed similar sentiments, as demonstrated in the statements below:

“The academic difficulty I encountered was struggling with unfamiliar terms from earlier years that felt like new information.” (P2)

“I struggled to recall similar laws and terms and often felt overwhelmed by the vast coverage of topics.” (P5)

“The academic difficulty that appears most often is their struggle to accurately understand the questions.” (RC)

These testimonies demonstrate that their challenges are not isolated but intertwined, shaping their overall readiness and performance. The participants’ experiences resonate strongly with previous studies that identified financial, emotional, and academic barriers in licensure examination preparation (Bahunsua et al., 2023; Eulogio et al., 2025). Pueblo et al. (2024) likewise described how many first-time criminology examinees experience sleepless nights, heavy stress, and constant fear of failing, experiences that mirror the emotional burden carried by the respondents in this study. Academic challenges further add to these pressures; Manuel and Paglinawan (2025) highlighted that subjects such as Forensic Science and Chemistry remain difficult for many students, while Albina et al. (2022) noted that unfamiliar topics and difficulty understanding exam questions often contribute to exam failure.

Together, these studies show that financial limitations, emotional burdens, and academic struggles are deeply intertwined, and all of them shape how ready, confident, and capable criminology graduates feel as they work toward passing the licensure examination. This implies that passing the CLE depends not only on knowledge but also on effectively managing financial pressures, emotional stress, and academic challenges, with strong support and structured preparation being key to building confidence and readiness.

3.3. Strategies and Support Systems that Fostered CLE Success

Preparing for the CLE is more than just memorizing laws and procedures; it is a journey that tests an examinee's financial resilience, emotional strength, motivation, and academic discipline. Many examinees encounter overlapping challenges, such as financial constraints, stress and anxiety, and gaps in their academic knowledge, which can make the preparation process overwhelming. Overcoming these challenges requires a combination of personal determination, structured study strategies, strong support systems, and, for some, spiritual guidance. Understanding how examinees navigate these hurdles highlights the strategies and support mechanisms that foster success in this high-stakes examination.

Financial support and emotional reassurance from families, review centers, and institutions were repeatedly emphasized by examinees as key to staying motivated and focused.

Participants shared that:

"My family gave me financial and emotional support." (P1)

"Financial constraints affected my preparation, as I sometimes had delayed payments, but the review center was understanding." (P1)

"We recommend government subsidies for financial needs and provide advice and motivation for emotional struggles." (AI2)

Faith and prayer also served as a central coping mechanism for managing stress and maintaining persistence.

The following statements highlight this perspective:

"I overcame the challenges I faced by relying on prayer and persistence." (P1)

"I handled stress, anxiety, and low confidence by praying for peace of mind, avoiding comparisons, and continuing to study consistently." (P3)

"I overcame these challenges by relying on God's grace, prayers, and emotional strength." (P4)

Maintaining motivation and a positive mindset was another strategy highlighted by participants.

Participants conveyed this in the following statements:

"My family's encouragement kept me motivated, and I stayed focused by reminding myself of my goal to pass the exam." (P1)

"The strategies that helped me stay motivated and focused were staying disciplined and reminding myself of my goals, since discipline sustains motivation." (P3)

Support networks were invaluable in reducing emotional burden and providing guidance.

This is echoed in the participants' statements:

"I received moral and emotional support from my review center, instructors, family, and peers." (P2)

"The school, review center, and instructors gave moral support, progress assessments, and helpful advice. My family, friends, and peers motivated me and reminded me that I was taking the exam not only for myself but also for them." (P3)

Discipline and structured study strategies allowed examinees to balance preparation with other responsibilities.

This idea is reflected in the following participant responses:

“I balanced personal responsibilities and CLE review through time management, allotting time for review, chores, and rest.” (P1)

“I managed my time and schedule by making an itinerary that outlined what subjects to study at specific times.” (P3)

Lastly, examinees addressed weak academic areas through focused effort and guided interventions.

These are evident on the responses of the participants during the interview conducted:

“I focused on difficult subjects like CDI, which surprisingly became the easiest during the exam.” (P1)

“We customize sessions based on examinees’ weaknesses by increasing exposure on difficult subjects, practice on weak topics through a 4-staged review phase which includes basic review lectures, examinations, marathon Q&A, and a seven-day final coaching.” (RC)

The experiences shared by participants are echoed in research that highlights what helps examinees succeed in licensure exams. Access to financial and institutional resources has been associated with greater stability and reduced psychological strain during intensive licensure examination preparation (Camañero et al., 2024), while faith and prayer help them navigate challenges and stay resilient (Colaljo & Cuevas Jr., 2024). Maintaining a positive mindset and strong motivation keeps them consistent and focused in their studies (Villaflares, 2023; Agabon & Allanic, 2025), and encouragement from family, peers, and mentors helps sustain their determination. Alongside this, discipline, structured study routines, and targeted academic remediation such as guided reviews and mock exams build both competence and confidence (Cadosales, 2023; Barreda, 2022). These insights show that CLE success grows from a balanced mix of practical support, mental resilience, steady habits, and dedicated preparation.

This implies that passing the CLE isn’t just about studying hard; it’s about having a strong support system, staying motivated, and approaching preparation with discipline and strategy. Examinees who receive guidance, encouragement, and access to structured resources are more confident, resilient, and able to face the pressures of the exam. It shows that challenges become more manageable when students balance their efforts with the right mindset, support, and planning. Ultimately, success in the CLE comes from a combination of perseverance, smart preparation, and leaning on both people and resources around them.

3.4. Institutional and Social Supports

Taking on the CLE is more than just answering questions; it is a demanding journey that challenges every part of an examinee’s life. Success doesn’t rely solely on hard work; it thrives on the support of a strong network, including schools, review centers, instructors, family, and peers. Examinees shared that this guidance gave them reassurance, encouragement, and practical help, helping them tackle tough subjects, keep up with intense study schedules, and manage the stress of mock exams. For them, this support turned feelings of anxiety and overwhelm

into confidence and determination, allowing them to face the CLE with focus, resilience, and a sense of preparedness.

Participants described in detail how different forms of support helped them sustain motivation, strengthen their preparation, and manage exam-related pressures.

This point is illustrated in the statements shared by participants:

“The instructors provided motivation and advice, while the review center offered in-house review programs and lectures.” (P1)

“Our school, review center, and instructors guided and supported us from application until after the board exam.” (P2)

“The school, review center, and instructors gave moral support, progress assessments, and helpful advice.” (P3)

“My school and review center provided strong academic foundations, clear guidance, and helpful exam tips from experienced instructors.” (P5)

“We guide students in subjects they find most difficult by providing additional teacher-led reviews, back-up discussions, and exposure to challenging questions.” (RC)

Participants also emphasized how organized review programs helped them build discipline and test-taking readiness. This is supported by participants' statements, as follows:

“The programs and policies of the review center, such as following instructions and practicing obedience, also helped a lot.” (P4)

“Programs like the review center’s mock exams and my school’s alumni support helped boost my confidence and preparation.” (P5)

“Yes, we conduct subject exams, comprehensive exams, and mock boards to train students in time management and exam readiness.” (AI1)

Many found emotional encouragement just as essential as academic preparation. Such are echoed in the statements made by participants:

“We recognize and address exam anxiety or burnout by counseling students to reconnect with their reasons for taking the exam.” (RC)

“We provide non-academic support by conducting individual follow-ups after preboards and offering personal counseling.” (RC)

“The institution provides seminars, peer support groups, counseling, and advisorship.” (AI2)

Practical support also eased the burden of exam preparation. The following statements from participants illustrate this point:

“Our review center provides support to examinees by assisting them from paperwork to exam day, preparing breakfast, arranging transport, and checking exam requirements.” (RC)

Finally, family, friends, and peers were a strong source of motivation and emotional stability. This importance is reflected in the participants' insights:

"My family gave me financial and emotional support." (P1)

"My family, friends, and peers motivated me and reminded me that I was taking the exam not only for myself but also for them." (P3)

"My family offered emotional and financial support, while my friends and reviewmates provided encouragement and shared resources." (P5)

The participants' experiences show that preparing for the CLE is not done alone, and research supports this. Guidance from mentors and structured review programs helps build competence, persistence, and effective study habits (Colicol et al., 2022). Emotional and social support from family, peers, and counseling provides confidence, resilience, and helps manage stress along the way (Colaljo & Cuevas Jr., 2024). Supportive school environments and personalized instruction also strengthen readiness and focus (Baynosa & Canape, 2025). Altogether, these findings highlight that CLE success grows from a web of academic, emotional, social, and institutional support, mirroring what the participants experienced throughout their preparation.

This implies that doing well in the CLE also comes from leaning on the right kinds of support and guidance. Mentorship, structured reviews, and helpful feedback give examinees the confidence and motivation to tackle difficult topics and overcome their weaknesses. Emotional encouragement from family, friends, and instructors helps them manage stress and keep going even when challenges arise. At the same time, school resources and organized review programs provide a steady framework to follow. These supports create an environment where examinees can stay focused, resilient, and genuinely prepared to face the exam with confidence.

3.5. Lessons for Future CLE Examinees

The participants' lived experiences reveal that passing the CLE requires more than memorizing content; it involves developing consistent study habits, disciplined routines, and emotional resilience. Beyond academic preparation, examinees stressed the importance of balancing study with rest, managing stress, and cultivating a positive mindset. Their insights provide valuable guidance for future examinees, showing that a strategic, well-rounded approach is key to tackling this high-stakes exam successfully.

CLE passers emphasized that having strong study strategies made a significant difference in their success. They relied on consistent review sessions, organized study schedules, and a mix of resources, including review centers, online lectures, and practice exams. Time management was particularly essential, allowing them to balance study with rest and personal responsibilities.

Participants shared practical lessons:

"The lessons I can share with future CLE examinees are to study hard, prepare well, and always pray." (P1)

"The study habits I recommend are to review consistently, listen to lectures even during chores, and rest when sleepy to absorb better." (P2)

“The lesson I can share with future examinees is to plan their review, practice under exam conditions, stay consistent, and maintain emotional support from family and peers.” (RC)

Alongside strategies, mindset and discipline were consistently cited as critical for CLE success. Participants noted that a positive, resilient mindset helps them cope with stress, while discipline ensures consistency in study routines and prevents distractions.

This was reflected in the participants’ responses during the interviews:

“The attitude most important to succeed is being obedient, humble, and disciplined while working hard.” (P1)

“The most important trait to succeed is discipline, which is essential to stay consistent and reach your goals.” (P4)

“Passers are consistent, disciplined, and confident, while non-passers often lack preparation and struggle with pressure.” (A11)

Managing stress and emotional well-being emerged as another essential element in preparation. Participants shared how balancing study with rest, avoiding comparisons, and maintaining a positive outlook helped them stay focused and resilient.

These are evident responses from the participants:

“A common mistake they should avoid is studying while exhausted; they should rest first to absorb information better.” (P1)

“Future examinees should avoid doubting themselves and ignoring instructions or guidance.” (P2)

“Future examinees should avoid discussing answers after the exam, as it can cause stress and low morale.” (P4)

Studies support the experiences and strategies shared by CLE passers, highlighting the importance of structured study habits, disciplined routines, and emotional resilience. Suarez et al. (2025) emphasized that mock board exams improve time management and predict actual exam performance, while Madayag et al. (2024) and Molina et al. (2024) noted that resilience, faculty guidance, mentoring, and organized review plans boost confidence and competence. Mindset and discipline are also critical, as consistent study, positive attitude, and intrinsic motivation strongly influence success (Galumba, 2025; Agabon & Allanic, 2025). Emotional well-being plays a key role, with proper rest, stress management, and coping strategies shown to enhance focus, cognitive function, and readiness (Pueblo et al., 2024; Camaño et al., 2024). Together, these studies confirm that a combination of structured preparation, disciplined mindset, and emotional stability is essential for achieving success in the high-stakes CLE.

This implies that passing the CLE depends on adopting a balanced, intentional approach to preparation. Developing structured study habits, maintaining discipline, and nurturing a positive mindset help examinees stay consistent, focused, and confident throughout their review. At the same time, paying attention to emotional well-being through rest, stress management, and coping strategies enables them to handle pressure and retain

information more effectively. When combined, these elements form a supportive framework that equips aspiring criminologists to approach the exam with readiness and resilience.

4. Conclusion

This study shows, based on the participants' experiences, that passing the CLE goes beyond academic knowledge; it also depends on the support systems and personal strategies examinees use. Success is built on consistent study habits, focused review programs, and extra effort to strengthen weak areas. Encouragement from family, peers, and institutions helps sustain motivation during the long preparation process. Managing stress and maintaining well-being also contribute to readiness, as examinees who balance study with rest and manage comparisons are better able to handle exam pressures.

4.1. Future Suggestions

- 1) Expand research to include a larger and more diverse group of CLE examinees across different regions.
- 2) Explore the long-term impact of review center programs and institutional support on post-licensure professional performance.
- 3) Investigate the effectiveness of digital learning tools and online resources in CLE preparation.
- 4) Assess the role of mental health programs in sustaining motivation and reducing exam-related stress.
- 5) Conduct comparative studies on the success rates of examinees with different types of family and social support.
- 6) Examine financial aid and scholarship programs to determine how they influence access to review materials and exam readiness.

5. Recommendations

Given these findings, criminology schools and review centers are encouraged to improve their programs by adding mock exams, diagnostic tests, and targeted reviews, while also promoting wellness through counseling, stress management activities, and peer support. Review centers can further help by offering balanced study schedules, and policymakers can ease financial burdens through scholarships or partnerships with institutions. For future examinees, the key is to stay disciplined, use healthy coping strategies, and take care of both body and mind. Altogether, the study highlights that CLE success requires a holistic approach, one that combines academic preparation with emotional resilience and strong support networks, leading not only to passing the exam but also to becoming competent and confident criminologists.

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Competing Interests Statement

The authors declare that they have no competing interests related to this work.

Consent for publication

The authors declare that they consented to the publication of this study.

Authors' contributions

All the authors took part in literature review, analysis, and manuscript writing equally.

Availability of data and materials

Supplementary information is available from the authors upon reasonable request.

Institutional Review Board Statement

Not applicable for this study.

Informed Consent

Informed consent was obtained from all participants before the commencement of the study.

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