| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Perceived Psychological Preparedness of the New Tertiary Curriculum Graduates in Taking the Professional Board Examination

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| ABSTRACT

This thesis was conducted to explore the perceived psychological preparedness of the selected graduates from the psychology department of the University of Cebu-Main Campus. It described the participants` preparedness in taking the psychometrician board examination. The way the participants adapt to the challenges experienced while reviewing, the experiences encountered by the participants through the factors, and the different coping strategies used to enhance and prepare for the upcoming board examination. The study utilized the qualitative method. There were sixteen (16) participants in this study, and they were selected through non-probability sampling, specifically purposive sampling. In data collection, an interview with a semi-structured interview guide has been used. In analyzing the qualitative data, thematic analysis by Boyatzis is being used. Codes, categories, and finding common themes were identified from the transcript of in-depth interviews. Eleven (11) emergent themes were created based on the participant's responses, which were classified under three (3) primary themes that provided answers to the sub-problems in this research. The emergent themes were extracted from the significant critical statements of the key participants. The description provided by the participants on their preparedness for taking the professional board examination, *Factors that Influenced the Participants` Preparedness,* has four (4) emergent themes categorized as: *On Motivation; On Academic Factors; On Individual Factors; On Environmental Factors.* For the challenges faced by the graduate participants about preparedness, the overarching theme is *Challenges experienced by the Participants. The preparation* has five (5) emergent themes*: Lack of Academic Preparation, the Impact on Overall Health, High Expectations, Poor Study Habits, And Self-Confidence.* The ways or strategies the participants used to cope with the difficulties faced in the examination preparation, the overarching theme is *Participants' Cope with the Challenges Met* has two (2) emergent themes identified: *By Ways of Addressing Challenges; By Seeking Social Support.* The findings and recommendations derived from the study were used to improve the preparedness of the new tertiary curriculum graduates in taking the professional board examination.

1. Introduction

High-quality education is more than just a "pathway to opportunities, but a prerequisite for success." Professional board examinations, crucial quality control measures for entry into most professional career paths, are now extensively utilized globally.

One of the instruments is to assess and corroborate the kinds of graduates that will join the industrial setting in the various companies locally and internationally. It has developed into a crucial element in establishing that one has met the credentials to perform in a specific field of specialization.

Education has been given the most attention since it is one of the determinants of the future of every country across the globe. The K-12 program is a kindergarten through grade 12 educational program in the U.S. that specifies the number of years of funded primary and secondary education. Currently, 140 countries are implementing and adopting the 12-year basic education model, which has become the international standard for pre-tertiary education (Sarvi et al., 2015). Educational institutions in countries across the globe, such as Afghanistan, Australia, Canada, South Korea, and Turkey, are just some of the lists that adopted the program. The goals of this program are as follows: First, it is to increase the student's preparation for higher education. Secondly, to equip the student's eligibility for domestic and overseas higher educational institutions and facilitate students' immediate employability upon graduation.

One of the three countries, including the Philippines, was the last to implement a 10-year pre-university program nationwide. To comply with the global market's demands and integrate the country's curriculum, where a high-quality education has become essential for everyone, the Philippine Educational system decided to transition to a more modern and progressive curriculum that followed a 12-year program (Dizon et al., 2019).

After professionals had received their training and education in their institution, examinations were used to maintain their professional excellence. Government organizations typically offer licensure tests to regulate a specific profession or occupation. One of the significant achievements that a student can consider is passing a Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) licensure exam. Licensure examinations are an instrument used to assess graduates' expertise, competencies, capabilities, and disposition in the practice of their chosen profession. Republic Act 10029, or the Philippine Psychology Act of 2009, was enacted with its objective to regulate the profession of psychology and psychometrics in the Philippines for the protection of society from inexperienced and unqualified individuals offering psychological services, to guarantee that psychologists are competent, outstanding, and internationally competitive (Villaluz, 2017).

Board exam preparation should be given careful consideration. As a result, among students or exam takers, some elements and difficulties were perceived as essential and presumed to have existed but only partially developed. It covers their psychological preparedness, self-motivation, study techniques, time management, and coping mechanisms. Psychological preparedness can help people respond to situations rationally and with greater confidence and control. The principle of psychological preparedness is connected to a person's emotional capacity to respond to any circumstances. "Processes and capacities such as knowledge, anticipation, recognition, thinking, emotion, decision-making, and the regulation of one's thought, feeling, and behaviors" are all part of psychological readiness (Australian Psychological Society, 2007).

The researchers found a lot of recent studies in terms of the psychological preparedness of graduates to take the professional board examination in different courses. However, there still needs to be a solution in assessing the psychological preparedness of the graduates from the new curriculum since they are the first ones to take the examination using the new curriculum implementation. The primary objective of this study is to augment the literature concerning the psychological readiness of K-12 graduates as they approach the board examination.

2. Theoretical Background

This study is grounded in Bernard Weiner's Attribution theory and is further supported by Edward Deci and Richard Ryan's Self-determination theory and Carol Weiss's Theory of Change.

The leading anchored theory of this study is Bernard Weiner's (1986) Attribution theory, which is concerned primarily with accomplishments. He identified talent, effort, task complexity, and luck as the most critical factors driving achievement attributions. This theory investigates how people interpret events and how this influences their thinking and conduct. People are assumed to try to figure out why people do what they do. When a person succeeds, they are more inclined to attribute their success to their labor or talent; when they fail, they are more likely to attribute their failure to external factors over which they have no control.

The desire to understand the origins of behaviors keeps learners interested in the learning environment. An individual's attributions are what we refer to as the causes of behavior. Heider (1958) asserts that people are motivated to learn because they need to acquire new attributions. The definition of attribution theory is the process through which people evaluate the success or failure of their behavior or that of others (Weiner, 2004). Students frequently use three aspects to explain their reasons for success or failure: 1) internal or external, 2) stable or unstable, and 3) controllable or uncontrollable.

Before assessing an individual's attributions, examining their impact on the outcome under consideration is vital. According to Rotter (1966), the locus of control of an individual is their ability to affect the achievement of a goal. The locus of control of an individual may be affected inwardly or outside. An outcome is said to have an external locus of control unrelated to the learner's behavior and an internal locus of control when closely tied to the person's activity. Individuals with an internal locus of control think they oversee their path. A learner with an external locus of control attributes success and failure to outside forces.

Weiner et al. (1971) claimed that the most frequent causative factors contributing to a learner's success or failure are ability, task complexity, effort, and luck. These factors are independent of an individual's internal or external locus of control. The causative aspects of ability, task difficulty, effort, and luck can affect an individual's behavior in various ways depending on the instructional environment. People with an internal locus of control tend to credit their success and failure more to skill and effort, whereas those with an external locus of control tend to blame task difficulty and luck more frequently. Therefore, a crucial aspect of accomplishment in a learning environment is a person's locus of control, whether external or internal.

Since attribution theory claims that its primary concern is with achievements, the abilities and capabilities of the students and the way they perceive things influence their actions and behaviors that affect their psychological preparedness in taking the professional board examination. The theory also explains that when students succeed, they are likely to credit their accomplishments to how they made decisions and to their intelligence. However, when they fall through, they attribute their failure to the environmental factors that surround them, which they do not have influence over.

This study is reinforced by Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan's Self-determination theory (1985). In that it concerns the energization and direction of conduct, self-determination theory is motivational rather than cognitive and uses motivational categories to organize cognitive, emotional, and behavioral characteristics. It is a way of studying human motivation and personality that employs traditional empirical methods, and an organismic metatheory that emphasizes the importance of people's evolved inner personality development and behavioral self-regulation resources (Ryan et al., 1997).

SDT concerns how people interact with and depend on their social environments. In SDT, intrinsic and various extrinsic motives are defined, along with their effects on personality, social and cognitive development, and situational responses in several areas. The core principles of SDT include the importance of relatedness, competence, and autonomy as fundamental psychological demands for growth, well-being, and self-determined motivation. Finally, SDT discusses the crucial role of social and cultural context in supporting or impeding people's fundamental psychological needs, sense of self-direction, performance, and overall well-being (Legault, 2017).

Self-determination theory presents a set of motivations: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. They contend that these motivations are based on various reasons that may lead to acting (for instance, internal and external causes). Someone who partakes in an activity for a personal benefit (e.g., satisfaction) is said to be intrinsically motivated, according to Deci and Ryan (i.e., autonomous). When the goal for engaging in that task is to achieve anything other than the activity itself, the motivation is said to be extrinsic. They go through to say that human growth can be regarded as a progression toward more autonomy and that this progression is dependent, in part, on the continuous learning of a variety of competencies. To put it another way, a student must be capable of controlling his environment. He must have an internal driving force to propel him toward a desired goal regardless of external obstacles.

The three fundamental psychological demands of autonomy, competence, and relatedness are defined by Deci and Ryan (1985). According to Deci and Ryan, the psychological desire for autonomy is first related to students' perceptions of their level of control, choice, and behavior in a particular situation using the facts at hand. Other definitions of autonomy include "experiencing conduct as self-determined" and "regulating by self while the experience is owned and validated by the person" (Sheldon & Niemiec, 2006; Weinstein et al., 2012). (Lamb, 2007, cited in Ushioda, 2011, p. 223). Autonomous conduct has been linked to improved creative learning and more vigor and energy (Weinstein et al., 2012).

Second, competence is frequently defined as some degree of mastery and the capacity of the individual to engage with the environment in order to exist and continue to develop. Deci (1980) stated that "competence development" was the process by which humans "acquire skills for effective interaction." This translates into confidence as well (Lloyd & Little, 2010). A student's need to be competent and independent is the foundation for intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Relatedness is the third component. According to Deci and Ryan (1985), relatedness is establishing and maintaining meaningful ties within one's social environment to feel socially connected to and accepted by significant persons (Wilson & Bengoechea, 2010). In a structured, adult-led setting, this takes place when students interact and socialize in a way that supports achieving a particular objective or result.

These psychological necessities, which Deci and Ryan call essential nutrients, are crucial for average human growth and functioning. This idea was backed up by Perlman and Goc Karp (2010), who stated, "Although each need is a distinct construct, the interaction and synergy between all three needs can and will affect individual motivation." The outcome of the interaction and the degree of satisfaction or efficacy attained can directly link to a student's psychological well-being. Environments that meet these criteria may also improve a person's well-being (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

The need for relatedness represents the want to feel understood, valued by others, and linked. In contrast, the need for competency refers to being competent and efficient within a setting or environment (Sheldon & Niemiec, 2006). Students who independently participate in activities and receive encouraging comments while demonstrating social and behavioral engagement will feel more competent (Deci, 2012; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Gagné & Deci, 2005). This is paramount because the high school serves as a platform for engagement. Extracurricular Activities (ECAs) provide students with the context to make informed decisions and take actions that align with their interests and requirements.

The sense of freedom in initiating action is also called self-determination (autonomous behavior). Deci and Ryan (1985) consider the need for self-determination as an essential motivator inherent in intrinsic motivation strongly related to the demand for competence. Intrinsically motivated learners (driven from the inside) have self-generated energy for a task. They do not need frequent urges from significant persons in their environment for motivation to complete a task. Deci and Ryan argue that possibilities for self-determination boost intrinsic motivation, whereas lacking such opportunities decreases intrinsic drive.

Regarding PLOC, individuals vary from one another (personal locus of causality). Some people believe that their conduct is self-determined; they are the ones who initiate and continue their behaviors, and their PLOC is internal. Others will perceive external circumstances as determinants of their lives, compelling them to take action. These individuals' PLOC will be external. Internal loci are associated with internal motivation, whereas external loci are associated with extrinsic motivation (Laureles et al., 2017).

This is extrinsic motivation when motivated by external variables such as rewards, social recognition, or fear of punishment. People are motivated by rewards rather than action in this type of motivation.

Conversely, intrinsic motivation pertains to the desire to engage in activities because individuals find them enjoyable, making it a more potent motivator compared to extrinsic incentives. The three needs that lead to intrinsic motivation are succeeding in what we do, being in touch with others, and possessing autonomy.

Self-determination theory claims three basic and universal psychological requirements encourage humans to grow and change. According to this theory, people can become self-determined when their demands for competence, connection, and autonomy are met. Self-determination theory relates to our study since intrinsic and external motivation contribute to a person's mindset. New tertiary curriculum graduates who will take the examination must have different motivations to continue and be self-determined to take and pass the test since the self-determination theory will significantly influence the life course perspective in the psychological preparation of a student. As can be noticed, the leading theory used to support this study exposed that motivation holds a significant role in the psychological Preparedness of the new tertiary graduates in taking the professional board examination.

Carol Weiss's Theory of Change (1995) supports the primary theory employed in this study. According to Weiss (1995), a theory of change is an intentional method for considering and articulating how and why a program or intervention will succeed, who it will benefit from, and how. A theory of change is often (but not always) created during the program design phase and is based on facts, presumptions, and beliefs (Jones & Rosenberg, 2018). Because they can teach us a lot about how to change people's behavior effectively, some theories of change draw from scientifically proven behavior change theories.

Weiss is associated with this idea because she has applied it heavily to her job as an assessor. She contends that many programs are so challenging to assess because their underlying assumptions are not clearly stated. Weiss highlights that it is crucial to consider the mini steps. She also exhorts decision-makers to be explicit about the theories of change that inform their work, suggesting that doing so would improve policies and strengthen their capacity to take credit for results that their theory had predicted (Msila & Sethalko, 2013).

This theory, also known as the logic model, serves as a clear roadmap for change and directs individuals involved in the change process. The theory of change ensures that people involved in the change process maintain their way. Without precise guidelines—the philosophy of change—it is impossible to imagine any transformation guidelines being successful. One of the helpful methods of the theory of change is to use an outcome map, which is a graphic representation of the connections between initiative strategies and desired outcomes (Msila & Sethalko, 2013).

The theory of change explains the importance of developing new ideas to achieve success with the use of interventions to promote the importance of success with the use of this theory. Moreover, the theory of change gives us the benefits of developing new ways of improving our skills and the potential to develop more. In this study, the theory of change is inclined because we wanted to know what interventions may occur along with the study and how the researchers will develop ideas to make a change so that the next batch of graduates from the new tertiary curriculum will be more efficient and competent. This will also be useful to the governing bodies in the education sector and schools and universities to produce knowledgeable and skillful individuals in the future.

Another theory supporting this study is Edward Thorndike's (1905) Laws of Learning theory. These three laws are as follows:

1) Law of Readiness: According to him, the first significant law of learning is known as the "Law of Readiness" or "Law of Action Tendency" is the "Law of Learning," wherein it states that learning occurs when a preparatory adjustment, setup, or attitude trigger an action tendency. If a person is unwilling to learn, learning will not be ingrained in him or her.

2) The "Law of Exercise," which states that drill or practice helps increase the efficiency and durability of learning, is the second law of learning. Thorndike's S-R Bond Theory states that the connections are strengthened whenever an attempt or practice is continued, and when the trial or practice is ceased, the associations are weakened. As a result, the "Law of Exercise" can alternatively be regarded as the "Law of Use and Disuse," in which case connections or bonds formed in the cerebral cortex are weakened or loosened. There are numerous examples of this case in cases of human learning.

3) The third law is the "Law of Effect," which states that the trial or steps leading to satisfaction stamp in the bond or connection. Satisfying states lead to consolidation and strengthening of the connection, whereas dissatisfying, annoyance, or pain leads to lessening or stamping out of the relationship. In addition, the "Law of Effect" states that if a response satisfies the subject, it is learned and selected, whereas those that do not are removed. As an example, in an educational institution, teaching must be pleasurable. The educator must respect his or her learners' preferences and interests. In other words, the bigger the satisfaction, the greater the motivation to learn. As a result, the "Law of Effect" intensity is a crucial criterion (Jordan, 2015).

Theory of Change is a methodology established to help understand and explain how change occurs, and interventions lead to desired results and goals. "In general, a Theory of Change is a complete description and demonstration of why and how a desirable change is anticipated to transpire in a specific circumstance." It is primarily concerned with mapping out or filling in what has been termed a program or change initiative as the missing middle performers (its activities or interventions) and how they help attain desired objectives (French et al., 2020).

The theory of change narrative guides the study of Brillantes, Orbeto, Francisco-Abrigo, Capones, and Jovellanos (2019). The desired outcomes of the SHS program are stated to be achievable by investing in necessary inputs such as funding, teaching staff, classrooms, school equipment, and materials, which are then transformed into outputs such as a new curriculum for SHS, educational resources, trained teachers, school facilities and equipment, and collaboration for immersion. The efficient use of these outputs is expected to result in intermediate goals such as high enrollment rates, use of the SHS curriculum and teaching materials, adequate educators per student, and adequate facilities and materials per student. It was evaluated and documented in the part that followed on service delivery and utilization.

The Philippine Republic Act 10533 was to develop the country's education system through a reinforced curriculum. The Senior High School (SHS) curriculum, which introduced Grade 11 and Grade 12, is a fundamental aspect of this law, making compulsory pre-college education for 13 years (Amanonce & Maramag, 2020).

Professional licensure aims to keep the public safe by establishing minimum credentials and skills for safe entry-level practitioners. Nursing is a regulated profession because it can potentially harm the community if performed by an unqualified person who is not appropriately trained and inept. The public benefits from nurse licensure because essential qualifications for nursing practice are identified; whether or not an individual meets those qualifications is determined, and only a licensed nurse is authorized to use the title of a registered nurse (RN) and specific other nursing titles or to represent themselves as a licensed nurse (Monroe, 2019). The Professional Regulation Commission is the government agency that certifies trained professionals after completing a comprehensive examination administered by the regulating authority.

According to the law, aspiring licensed psychometricians must pass four board courses. Personality Theories, Abnormal Psychology, Psychological Assessment, and Industrial Psychology are examples. Personality Theories focus on studying the various views and theories that best explain individual differences (Bouree, 2016; Cherry, 2016). Abnormal Psychology studies the causes, diagnosis, and treatment of various psychological and mental illnesses (Schwartz, 2000; Dreher, 2013). Psychological assessment is a course

that teaches various procedures for psychological testing to generate hypotheses about people's personalities, abilities, and conduct (Framingham, 2017).

Student enthusiasm to pass the board examinations and the presence of metacognitive knowledge should also be prioritized. However, regardless matter how much time has been spent in class to ensure students understand information, students are frequently ignorant of what they do not know or understand until closer to the exam, typically a day before it occurs (Gurung, 2005). When students examine themselves, they can determine what they know, do not know, and would need to know (Bucaoto et al., 2018).

Psychological preparation is one of the most significant requirements for successful self-realization in a career path. Readiness is a qualitative measure of self-regulation at three physiological, psychological, and social levels. It is studied as a type of human resistance to external and internal forces. Based on modern educational paradigms and our understanding of man as a topic of development and self-development, the construction of psychological preparation in students necessitates the activation of their self-processes (Popov et al., 2016).

Some colleges offer actual review classes or incorporate review sessions within their regular professional courses (Dela et al., 2013). Furthermore, institutions must know students' activities and motivation (Cromwell et al., 2013) to determine whether they are prepared for the board examination (Villaluz, 2017). Psychological readiness is investigated with personal criteria for successful action in the personal approach (Durai et al., 2020).

The most significant aspect before deciding to major in a specific discipline of psychology is determining one's predisposition and assuring future employability. The board examination is one of the features considered a crucial milestone in school success. This is a critical stance to consider if you want to maximize a course's academic achievement (Taguba, 2022).

An organization well-known as the European Foundation for Psychologists and Analysts (EFPA) intends to have a goal of informing people on a variety of subjects, including how to get started in Psychology, even justifying the many benefits of majoring in psychology, and the implementation of the Republic Act 10029, also known as the Psychology Act of 2009, the technical, legal, and professional standards of the Psychology profession would be ensured. The welfare of clients would be protected (Hertz & Chinn, 2000).

Uhls and Bonfil (2017) emphasized the relevance of earning a bachelor's degree in psychology if one sincerely intends to pursue a career as a full-fledged psychologist. It is critical for a bachelor's degree graduate to pass the psychometrician license examination since this will allow graduates to practice psychometrics and then pursue graduate studies and get a master's degree if they want to be eligible to take the licensing exam for psychologists. Nevertheless, all higher education institutions in the Philippines that provide Psychology programs are working hard to ensure that their graduates are licensed. With this goal in mind, implementing a competency-based education program focusing on learning outcomes would be advantageous (Klein-Collins et al., 2014).

Assessment is a critical tool for monitoring performance. According to Burke (2001), assessment serves two purposes: providing information to learners and serving as a diagnostic tool for instruction. The assessment addresses the following questions: 'Did the students meet the minimum standards?' If not, how can the performance be improved? Was the training practical? If not, how can it be improved? 'A structured interpretation' (Salon, 2003).

According to Hood (2020), having a support system means engaging with a network of individuals who can offer psychological or financial support. The entire health will improve when one has these support systems, which have also been proven to lessen stress and anxiety. When someone has a support system, there are individuals to turn to when needed most. It implies that some people can rely on whenever in a challenging circumstance. In taking a licensure examination, social support is needed since it helps lessen the difficulty. When undertaking a trip, such as the preparation phase of an exam, one needs to be surrounded by the right people who can support and encourage them.

Coping encompasses individuals' cognitive and behavioral strategies to manage situations they perceive as potentially surpassing their available resources (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The two primary purposes of coping are to control one's feelings (emotion-focused coping) and to steer behavior toward solving problems (problem-focused coping) (Ramesar et al., 2009). According to a survey conducted among South African medical students, the undergraduate program, workload issues, personal issues, communication and language barriers, and financial struggles are the primary sources of stress (Naidoo et al., 2014). Additionally, data point to several problems outside the environment of universities that may harm students' well-being (Van Heerden-Pieterse, 2015). Therefore, it is vital to support students in creating healthy coping mechanisms to deal with stress (Nelson & Low, 2011).

The educational progress of the students necessitates immediate attention to reach their objectives. Several studies have been undertaken to help discover the predictors of college students' educational performance, notably their ability to pass the Professional Board Examinations. Investigations use the information and knowledge gathered in the past due to humankind's ongoing research activity (Bucaoto et al., 2018).

New graduates are more likely to pass the exam if they take it soon after graduation. Organizations should provide them with additional information about the value of earning a license early in their careers. They discover evidence that providing guidance and incentives to fresh graduates may motivate them to take the examination. They taught students how to practice and use specific approaches to increase focus skills when preparing for and taking exams, which may help them score higher on licensure exams.

Higher education institutions use licensing and certification tests as a tool for practice analysis (Raymond, 2010) of the profession to improve the curriculum (Hedderick, 2009). The outcomes of licensure examinations are also used to assess the success of a curriculum (Stewart et al., 2004). According to the data, grade point average, design and construction, mathematics and hydraulics, and survey subjects all predict passing the license exams. A simulation of the predictor variables determines the student's preparation degree for the examination (Tamayo et al., 2014).

McDonough (2010) tends to suggest exam downfalls to avoid and tips to pass the examination on your first attempt: apply early- at the appropriate time, make a plan- A study plan, quality, and quantity- Take the time to understand the process needed to solve each particular problem, consider giving it your best – have plenty of rest just before the examination and get to the testing center early, do not modify an answer, take your time with the simulation, and, after the exam, continue to study for your next section.

Students who participate in board programs must prepare themselves academically and psychologically to take the board, which includes committing to productive study habits and physical and psychological preparation. The use of contemporary instructional technology to establish conditions in which the student becomes the topic of educational activity and can more fully realize his potential is one answer to the problem of psychological preparation formation. It would be preferable if newly graduated students took the board test immediately. It was also discovered that those who took the exam for the first time significantly outperformed (Rosales et al., 2014), so some of the strategies used by higher learning institutions include administering mock board and remedial tests to determine readiness for licensure examinations (Tamayo et al., 2014).

Additionally, graduates with high levels of psychological preparation for job growth better understand their career potential and activity goals, have specific aspirations, seek new experiences, and are continually involved in self-improvement. Secondly, of the graduates who score well on psychological preparation for career development, eighty-nine percent (89%) may already have a better grasp of their career objectives and job goals, and seventy-two percent (72%) that they already have specific goals in mind (Prozorova et al., 2021).

Although the hypothesis of the study of Prozorova et al. (2021) was revealed to be correct, further research could be completed by obtaining a larger group of graduates as we all, as the new tertiary curriculum graduates of the college, whether they are psychologically prepared to take the board examination amidst the circumstances and struggles they are facing right now. Psychological Preparedness has a compound dynamic structure and expresses the human psyche's cognitive, emotional-volitional, and motivational aspects in connection to future activities and changing circumstances. A person's success in executing professional functions is determined by their psychological readiness for activity (Kryukova et al., 2020). Furthermore, psychological preparation is understood concerning the psychological functions required for excellent performance in activities, according to the framework of Kuzmin et al. (2021).

A study by Laureles, Nibay, and Pepito (2017) used self-determination theory as its theoretical basis. It is related to their research in determining B.S. Psychology graduates' self-determination, Preparedness, and competence in the licensure examinations. According to the study, self-determination is defined as "the ability to think for oneself and to take action congruent with that thought" from the perspective of positive youth development. Self-determined people are self-initiated and self-directed and make things happen in their lives.

Cuy (2021) altered Weiner's (1985) attribution theory to line it with psychology graduates' readiness to take the licensure examination. The study's findings support the theory that the quality of the curriculum reflects the degree of instruction offered to students. The educational institution significantly impacts students' readiness to take the licensure examination.

Since few people failed the NCLEX-RN, the statistics for the study were skewed. Therefore, a precise and benchmark score on the Kaplan RN Readiness Exam for this college or sample linked to at least ninety-five percent (95%) certainty of passing the NCLEX-

RN® examination on the first trial was not found. Gender, first-generation college student status, GPA at the end of the nursing program, the amount of recommended NCLEX® prep completed, and the average score on the NCLEX® prep tests were factors that were found to be related to the Kaplan RN Readiness Exam score and, consequently, the NCLEX-RN® outcome (Monroe, 2019).

According to the study by Joolaee et al. (2015), nursing students must be psychologically prepared for clinical internship. Therefore, the researchers advise reducing students' fear and anxiety before they enter the clinical setting by conducting workshops in retraining and practicing clinical skills and a course that includes visiting the hospital for students' confrontation and familiarization with the natural environment right before entering the clinical setting. This will help the respondents to prepare for a better start. Additionally, once students have entered the environment, clinical educators should pay attention to the student's level of preparedness, particularly their psychological needs and conditions, including how much they have accepted their vocation.

Gandhi et al. (2021) explored psychological preparedness among nursing students and nurses during the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings underscored the significance of taking psychological preparedness into account when planning and managing the ongoing pandemic and training nurses and nursing students. The results indicated that self-efficacy, optimism, and resilience could be predictive factors for psychological preparedness in pandemic management. Moreover, it is crucial to recognize that managing one's mental and psychosocial well-being during this period is equally vital as attending to one's physical health. Effective training programs have the potential to enhance self-efficacy. At the same time, initiatives focused on bolstering resilience and coping skills can contribute to greater psychological preparedness, ultimately aiding in the ongoing pandemic's management.

According to Agherdien (2014), K-12 graduates must be psychologically prepared. Students need more courage to take the next step because they are not confident in their learning. As a result, the researcher recommends expanding the scope of student counseling services on all campuses. The existing system needs to be improved to meet the needs of the growing number of students needing assistance. It is advisable to hire academic advisors specifically dedicated to overseeing at-risk students. This role would involve active interaction and communication with students and staff, with the advisor taking sole responsibility.

Bronola et al. (2015) identify the level of preparation for the psychology licensure examination. The data showed that the respondents were prepared for the upcoming licensure exam and had an overall mean of 4.00. The respondents were aware of the importance of preparing before an exam. According to a publication entitled Guide to Exam Preparation (2013), adequate exam preparation can significantly affect exam scores. Furthermore, it was determined that there is a significant correlation between emotional state and exam preparedness. This implies that a person's preparedness for an exam is directly correlated with their emotions. According to Gross (2006), feelings emerge when a person pays attention to a circumstance and decides it is crucial to their goals, so they prepare for it.

Villaluz (2017) also revealed the degree of readiness of UPHSL Psychology graduates to take the licensure examination. According to the test items, the statement "I am ready to take the psychometrician board exam because I have faith and believe that prayers would help me immensely in exam combined with effort and dedication" obtained the highest score, indicating the graduates' high level of preparation for the licensure examination. The study's findings directly contradict those of Lee's (2005) study, which found that schools did nothing to help their graduates be ready for graduate school or licensing exams. Students usually need more awareness of the qualifications, elements, and steps involved in applying to graduate programs or, in any case, taking the board examination.

A study conducted by Albite (2019) exhibits that early preparation contributes to the performance of an individual on taking the licensure examination. Respondents showed how critical readiness is. As a result, when asked what advice they would provide other LET takers in the future, they all concurred that they should start preparing early. In addition, the participants recommended that those interested in entering the teaching profession begin their LET preparation as soon as possible. It is also important to note that being well-prepared and taking the LET as 56 fresh graduates contribute to test-takers increased confidence. Figueres (2013) discovered in a study she performed on the teacher education programs at the University of Northern Philippines that recent graduates typically perform higher on the LET than those who opted for the later timetable.

The study Blept level of preparedness of BSEd English Graduating students by Abarcar et al. (2022) revealed that in preparation for the upcoming BLEPT, in their preparation for the upcoming BLEPT, most students are at least generally moving toward Mastery level in the following subjects: Remedial Instruction in English, English for Specific Purposes, Language Curriculum for Secondary Schools, Theoretical Foundations of Language and Literature, Literature and Methodology. The Board Licensure Examinations for Professional Teachers test prospective teachers' thorough knowledge and abilities. They offer a standardized framework against which their practice can be evaluated and demonstrated and access to continued learning and improvement. In addition to pride and reputation, it also gives them a significant advantage over non-LET passers.

Verdadero et al. (2022) determined that the preparedness and confidence of engineering major graduate students are affected based on the three learning domains. The average level of intellectual aptitude among the respondents in the Cognitive Domain was "Fair." Their study habits and preferences, for instance, had a significant impact on how well they performed. The students' confidence in taking the licensing exam depends significantly on aspects like family support in the affective domain.

In the Psycho-Motor Domain, the students' on-the-job training was unquestionably helpful in utilizing the abilities and information they learned in school to hone further and prepare them for the workplace. Sixty-two percent (62%) of the respondents actively participated in academic activities but only participated in other activities when necessary, indicating that students' confidence level in leadership and participation outside the classroom could be much higher. Leadership and participation are crucial components of a person's overall emotional intelligence. As a result, the research revealed several issues that must be resolved to increase graduate students' degree of preparedness for and confidence in completing the licensing exam (Verdadero et al., 2022).

In the study by Aquino and Balilla (2015), various elements that contribute to one's readiness for the licensing examination must be clarified and studied for the benefit of students and examinees. The study's results show that most respondents intended to start working right after college, while most responders also said they planned to take the licensing exam. Lastly, most respondents preferred to review in a review facility or do it themselves. Researchers made the following suggestions for more research in graduates' and students' preparation for licensure exams. There should be a deeper investigation into the plans for the licensure examination to assess how it affects the examinee's performance. The standard of the review offered in review centers should also be evaluated, and its impact on the board taker's performance should be looked into.

Family is crucial in helping a person maintain their composure and ensure that they achieve their objectives. Most of the time, people rely on their families for the help they require. According to studies, students with supportive and caring interactions with their peers report having better academic attitudes, values, and school satisfaction. Students who do not receive emotional support from those around them perform poorly in school and have fewer chances of success (Protheroe, 2007).

3. Objective of the Study

This study aimed to determine the Perceived Psychological Preparedness of the New Tertiary Curriculum Psychology Graduates taking the Psychometrician Professional Board Examination in Cebu City, S.Y. 2022 – 2023. It further answers the factors that influenced psychology graduates' preparedness to take the professional board examination. Also, answers the challenges experienced by psychology graduates that affect their preparedness for the professional board examination. Lastly, psychology graduates' coping mechanisms towards the challenges met.

4. Methodology

This chapter contains the ways and basis of the purpose of the study. This section explains the research design, the research environment, the instruments used, and the data collection, analysis, and interpretation approach.

4.1 Research Design

This study used a qualitative research method to understand better the perceived psychological Preparedness of the new tertiary curriculum graduates in taking the professional board examination through first-hand information, accurate reporting, and statements from actual conversations with participants. The qualitative research process entails the emergence of new questions and techniques, data collection in the participants' environment, data analysis inductively developed from specifics to broad themes, and the researcher's interpretations of the data (Creswell, 2007).

The researchers also utilized a phenomenological research design to achieve this study's objectives. According to Welman and Kruger (1999), phenomenologists are interested in understanding social and psychological processes through the perspective of those involved. Alfred Schultz applied Husserl's philosophical phenomenology to how everyday contributors to society respond to their ordinary lives (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000). This phenomenological study is intended to investigate and determine various psychology student graduates' psychological Preparedness in taking the psychometrician professional board examination.

4.2 Research Environment

This study was conducted at the University of Cebu - Main Campus. It is located at Sanciangko Street, Cebu City, Philippines. Atty owns the University. Augusto W. Go was founded in 1964 and was formerly known as Cebu Central College, which grew over time and became known as the University of Cebu.

UC has five campuses around Metro Cebu: (1) The Main Campus, (2) the Banilad Campus, (3) Lapu-Lapu and Mandaue (L.M.) Campus, and (4) the Mambaling Campus, also known as Maritime Educational Training Center (METC), and (5) the Pardo-Talisay Campus. The University of Cebu commits itself as a vital catalyst in imparting effective educational services and pursuing excellence

in guidance, research, and community service to society, including economic progress in addition to environmental sustainability, to require, disseminate, and make use of suitable technology to enhance the University's instructional grants and foster an organizational lifestyle that nurtures worker and engagement.

The study's participants were drawn from the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), which comprises five distinct programs: Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature, Bachelor of Performing Arts, Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, and Bachelor of Science in Social Work. The number of teachers from this department is 39 full-time and 40 part-time. On the other hand, CAS has a total number of 989 officially enrolled students (A.B. English Language and Literature has 48 students, performing arts has 13 students, Political Science has 111 students, Psychology has 817, and Social Work has 180). The psychology department has 69 male and 176 female first-year students; the second year has 36 males and 131 females; the third year has 36 males and 134 females; and the fourth year has 51 males and 184 females. The psychology department has 817 psychology students as of the school year 2021 to 2022.

4.3 Research Participants
This study was conducted and was catered to sixteen (16) psychology student graduates, eight (8) males and (8) females from the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) from the University of Cebu – Main Campus. The participants were selected with the use of purposive sampling. The participants must follow a specific criterion to fit the study's qualifications. Through this technique, the researchers gained valuable insights into the efficient and judicious selection of participants. They also acquired the ability to determine the appropriate level of analysis required to address the study's objectives (Bernard, 2002). The participants must also be under the new tertiary curriculum, which means the first batch of graduates from the K to 12 programs implemented who will take the professional board examination.

4.4 Research Instrument
The researchers employed a semi-structured form of an interview. With this, the participants could elaborate, giving them more flexibility and range and, hence, the ability to elicit more information from the participants. Semi-structured interviews give people more freedom to answer questions on their own terms (May 1997). This is a form of an interview in which researchers prepare a specific set of questions but also conduct additional probes that might be open-ended or closed-ended. The researcher can obtain extra information from the participants to add depth and relevance to the findings and better grasp their viewpoints on a particular subject (Cristobal & De La Cruz-Cristobal, 2017). Constructed questions were based on the questions cited in the problem statement, and follow-up questions were provided as needed. The interview was recorded and noted. Administration of every interview was scheduled, and a free disturbance location was set up to provide proper accommodation to the participants to ensure that the participants' attention towards the interview was focused. The duration for each interviewee lasted between 30 minutes to 1 hour. The tools used are an interview questionnaire sheet, pen, and laptop or smartphone to take notes and record the responses accurately.

4.5 Research Procedure
This section presents the data collection analysis, which will be used to conduct reliable data analysis and interpretation.

4.5.1 Data Collection
Primarily, the researchers prepared a transmittal letter to ask permission to conduct the research study signed by the Research Instructor, Chairman of Psychology, and the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS). Another letter was sent to the University of Cebu Alumni Association, Inc. to ask permission to post on the organization's Facebook page to find the potential participants of this study. After the approval of the requests from the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) and the President of the UC Alumni Association, Inc., the data collection processes commenced. The time of administration of the interview was scheduled, and the participants were asked to have a free disturbance location to ensure that the participant's attention on the interview proper is of focus. The researchers noted and recorded the answers and observations as the interview proceeded.

The entire procedure of the study was thoroughly explained so that the participants understood the nature and purpose of the research and, therefore, asked for their participation. Informed consent was distributed to obtain the participant's agreement to participate in the research study. Participants were also assured of the findings' confidentiality and that all information acquired will be used for this research study only.

The participants were reached out using a social media application, messenger. Since this is a phenomenological study, the researchers followed the thematic analysis method. As for the information that was collected through an interview, the researchers made them into transcripts. Analysis and separation of information gathered from the interview was done by categorizing these based on the typical responses and answers from the participants, tabulated to give a clear presentation. The data was reviewed

comprehensively, and sections were diagnosed with a comparable focus integrated to make compact, efficient summaries of its content.

4.5.2 Analysis of Data

The researchers utilized a thematic analysis in analyzing the data. According to Boyatzis (1998), thematic analysis is a type of qualitative analysis. It is used to break down groups and reveal themes that relate to the data. It delineates information in detail and manages a variety of topics using interpretations to explain. The researchers read and reviewed the data, and significant statements from each transcript were extracted. The researchers aimed to arrange the data collected into clusters, which allowed sub-themes and major themes to emerge. Distinction and comparison were produced in the participants' answers, as stated in the interview lines. The researchers then provided the data of findings, including descriptions of vital meanings, which were elaborated on and associated with the accumulated information to vindicate the interpretations offered. The findings were simplified into a brief description of the phenomenon under study.

5. Results and Discussion

This chapter covers the results obtained by the researchers from participant interviews and questionnaires and data analysis using Bamberg's (2012) narrative analysis to develop a thorough understanding of the study.

This qualitative study relied on a comprehensive understanding of the transcribed responses of every leading participant by comprehensively reading the transcripts to identify the overall sense of its content coverage. A significant statement was obtained, recorded, and encoded using Microsoft Word from the transcripts of the interviews and questionnaires. The significant statements were properly encoded with their designed number of responses and participant numbers for efficient tracing. There was a total of 190 significant statements that represented the perceived psychological preparedness of the new tertiary curriculum graduates towards the preparation for the psychometrician board examination.

The researchers formulated meanings from the 190 significant statements extracted from the transcripts—a total of 190 formulated meanings that clearly explained the participants' experiences.

The formulated core meanings that share the same pattern of ideas are grouped. The common groups of formulated meanings are categorized as cluster themes. There were 26 cluster themes developed. The existing clustered themes are improved where two or more are re-grouped to form sub-themes; merging cluster themes included 17 sub-themes. Lastly, these 17 sub-themes are clustered to form major themes called emergent themes. A total of 11 emergent themes represented the major themes that provided meaning to the study's three (3) sub-problems.

After a generation with the in-depth formation of the core meaning using narrative analysis by Bamberg (2012), twenty-six (26) cluster themes were generated and reorganized into seventeen (17) sub-themes, which were then separated into eleven (11) emergent themes. Emergent themes were categorized into three (3) main points, which provide meaning to the sub-problems of the study. The following are the overall themes with emergent themes:

    I.   **Factors that Influenced the Participants' Preparedness**
          1. On Motivation
          2. On Academic Factors
          3. On Individual Factors
          4. On Environmental Factors
    II.   **Challenges Experienced by the Participants for the Preparation**
          1. On Lack of Academic Preparation
          2. On the Impact on Overall Health
          3. On High Expectations
          4. On Poor Study Habits
          5. On Self-confidence
    III.   **Participants' Cope with the Challenges Met**
          1. By Ways of Addressing Challenges
          2. By Seeking Social Support

The themes developed are intended to describe the participants' responses to the study's questions. The three (3) primary themes with different emergent themes are discussed here.

5.1 Factors that Influenced the Participants' Preparedness

Developed themes with main themes provided descriptions of the participants' experiences, their motivation, and the factors affecting their preparation for taking the board examination. The reports also determined the factors such as motivation, academic, individual, and environmental factors that are influencing participants' preparation for taking the board examination.

The following are the four (4) themes developed to describe the responses of the study's key participants to the sub-problem number 1:

5.1.1 On Motivation.

The theme describes having purpose and drive as one of the factors influencing the participants to keep going for the preparation on taking the board examination.

Participant 7 was asked about the factors influencing her preparedness, and she answered:

> So, of course no kanang... I am going to take the psychometrician examination. So, my motivations are, of course, my parents and family and uhm... of course no, self-fulfillment is there so naa gyud ang self-fulfillment no para ma-reach nako akong satisfaction and akong mga dream job, puhon puhon no. Because I believe na if you're already a licensed professional no, daghan jud kaayog mga doors ang mo open, mga opportunity ang mo open para nimo (IDI 7-1.1 SS73). *(Of course, I am going to take the psychometrician examination. So, my motivation is, of course, my parents and family, self-fulfillment is there so that I reach my satisfaction and my dream job in the future. Because I believe a licensed professional will open doors of opportunity for you.)*

Participants 4 and 15 also added:

> Okay so honestly I really don't have any plans to take the board exam but gi ingon man sa akong parents nga I have to take daw for my future....future but then so basically my motivation are my parents happiness and then yeah and then another thing is more job opportunities when I apply jobs and then incentives I guess and then edge sad nako so like yeah mao ra gyud na akong motivation to take the exam. Yeah, that's it (IDI 4-1.1 SS37). *(I really don't have any plans to take the board exam, but my parents said that I have to take it for my future but then so, basically, my motivation is my parents happiness and then another thing is more job opportunities when I apply jobs and then incentives and then edge of me so, that's really my motivation to take the exam.)*

> My motivation for taking the professional board examination is my family. They are my support system. They are my strength. Maka ana ko nga kanang uhm, akong mga hard work is for them. I want to give back all the hard work of my parents (IDI 15-1.1 SS167). *(My motivation in taking the professional board examination is my family. They are my support system and my strength. My hard work is for them. I want to give back all the hard work of my parents.)*

The theme was also supported by Ryan and Deci (1985), who states that self-determination theory is motivational rather than cognitive and uses motivational categories to organize mental, emotional, and behavioral characteristics. Self-determined people are self-initiated and self-directed and make things happen in their lives.

As per the participant, being motivated is essential to build perseverance in achieving goals that someone needs to reach. Gaining desired results is possible, as it is improving performance, one's overall well-being, one's ability to grow personally, or one's sense of purpose.

5.1.2 On Academic Factors.

The theme is obtained from the participants' responses regarding the influence of academic factors affecting the graduates' preparation for the board examination. As per participants, different academic aspects need to be considered as reasons affecting their preparedness.

Participant 9 shared that the academic factor that is affecting his preparation is the subject of Abnormal psychology because the professor assigned failed to have enough competency to teach the issue; he stated:

> Ahm, I don't know if this is the correct answer ha, but the academic factor that affects my preparation for the upcoming board exam is the subject of abnormal psychology because way back last two years ago, there was a

professor who was assigned the subject he was such a very controversial professor because he failed students when he didn't have actual class it was so bo---bothering up until now because, as far as we remember we didn't learn from him so I'm struggling on this subject abnormal psychology (IDI 9-1.3 SS100). *(I don't know if this is the correct answer, but the academic factor that affects my preparation for the upcoming board exam is the subject of abnormal psychology because way back last two years ago, there was a professor that was assigned the subject he was such a very controversial professor because he failed students when he didn't have actual class it was so bothering up until now because, as far as we remember we didn't learn from him so I'm struggling on this subject abnormal psychology.)*

Participant 15 also shared a different academic concern that is impacting his preparation. He stated that being from an online class, he shared that learning are only limited, and discussions cannot be understood due to poor internet connection:

For me, online school has a big impact in terms of academic factors. I can say that yes, you will learn, but there are a lot of struggles in online classes, sometimes di ko makasabot sa discussion because of poor internet connection. Yes, for me, that's the negative side (IDI 15-1.3 SS170). *(For me, online school has a big impact in terms of academic factors. It's because online, I can say that yes, you will learn, but there are a lot of struggles in online classes; sometimes, I can't understand the discussion because of poor internet connection. For me, that's the negative side.)*

This theme was supported by a related study by Cuy (2021) that the quality of the curriculum reflects the degree of instruction offered to students. The educational institution significantly impacts students' readiness to take the licensure examination. Furthermore, Dela Cruz and Cruz (2013) added some colleges offer actual review classes or incorporate review sessions within their regular professional courses.

They may accurately state that education plays an essential role in the preparedness of the graduates who will take the board examination since it also serves as a critical foundation for the knowledge they can use in reviewing and their confidence in taking the exam.

5.1.3 On Individual Factors.
This theme described how the participants' struggles and concerns greatly affect their preparation.

5.1.3.1. Psychological
Participant 2 was asked about other factors affecting his preparation to take the board examination, and he replied:

I think pressure....pressure by because I myself don't like actually daghan makahibaw but knowing this time like mygashh igas man kag buhok so I think makuyawan ko like if inig makahibaw sila nga ni take ko and I failed by unfortunate chance I hope not I don't know what will happen I might got distress (IDI 2-1.3.2 SS18). *(I think pressure by, because I myself don't like actually many people will know but knowing this time like my gosh, so I think I will be scared like if they find out that I took it and I failed by unfortunate chance I hope not. I don't know what will happen I might have got distress.)*

Participant 16 also appended:

As what I have said, the pressure--the pressure that I have experienced, uhm... the challenging part of that is unsaon nako pag overcome hmm... pag overcome sa katong pressure, pressure nga akong na feel sa akong family ug self kay feel nako ba nga pabigat ko (IDI 16-2.2 SS186). *(As what I've said, the pressure that I have experienced. The challenging part of that is how I can overcome it, the pressure that I've felt in my family and myself because I do feel that I'm a burden.)*

5.1.3.2. Social
Another individual factor that is affecting the participant's preparation is social. Participant 3 shared:

Okay, uh, sige. Uh, we also have the... aside sa academic factors, so we have this uh... Support. The support system, because if the people around you really want you to become a psychometrician, then it will be a great factor. Na for you to become a successful one kay your parents will say na "Oy, kaya ra na nimo", encourage you na "You can do that. I know-- we trust you. I know you are good at this. I know you have a lot of dreams and goals. If you really want to become a psychometrician, you can achieve it." So that's the best way gyud. If you

are your friends, your environment, your family really support you. So, support system is the keyword here. If you--if you're just focusing aside from academic factors, diba, so that's it. (IDI 3 1.3.2 SS30) *(Aside from academic factors, so we have this support. The support system, because of the people around you really want you to become a psychometrician, will be a great factor. For you to become a successful one because your parents will say, "you can do that", encourage you "You can do that. I know we trust you. I know you are good at this. I know you have a lot of dreams and goals. If you really want to become a psychometrician, you can achieve it." So that's really the best way. If you are your friends, your environment, your family really support you. So, support system is the keyword here. If you're just focusing aside from academic factors.)*

Participants 12 and 15 also stated that:

Ah, yung ahm family, one thing for sure, family your core, core motivator when you take in all high or take risks in life, so one of the factors might be my my parents pushing ahm pushing---pushing for you know for that title because its not only giving them prestige meron silang mga tawag gani naa silay nay unod sa mga chika chika nila uy akong anak kay kana ing-ana it's going to give them credibility (laughs) ayun and ahm also I really wanted to make them proud ayun so motivational ko talaga yung parents ko when it comes to my preparation to board exam (IDI 12-1.3.2 SS136). *(The family, one thing for sure: family, your core motivation, or when you take in all high or take risks in life, so one of the factors might be my my parents pushing for you know for that title because it's not only giving them prestige, you are the main topic. It's going to give them credibility, and also, I really wanted to make them proud, so my parents are really motivational when it comes to my preparation for the board exam.)*

The people around me motivate me to strive for the examination, and having this kind of support system really helps a lot. And... It boost my confidence, and it helps me to believe in myself (IDI 15-1.3.2 SS172). *(The people that surround me motivate me also to strive for the examination, and having this kind of support system really helps a lot. It boosts my confidence, and it helps me to believe in myself.)*

5.1.3.3. Economic
Participant 12 also added the different personal concerns affecting the graduates' preparation, and this is about economic status. He stated that:

Ahm, the current economic status right now ahm taking board exam ahm might not be the good thing but still taking it now as early as now might be really a good thing for you is actually you are divided unang una yung pag ta---take ng board it's going to put you somewhere higher but the cost of that is going put you low for now what I mean is that you're not going to focus on your career because your studying diba you can't be a master at the same time you can't master two subjects at the same time and you can't be you know you can't divide your brain unfortunately despite the fact that meron tayong nothing left here we can only focus in one thing and ahm yung economic status for example yung m ga bilihin natin is going up and it's going to make you consider ahm if you're going to take you are really prepared for taking the board exam so ayun that's one thing ahm socio economic status (IDI 12-1.3.2 SS136). *(The current economic status right now, taking board exam might not be the good thing, but still taking it now as early as now might be really a good thing for you is actually, you are divided first of all when taking the board it's going to put you somewhere higher but the cost of that is going to put you low for now what I mean is that you're not going to focus on your career because in your studying you can't be a master at the same time you can't master two subjects at the same time and you can't be you can't divide your brain unfortunately despite the fact that we have nothing left here we can only focus in one thing and the economic status for example what we buy is going up and it's going to make you consider if you're going to take, you are really prepared for taking the board exam so that's one thing for socio economic status).*

Participants 9 and 13 also answered:

So, as of now, I don't have enough money to pay for the review center; as I've said, I have to work hard for it, so what I did after few months I graduated I seek reviewers online. I pay for maybe a hundred pesos, or I think it was one hundred fifty something, and compared to those my own review, maybe you can I'm not that focused like my batch mate a---are which are enrolled in review centers, but I am currently working while doing my own review although I can say that I am as motivated as them to pass the exam for this ah I mean for the next year... that is all (IDI 9-1.2 SS98). *(As of now, I don't have enough money to pay for the review center; as I've said, I have to work hard for it, so what I did after a few months I graduate I seek reviewers online. I pay for maybe a hundred*

pesos, or I think it was one hundred fifty-something, and compared to those my own review, maybe you can. I'm not that focused like my batch mates are, who are enrolled in review centers, but I am currently working while doing my own review; although I can say that I am as motivated as them to pass the exam for this, I mean for the next year, that is all.)

Ahm kuan ahm... financial gyud mu like take man gyud kay board exam is naa pud kay necessary nga angay bayran like for example sa center ahm RGO is 15k so if wala kay 15k wala...dako gyud na siya ang RGO kay mao mana ang pinaka known sa Cebu 15k gyud na siya gyud as in walay tsar like wala kay money to enroll so hindrance gyud siya nga basi dili lang sa mu take niya other year na sad hangtod dili naka ganahan kana. So, financial aspect (IDI 13-1.3.2 SS148). *(Financial, when you take a board exam, it is a necessity that you have things to pay for like, for example, the center, RGO is fifteen thousand, so if you don't have enough money, nothing. RGO is very well known in Cebu, no joke, so if you don't have money to enroll, it is a hindrance because maybe you will not just take it another year and so on until you don't want to take anymore. So, financial aspect.)*

Kryukova et al. (2020) supported this theme and stated further research could be completed by obtaining a larger group of graduates as we all, as the new tertiary curriculum graduates of the college, whether they are psychologically prepared to take the board examination amidst the circumstances and struggles they are facing right now. Psychological Preparedness has a compound dynamic structure and expresses the cognitive, emotional-volitional, and motivational aspects of the human psyche in connection to future activities and changing circumstances.

The theme illustrates the responses on how personal struggles affect the psychological preparedness of the graduates.

5.1.4 On Environmental Factors.
This theme described the graduates' experiences as one of the determinants that affected their preparation for the upcoming psychometrician board examination.

In a one-on-one interview with Participant 10, her response to the question about the other factors influencing the preparation for the examination:

Ahm, it really affects because maka wala na lang ug gana kay saba kaayo ang mga silingan need jud siya place nga mingaw in order para maka focus (IDI 10-2.3 SS117). *(It really affects me because I feel like I not be motivated because the neighbors are so noisy, I need a quiet place in order to focus.)*

Furthermore, Participants 6 and 9 elaborated more on the environmental factors:

Ahmm other factors is I think sa kuan environment lang for me kay sa like sa amo lang ha kay kuan man miss like dili kay siya like very calm or silence or quiet ba so mao gyud na siy naka affect sa (IDI 6- 1.3.2 SS66). *(Another factor is, I think, in the environment for me, because in my place, Miss, it's not very calm or silent or quiet, that's why it's really affected.)*

Ahm I am working in the office right now it's very stressful for me ahm not to mention it was it's very mentally draining every single day after I got home because I---as I was struggle in daily basis working in the office naa pa gihapon koy huna-hunaon nga taga balik kay mag review kog notes sa akong cellphone kundili sa akong room naa man koy kuan dira nga reviewer basa-basahon nako so stressful siya at the same time pressure **(**IDI 9-1.3.2 SS102). *(I am working in the office right now. It's very stressful for me, not to mention it's very mentally draining every single day after I get home because I was struggling on a daily basis working in the office. I still think before I go home, I still review my notes. I have a reviewer here, so it's so stressful and at the same time pressure.)*

Deci and Ryan (1985) supported this theme, which indicates that the goal of engaging in that task is to achieve anything other than the activity itself. The motivation is said to be extrinsic. They go through to say that human growth can be regarded as a progression toward more autonomy and that this progression is dependent, in part, on the continuous learning of a variety of competencies. To put it another way, a student must be capable of controlling his environment. He must have an internal driving force to propel him toward a desired goal regardless of external obstacles.

The theme implies that external factors, such as the noise in the surroundings, significantly impact the participants' focus.

5.2 Challenges Experienced by the Participants for the Preparation
This overall theme has four (4) emergent themes that describe the participants' experiences in facing the different challenges on the level of difficulty of the board subjects, the impact on the overall health, having high expectations, and sustaining commitment. These four (4) emergent themes characterized the participants' experiences with this study's sub-problem number 2.

5.2.1 On Lack of Academic Preparation.
This theme describes how a lack of academic preparation affects the preparation of the participants.

In terms of the question about encountering challenges in the preparation, Participant 4 and Participant 7 answered:

> Kuan ahmm pag focus habang naga basa lalo na sa abnormal psych kay mas dili nimo siya madala ra na mag basa ka dapat mas masabtan nimo siya tapos mas nice siya if e discuss gyud (IDI 1- 2.2 SS8). *(Focusing while reading especially on abnormal psychology because you cannot just get that by reading only you should understand and much better if it is discussed well in a nicer way.)*

> So, I have three no na ak---first online is the pandemic. So si pandemic daghan kaayo syang ge— ge stop nga opportunities… daghan kay syang doors nga ge close. So, number one si pandemic. Ika-duha si pressure diba. Then lastly, is the time no. Karon man gud feel nato, always ta mahutdan ug time, mao na kita always tang ga dali kay we always want to… uhm… pursue our dreams or our life careers like kanang naa gyud tay ah-- by the age of 23 or 24 no, dapat nakab-ot na ni nako nga license but because of these uhm… factors like pandemic, mao nang ma stop gyud sya no, there are many opportunities nga ma stop. So mao ni sya ang tulo ka factors nga I can think nga challenging kaayo siya sa akoang part (IDI 7-2.2 SS80). *(I have three, first online is the pandemic. So, the pandemic cuts offs and closes a lot of doors of oppurtunities. So, number one is the pandemic. Second is pressure right. Then lastly, is the time. Nowadays, it feels like time runs so fast, so we all feel like always in a hurry to pursue our dreams or our life careers so were like by the age of 23 or 24, I must have that license but because of these factors like pandemic, that's why it forbids us, there are many opportunities that didn't made possible. So those are the three factors that I can think that is really challenging on my part.)*

Participant 12 also stated that:

> Ahm, okay, a lot first of all (laughs), yung module namin is online; that's one of the challenges I met when it comes to my preparation; second, limited yung knowledge namin limited lang yung ma consume namin for everyday everyday na discussion; not to mention ah no next meet actually not every day why because schedule lang talaga, for example, Friday at Saturday lang talaga is not going to consume one week ayun not really worth it or it's not really going to give you ideas or knowledge regarding sa mga subjects core mo when it comes to examination (IDI 12-2.1 SS137). *(A lot. First of all, our module is online, that's one of the challenges I met when it comes to my preparation; second limited, our knowledge is limited what we can consume for everyday discussion, not to mention no next meet actually not every day why because it's really just a schedule for example only Friday and Saturday is really not going to consume one week that's not really worth it or it's not really going to give you ideas or knowledge regarding your core subjects when it comes to examination).*

The theme is also supported in the study by Gurung (2005). Regardless of how much time has been spent in class to ensure students understand information, students are frequently ignorant of what they do not know or understand until closer to the exam, typically a day before it occurs. When students examine themselves, they can determine what they know, do not, and need to know (Bucaoto, Cruz, Morales, Roxas & Tapican, 2018).

The theme illustrates the responses on how personal struggles affect the psychological preparedness of the graduates.

5.2.2 On the Impact on Overall Health.
This theme explains how physical, emotional, and mental health are impacted and the participants' struggles that must be addressed.

In terms of the question about what significantly affects well-being, Participant 3 shared:

> So, sa college pa lang daan, kapoy na diba? We all know that if you really want to become a great student, dili lang great, maybe uh, if you really want to pass lang, dili naman gani sayon. It's hard for you diba? Daan pa lang. So, I can say na there are a lot of encounters, but that encounter doesn't mean you need to stop. Make it as an

inspiration for you to achieve your goals. It's not a... challenging, let's say, yeah, challenging, but... That challenge bitaw kay mura syag wake up call nimo na "Oy, kaya ra na" "You can do that". So, aside sa challenging, sige, di ta mo use ug challenging na word kay that" an encounter man diba. So, akong na encounter. Asi—ang kapoy, tired, ang... aside from being tired is there's also a emotional damage. Kay... uh, mental, at the same time diba? Imong health. Physical, mental, emotional. So that's the encounter, the challenging nga imong ma encounter, if you really want to become a psychometrician. Naa jud na silang tulo, di jud na mawala. So that's it (IDI 3-2.2 SS32). *(Just before college, you're already tired, we all know that we you really want to become a great student, not just great, maybe if you really want to just pass, it's not even easy. It's hard for you, right? It's just old. So, I can say that there are a lot of encounters, but that encounter doesn't mean you need to stop. Make it an inspiration for you to achieve your goals. It's not challenging, let's say, challenging, that challenge is like a wake-up call to you saying "you can do it" "You can do that". So, aside from challenging, don't use a challenging word because that's the encounter, So, my encounter Aside from being tired is there's also an emotional damage. Because mentally, at the same time, right? Your health. Physical, mental, emotional. So that's the encounter, the challenge that you will encounter, if you really want to become a psychometrician. The three of them are already there, they will not disappear.)*

Participant 12 appended:

Ahm I am working in the office right now it's very stressful for me ahm not to mention it was it's very mentally draining every single day after I got home because I---as I was struggle in daily basis working in the office naa pa gihapon koy huna-hunaon nga taga balik kay mag review kog notes sa akong cellphone kundili sa akong room naa man koy kuan dira nga reviewer basa-basahon nako so stressful siya at the same time pressure **(**IDI 9-1.3.2 SS102). *(I am working in the office right now. It's very stressful for me, not to mention it's very mentally draining every single day after I get home because I was struggling on a daily basis working in the office; I still think that before I going home, I still review my notes. I have a reviewer here, so it's so stressful and at the same time pressure.)*

Rosales et al. (2014) supported this theme. They stated that students who participate in board programs must prepare themselves academically and psychologically to take the board, which includes committing to productive study habits and physical and psychological preparation. The use of contemporary instructional technology to establish conditions in which the student becomes the topic of educational activity and can more fully realize his potential is one answer to the problem of psychological preparation formation.

As described by the participants' responses, this emergent theme implies that health can also be affected while trying to reach their purpose of taking the board examination.

5.2.3 On High Expectations.
This theme explains the pressure to meet others' presumptions.

Regarding the question of the experiences the participants had while preparing for the professional board examination, Participants 2 and 3 answered:

Ahmm, what kind of experiences.... I think ahmm ang pag.... ang pag unsa pag kuan ani uy it's not a transpo like kanang daghan dagko silag high hopes nako ba what term nga... oh expectations and mao ra.... and also my kanang study styles or habits nako in terms prepared sa board exam (IDI 2-2.1 SS19). *(What kind of experiences, what to do when I take this, like that they have a lot of high hopes, expectations and expectations,d also my study styles or habits in terms of preparing for the board exam.)*

Okay. Ah. This is somehow sad because... examination is really hard, diba. High expectations from your parents. Aside from their support, dili gyud na mawala na taas kay silag expectation, and once you failed. Then you're a failure to them, diba. So, down nata ana. So... kana, part na sya sa atong kanang if you really want to become a professional, you should also kuan jud kanang encourage yourself na... kani challenges ra ni, it will pass through. Ah, makaya ra na nako, ing-ana but mao lage, sa what I have said, naa jud nay times na atong parents kay, samot na ug di ta mag-tuon, so they will just say "Oy, ge take—ge kuan ra diay na nimo, wala diay ka nag-tinarong. Imo ra diay na ge—ge kantyaw-kantyawan imong pag eskwela or imohang pag review. So, that's it (IDI 3-2.1 SS31). *(This is somehow sad because examination is hard. High expectations from your parents. Aside from their support, it will never disappear because they have high expectations, and once you fail. Then you're a failure to them. So, that's down. I am part of that; if you really want to become a professional, you should also encourage*

yourself now; this is just challenges; it will pass through. I can handle it; that's the way it is. From what I have said, there are times when our parents are too bad, and we don't study, so they will just say, "you take for granted It's just you; you're not right. It's your responsibility to go to school or review).

This theme is supported by the self-determination theory of Deci and Ryan (1985) on the third component of being self-determined. It states that the need for relatedness represents the want to feel understood and valued by others and linked. In contrast, the need for competency refers to being competent and efficient within a setting or environment (Sheldon & Niemiec, 2006). Some participants felt that there was too much pressure in reviewing and preparing to take the examination since many people are looking out and depending on them to pass and attain a license.

This emergent theme explains the participants' responses on how often they get pressured by their parents' high expectations or the expectations they have set for themselves. Expectations can contribute to goal-directed behavior, but setting bars too high can lead to disappointments when the outcomes do not turn out the way one wants them to.

5.2.4 On Poor Study Habits.
This theme describes the participants' poor study habits while preparing for the upcoming board examination.

During the one-on-one interview with Participant 4, her answer when asked about the difficulties encountered in the preparation for the examination was:

> My study habits (laughs) yeah, my study habits. I really don't know how to study ahmm, I know how to study, but I don't know where to begin, so more like kanang, I have this tendency to kanang study one week like naa gyud koy motivation to study one week and then after that wala na mag kanang I could study for one week and then after that break for like two months.. yeah ing ana and then after mao gyud na like kanang hahaha maayo ra gyud ko sa sugod kana and also another factor is that the subjects kay like bias man gyud kaayo ko I know I should not be pero kanang if I don't like the subjects like wala gyud koy motivation to study specially psych assessment ahhhh I hate psych assessments so yeah mao ra na siya (IDI 4-2.2 SS44). *(My study habits, I know how to study, but I don't know where to begin, so, more like that, I have this tendency to study one week like that; I really have the motivation to study one week, and then after that, I can study for one week. And then after that, break for like two months. And also another factor is that the subjects; I'm really biased. I know I shouldn't be, but if I don't like the subjects. I am not motivated to study, especially psych assessment I hate psych assessments.)*

Participant 8 added:

> Ahm maybe time management, because of my work sometimes e dungan pa nakoakong work ug akong study kay ig break time ako gae e mag tuon gyud gihaponko ig break time sa ig ka human sad sa akonwork pero dili man gihapon siya enough kay una... kay sa naa koy goal akong goal kay magtuon ko everyday pero ma burn out ko tungod kay nag work ko mas kuwangakong oras sa pag study (IDI 8-2.2 SS92). *(Maybe time management, because of my work sometimes I still have my work and my studies at the same time because during break time I will still study during break time, even after my work but it is still not enough because first... then I have a goal, my goal is because I study every day but I feel burn out because I work and I have less time to study.)*

Rosales et al. (2014) also supported this theme. They stated that students who participate in board programs must prepare themselves academically and psychologically to take the board, which includes committing to productive study habits and physical and psychological preparation. The use of contemporary instructional technology to establish conditions in which the student becomes the topic of educational activity and can more fully realize his potential is one answer to the problem of psychological preparation formation.

This theme describes the response to participants' poor study habits, affecting their preparation for the upcoming examination.

5.2.5 On Self-confidence.
This theme describes the problem of the participants' difficulty in staying motivated, having inspiration, and having low self-confidence in preparation for the board examination.

Participant 11 shared an experience and stated:

Uhm, the challenging parts that I encounter in preparing to take the board exam is actually uhm... inspiration. Being, you know, being motivated to take the exam and having that self-confidence that I can pass and it is really uhm, one of the challenging parts for me is having that uhm self-confidence and trusting myself that I can do it. However, uhm, one of the reasons as well would be... uhm, the books and the things that—the physical things like books and materials na imong—na pwede nakong gamiton sa pag take sa board exam because I'm still looking forward it and also the right uhm review center that might help in order for me to of course do better and para makakuha pud tag mas mayo nga kuan... grado (IDI 11-2.2 SS126). *(The challenging parts that I encounter in preparing to take the board exam is actually inspiratioinspirationo take the exam and having that self-confidence that I can pass, and it is really one of the challenging parts for me is having that self-confidence and trusting myself that I can do it. However, one of the reasons as well would be the books and the physical things like books and materials that I can use in taking the board exam because I'm still looking forward it and the review center that might help for me to of course do better and to get good grades.)*

Participant 7 also said:

Well, there are two factors, there are 2 things that naka affect sya nako, kaning mga... diba ang uban nga mga tawo kay if they will be facing a difficult challenges, maka ingon sila nga.. I rather give up or kapoy naman, wa nakoy gana but, as for me no... I'm--these factors, these negative factors no nga made me stronger and more determined (IDI 7- 2.3 SS81). *(Well, there are two factors, there are 2 things that affects me, like for others if they will be facing a difficult challenge, they might think, I'd rather give up, or I feel tired, or I don't have the energy to keep going, as for me, these negative factors made me stronger and more determined.)*

This theme is supported by Deci and Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory's second component of being self-determined: competence. It stated that competence is frequently defined as some degree of mastery and the capacity of the individual to engage with the environment to exist and continue to develop. Deci (1980) stated that "competence development" was the process by which humans "acquire skills for effective interaction." This translates into confidence as well (Lloyd & Little, 2010).

This theme outlines the participant's responses to the need for self-confidence, which is crucial for having faith in oneself when taking any critical examination, such as a board examination.

5.3 Participants' Cope with the Challenges Met

This central theme described the study's sub-problem number of the ways or strategies the participants used to cope with the challenges encountered during the preparation for the board examination. The participants provided different personal ways to cope.

From the participants' responses, two (2) emergent themes were generated based on the participants' experiences with this study's sub-problem number 3.

5.3.1 By Ways of Addressing Challenges.

This theme describes how the strategies and utilizing different ways to cope helps the participants to deal with the circumstances.

5.3.1.1 Time Management

Participants 2 and 5 revealed some strategies that need to be done while reviewing for the upcoming examination:

I think my strategies are ahmm; I need not to procrastinate, make a To-do list and organize things and do not rush everything and take time to read that's it (IDI 2-3.1 SS22). *(My strategies are I need not to procrastinate, make a To-do list and, organize things and do not rush everything and take time to read; that's it.)*

Okay, so as a millennial and, we are very bombarded with a lot of things here in our uhm society, so uhm, there's a lot of uhm, mga babag. Especially with ahm, our kanang unsa—mga buhaton sa kinabuhi like laag or trabaho or kanang ing-ana mga butang dapat nimo buhaton. So kana na pa lang daan, you cannot uhm multi-task in one time, right? Especially if lahi-lahi nga location. Siguro kanang if—kaning ana gyud nga case if I really have to kana ganing balance everything. Siguro, ing-ana nalang jud. [Interviewer speaking in backround] Oh, ing-ana (IDI 5- 3.1 SS58). *(As a millennial and, we are very bombarded with a lot of things here in our society, so there's a lot of obstacles. Especially with the things that come your way that life throws like travels and works or other things which you need to do. So, with those things, you cannot multi-task at one time, especially if it's anywhere, but if that's the case, I really must balance everything. Maybe that's how I would.)*

Participant 9 also added:

> Strategies is I prefer a schedule as I said nga earlier I prefer a schedule in order to ahm second is since hilom man diri sa amoa maybe find a calm environment and third prioritized important topics kay kanang important topics since they are four subjects in the kuan exam board exam akong gi prioritized ang mas pinaka importante until sa last ing-ana nako and last is ma'am kay get sufficient rest gyud kay naka realized gyud ko ana nga basta mag work ka while studying if sige lang kag work sige sad kag study di gyud dapat nimo e balance nimo sa ako lang own experience dapat sakto imong pahuway so that para dili ka makalimot sa imong gituon mao gyud na siya, sa akoa (IDI 9-3.1 SS106). *(Strategies I prefer a schedule as I said earlier, I prefer a schedule in order to second is since it's quiet here in our home, maybe find a calm environment and third, prioritize important topics because those are important topics since they are four subjects in the exam board exam I prioritized the most important until the last one and last is ma'am because I really get enough rest because I really realized that as long as you work while studying if you just keep working and studying You really have to balance yourself in my own experience, you should rest properly so that you don't forget what you are studying, that's exactly what he is, in my opinion.)*

5.3.1.2 Diversion

Aside from having time management, some participants also have other ways to cope. Participant 2 said:

> Based on my personality, I am an extrovert, so I guess ahm going out would be one of my coping mechanisms. Going to places where more trees and then beaches also that's my routine every weekend (laughs), and-- listening to music while studying (IDI 2-3.2 SS23). *(Based on my personality, I am an extrovert, so I guess going out would be one of my coping mechanisms, going to places with more trees and then beaches. also, that's my routine every weekend and listening to music while studying.)*

Participant 4 and 8 also shared their ways of dealing with the challenges brought on by the preparation for the examination:

> Coping mechanism ay cellphone ay social media (laughs) feel nako na judge na gyud ko ani yeah I swear to God yeah distractions I swear like instead of studying kay like I go to social media for seek kanang seek distractions ing ana sometime yeah entertainment yeah sometimes I read pero I read everything except kanang psych-- psychology books I don't have any coping mechanisms nga murag effective sa ing ana so like ako ra permi e kuan sa akong self nga kanang ahh okay ra na dugay pa na mura kog nag self how do you say that.. Basta kana murag akong gi ohh, gi convince nako akong self nga its okay dugay pa man hmm same niya (IDI 4-3.2 SS47). *(Coping mechanism is scrolling social media. I feel like I'm really the judge of this, I swear to God. Yes, distractions, instead of studying because I like to go to social media that seek distractions and sometimes entertainment. Sometimes, I read, but I read everything except those psychology books. I don't have any coping mechanisms that seem to be effective for that, so I'm always like, I'm always telling myself that it's okay. As long as that's what I convinced myself that it's okay for a long time).*

> Hmm... kung maka feel ko nga ma pressure nako sa akong work niya mag study pa gyud ko after akong buhaton kay mu urong gyud ko ug (laughs) di gyud nako epugos e chill nako akong mind anyways akong goal nga makapasar gyud ko nga wala pa anyways wala pay schedule pud when angdate sa examination next year e divert nakoa koang stress into music para chill lang, di kaayo ko ma stress (IDI 8-3.2 SS95). *(I feel that I will be pressured by my work, I will definitely study after I do it because I will really retreat, and I will not force myself. When the exam date is next year, I will divert my stress into music just to chill, I won't be too stressed).*

5.3.1.3 Meditation

Aside from going activities for leisure, Participant 3 take a break to relax and shared:

> Find place where I can be focus in order to be well prepared in taking the board examination (IDI 10-3.1 SS118). *(Find a place where I can be focused in order to be well on taking the board examination.)*

Participant 3 also appended:

> Are you guys familiar with that? Yuh, basta free dive, I also do that, and I will sometimes kay mag kuan ko, stroll ko. Like—like I'm driving motorcycle man so hilig kay ko mo adtog other places and kita lang kog dagat, chill na. Ako ra usa, okay ra kay na sya. Murag way of, at the same time, it's a kanang meditation bitaw sa imong self.

So yes, that's it (IDI 3-3.2 SS35). (*Are you guys familiar with that? If it's a free dive, I also do that, and I will sometimes because I go to, I stroll. I'm driving a motorcycle too, so I like to go to other places, and I can only see the sea chill. I'm the only one; it's okay because it's gone. It's like a way of, at the same time, it's a meditation on yourself*).

This theme is supported by the study of Lazarus and Folkman (1984), that the term "coping" refers to the cognitive and behavioral techniques people employ to deal with circumstances they believe may be beyond the scope of their personal resources. Ramesar et al. (2009) also supported this theme that the two primary purposes of coping are to control one's feelings (emotion-focused coping) and to steer behavior toward solving problems (problem-focused coping).

This emergent theme, as described by the participants' responses, implies that the participants find ways to address and take a breather away from the challenges they are facing while preparing for the examination.

5.4 By Seeking Social Support.
The theme explains how the support network positively impacted to overcome the challenges that the participants met.

In an interview statement of Participant 9, he stated the importance of having emotional support from his partner:

First of all akong gi lower akong expectations gyud di gyud ko mag expect nga maka pasar gyud ang akoa rang point is that I should lower my expectations but I am hoping nga maka pasar gihapon ko so I ask others to assist me and ask for help kung unsa ni siya as a for example naa koy ahm topic nga ginalisodan mo ask ko sa akong batch mates naa kay nahimbaw-an ani nga topic unsa deay ni siya mu ask ko nila mu chat ko ana nila regularly if naa koy free time and importante gyud ang maintaining emotional support like akong emotional support right now sa akong uyab karon kay siyay mo motivate nako to do this to do that greatest greatest greatest ana mao gyud siya and coping mechanisms nako kay taga pay day nako kaming duha mag study mi starbucks so oh mag kuan-kuan mi bawsanay ra ni siya so para pampawaha sa stress at the same time nay quality time yeah (IDI 9-3.2 SS107). (*First of all, I lowered my expectations. I really don't expect to pass. My point is that I should lower my expectations, but I am hoping that I can still pass, so I ask others to assist me and ask for help if what it is like for example, I have a topic that I'm having a hard time asking my batch mates who are interested in this topic what it's like I will ask them I will chat with them regularly if I have free time and it is really important maintaining emotional support is like my emotional support right now with my girlfriend because she motivates me to do this to do that greatest that's really her and my coping mechanisms after my payday we both study at Starbucks so it's like give and take so to relieve the stress and at the same time it's quality time.*)

Participant 14 and Participant 16 also replied when asked about their ways of coping in facing the challenges made by the preparation for the examination:

Sige, kanang, I eliminate the negative thoughts inside my mind, and I also seek for social support, like my family and friends kay kuan, kanang, need jud kaayo sya. I also do what makes me feel relaxed and focused. Unwind ba, kana sila (IDI 14-3.2 SS165). (*Alright, I eliminate the negative thoughts inside my mind, and I also seek social support, like my family and friends. I really need it. I also do what makes me feel relaxed and focused. Unwind.*)

Uhm... my coping mechanisms are... daghan man siya, play with my dog kuan sad, kanang, going out with friends, chill chill sa gamay. Nya kuan sad, every Sunday, family day man jud na so tends to go out and have dinner out (IDI 16-3.2 SS189). (*My coping mechanisms are playing with my dog and chilling with friends. Then, since it is a family day every Sunday, we tend to go out and have dinner.*)

This theme is supported by a related study by Hood (2020) that shows that having a support system means engaging with a network of individuals who can offer psychological or financial support. The entire health will improve when one has these support systems, which have also been proven to lessen stress and anxiety. When someone has a support system, there are individuals to turn to when needed most. It implies that some people can rely on whenever in a challenging circumstance. Social support is needed in taking a licensure examination since it helps lessen the difficulty. When undertaking a trip, such as the preparation phase of an exam, one needs to be surrounded by the right people who can support and encourage them. Another study by Protheroe (2007) supported this theme and added that family is crucial in helping people maintain their composure and achieve their objectives. Most of the time, people rely on their families for the help they require. Students with supportive and caring interactions with their peers report better academic attitudes, values, and school satisfaction.

According to the participants, the theme describes that having a solid network of people who will support the participants is significant to coping skills and helps to reduce distress and having the will to stay motivated.

As Creswell (2007) explained, the qualitative research process entails the emergence of new questions and techniques, data collection in the participants' environment, data analysis inductively developed from specifics to broad themes, and the researcher's interpretations of the data. According to Crossman (2021), qualitative research is a sort of social science research that collects and analyzes non-numerical data to derive meaning from it to understand better social life and the study of specific groups or locations. It intends to show the meaning that apprises the actions or outcomes quantitative research generally measures. As a result, qualitative researchers investigate the meanings, interpretations, symbols, and social processes and relationships.

The relevant qualitative data gathered from the participants' responses were extracted and analyzed through narrative analysis by Bamberg (2012).

The gathered information is then coded, segmented, clustered, categorized, and summarized so that the main concepts of the data sets are apprehended. The process went through extracting 190 significant statements and then drawing up 190 formulated meanings from the transcribed responses of the participants. The formulated meanings are then grouped into 26 cluster themes and subdivided into 17 sub-themes. Ten main or emergent themes are formed when the sub-themes are classified and organized. Themes were thoroughly developed to directly expound the participants' perspectives towards the Perceived Psychological Preparedness of the New Tertiary Curriculum Psychology Graduates taking the Psychometrician Professional Board Examination.

This case study explored the experiences of the new tertiary curriculum graduates' preparedness in taking the psychometrician board examination, focusing on factors and challenges they encountered and how it influenced them is anchored on the Attribution Theory by Bernard Weiner, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by Richard Ryan and Edward Deci, and Theory of Change by Carol Weiss.

The primary theory applied in this research is the Attribution Theory of Weiner (1986). This theory claims that its primary concern is with achievements, the abilities and capabilities of the students, and the way they perceive things that influence their actions and behaviors that affect their psychological preparedness in taking the professional board examination. The theory also explains that when students succeed, they are likely to credit their accomplishments to how they made decisions and to their intelligence. However, when they fall through, they attribute their failure to the environmental factors that surround them, which they do not have influence over. Preparation for taking an examination involves the goal of reaching an accomplishment. To be successful in the preparatory stage, the graduates need to exert an effort in reviewing for the examination. Different factors, such as individual and environmental factors, may influence while preparing. However, one gets to be successful after taking the examination. In that case, they will attribute it to factors such as effort since it is one the most critical factors driving achievement attributions. Thus, this theory is connected to the gathered data because factors affect the graduates' preparation for the board examination. They are preparing and currently exerting hard work and efforts to reach the goal of passing the upcoming examination. However, some circumstances are causing them to have inconveniences and setbacks in getting ready for themselves. People have different reasons why we do such behavior in certain situations, and the same thing to the graduates who are doing their part in preparation to pass the licensure examination.

This study was also anchored by the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) of Deci and Ryan (1985). The theory explains that motivation is based on various reasons that may lead to acting, for instance, internal and external reasons. This theory claims three basic and universal psychological requirements encourage humans to grow and change. According to this theory, people can become self-determined when their demands for competence, connection, and autonomy are met. The theory looks at the graduates' drive to take the examination, and there are several reasons why the graduates have this drive. One of these is the motivation of self-achievement in reaching their dreams and goals in life. The family also serves as an inspiration to keep going and aspire to make them proud. There is also the drive to gain more opportunities in acquiring higher positions when finding a job.

The graduates in this study played a significant role in stimulating their challenges and ways of addressing them while also preparing for the upcoming board examination. Theorists made interesting suggestions regarding methodologies to use as research on challenges and coping to feel better. Graduates dealing with challenges may result in risk and danger factors that can cause serious problems. However, despite that aspect, they are able to find ways to cope with the situations they are facing. With a particular coping mechanism, graduates have been able to continue to go through reviews for the upcoming psychometrician board examination. Graduates were flexible even though they were the product of online classes. Still, they want to ensure that the learning in face-to-face review will continue. They know that their support system is an achievement and their motivation to do better. Therefore, the researchers agree with the theory and believe that it supports the study's results since it shows that the graduates have different motivations to keep going despite the challenges faced in preparing for the examination. They have also achieved the components of being self-determined: autonomy, in which they have the sense of choice of doing things such as enrolling in review centers and doing a self-review. There is also their competence to reach their objective after reviewing, which

is attaining to be a licensed psychometrician, and lastly, relatedness in which having connections with the people surrounding them and getting to interact and having ties with others.

Furthermore, it is crucial to instill a sense of pride in graduates by assisting them with specific objectives based on their challenges met and coping strategies regularly. However, cultivating their challenges and coping with any experiences or environment is a struggle for graduates because they have different ways of identifying and addressing their challenges since each graduate is distinct. Other theories and related studies were also cited to support the findings of this study.

The themes from the participants' responses presented the solutions to the study's sub-problems. Three (3) main themes represented the responses, and the first theme has five (5), the second has four (4), and lastly, the third has (3) emergent or major themes.

6. Conclusion

This study aimed to determine the Perceived Psychological Preparedness of the New Tertiary Curriculum Psychology Graduates in taking the Psychometrician Professional Board Examination in Cebu City, S.Y. 2022 – 2023. It further answers the factors influencing psychology graduates' preparedness for the professional board examination. Also, it answers the challenges experienced by psychology graduates that affect their preparedness for the professional board examination. Lastly, psychology graduates' coping mechanisms towards the challenges met.

The participants' responses established ten (10) emergent themes, categorized into three (3) main points that offered answers to the sub-problems. The primary participants' significant statements were used to extract the emergent themes. For the descriptions of the participants' involvements in preparing for the exam, *Factors that Influenced the Participants' Preparedness* have four (4) emergent themes*: Motivation On Academic Factors, Individual Factors, and Environmental Factors*. The challenges faced by the New Tertiary Curriculum Graduates participants about preparedness, the overarching theme is *Challenges Experienced by the Participants for the Preparation* has five (5) emergent themes that were classified as: *On Lack of Academic Preparation; On the Impact on Overall Health; On High Expectations; On Poor Study Habits; On Self-Confidence.* The ways or strategies the participants used to cope with the difficulties faced in the examination preparation, the overarching theme is *Participants' Cope with the Challenges Met* has two (2) emergent themes identified: *By Ways of Addressing Challenges; By Seeking Social Support.*

Setting Standards and Approaches to Enhance Effective Teaching Strategies Based on Experiences of the New Tertiary Curriculum Graduates, some teachers may have used different approaches to ensure that their students received well-delivered lectures. However, some still need help adapting to new teaching strategies. Some even need more competency in teaching, resulting in the students' difficulty understanding the lessons being taught. Teachers should be equipped with the different approaches needed when teaching. Teachers' effectiveness is significant, especially for pre-board course students, since it determines their confidence in taking the board examination. Also, *Improvement of Facilities, Equipment, and Instructional Materials, s*chool institutions should find ways to make needed improvements for the students' comfort while learning. Several factors influence the student's learning capability and create a barrier to the student's learning process. The institution must be aware of the requirements to improve giving quality education to the students under their administration. Lastly, *having self-discipline and Interdependence* results from being prepared. This implies that being prepared for examinations will lead to better results. Being self-sufficient is substantial, but having networks of people around that support and help you is even greater. Never hesitate to look for people who would support and assist.

The study was limited to fresh psychology graduates, excluding the non-K-12 graduates. Among the other limitations were the areas where the study delves into the mental health effects but excludes other relevant aspects. Also, it should have included the school's efforts to make the graduates prepare for the board examination.

Consequently, the following topic is recommended for further study: Perceived Psychological Preparedness of the Second Batch K-12 Curriculum Graduates in taking the Professional Board Examination; Psychological Preparedness and the Impact on Overall Health of taking the Professional Board Examination; and Quantitative Study of the Psychological Preparedness of the Fresh Graduates in taking the Professional Board Examination.

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