

# From Setback to Growth: A Phenomenological Study of Psychometrician Exam Retakers

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**ABSTRACT.** Licensure examinations serve as a critical gateway to professional practice, often creating significant stress and challenging experiences for those who fail and must retake them. This study explored how the experience of failing and retaking the psychometrician licensure examination impacted the self-concept of seven examinees from Region 1, Philippines. Using interpretative phenomenological analysis of online interviews, the research revealed that retaking the exam had profound and varied effects on their self-perception, ranging from restoring confidence to completely transforming their sense of self. This research highlights the often-overlooked experiences of licensure exam retakers and contributes to understanding the psychological impact of setbacks and perseverance on the path to success. By focusing on the lived experiences of these individuals, the study offers valuable insights into the challenges and triumphs faced by those striving to achieve professional licensure.

## 1.0. Introduction

In a world where professional reliability is often measured by credentials, obtaining a work license can be the ultimate game changer as it serves as a badge of honor that can cement a person's standing within the industry. However, the journey to acquiring one is filled with many challenges that holistically shape how people view themselves afterward. In addition, this certification attests that an individual has acquired the knowledge and expertise to perform specialized tasks related to one's field of work (Gachango, 2021).

To attain this certification, one must go through the arduous trial of licensure examination, a mandatory process where a governmental agency grants time-limited permission to an individual to engage in each occupation after verifying that he or she has met predetermined and standardized criteria (Rops, 2007). Today, licenses have become a requirement for work and are even used as a measure of quality work assurance.

The Board Licensure Examination for Psychologists and Psychometricians (BLEPP) is the official licensure test for psychology graduates in the Philippines. The career was formally recognized and licensed in 2014, making it one of the youngest professions and fields to be standardized in the

country. This hallmark equates psychologists and psychometricians with professionals in other fields, like engineering and medical doctors (Advantages of Licensure | National Society of Professional Engineers, n.d.). Under these premises, psychology holds massive potential that has yet to be discovered, especially in producing its professionals.

Like other licensed professional fields, schools invest great resources to improve the passing rate, especially for college programs with board examinations. With much emphasis on being included in the roster of successful examinees, only some studies have assessed the issues surrounding failed takers, specifically those who have passed after multiple attempts officially labeled as 'retakers,' and how this status translates into their work later. Although this issue of "status" has little impact on a person's performance in the workplace, it has sometimes been used as a parameter in job application in the Philippine setting to the point where being a first-taker is occasionally seen as a significant advantage. Such assumptions can often merit a person positively, impacting performance across different settings such as work, family, social relationships, self-esteem, etc. However, the opposite usually occurs for unsuccessful examinees, with the same goes for retakers.

Every individual must make necessary preparations to ensure they pass the test. Without any encouragement or fear of failure to perform well on

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the examination, a student is unlikely to put sufficient effort into preparation or be adequately motivated when taking the test. However, some people can pass a test regardless of whether they have reviewed it or not.

Among the participants, regular attendance in review sessions offered by review centers is a potential factor that increases the chance of passing the licensure examination (Albina et al., 2021). Likewise, the study of Panggay et al. (2023) said that respondents passed the BLEP regardless of their review mode and examinee type and that demographic variables are not directly linked with the contents and coverage of the BLEP. Only general academic performance is the single best predictor.

All of these led to research about performance in licensure examinations. In hopes of digging deeper, studies have been done to explain the factors and techniques used to prepare for exams, with the participants being those who passed. This means that the concept of test retakers needs to be studied more and considered due to the focus on the retroactive experience of licensure exam passers. The Board Licensure Examination for Psychometricians presents unique difficulties that can cause test-takers to experience substantial stress and pressure (Paduraru, 2019; Ferguson; 2022). Some individuals may even fail to pass the exam on their first attempt. However, in their pursuit of obtaining a license, they are determined to retake the exam several times until they succeed.

Likewise, retaking a licensure exam poses specific impacts that alter the self-concept of board exam retakers. It is a dynamic and situational construct that varies from person to person (Nalah, 2014). Significant others' evaluations, reinforcements, and behavior attributions significantly influence self-concept. Self-concept serves as a reference point for an individual's identity, comprising characteristics, attributes, qualities, deficiencies, capacities, limits, values, and relationships they perceive as related to their identity (Tus, 2020).

Becoming a licensed psychometrician is known for being challenging and rigorous. Aspiring professionals will undergo meticulous training, education, and examinations to acquire the necessary skills and qualifications to practice in the field (Indeed Editorial Team, 2022). Hence, this study aims to find how the psychometrician licensure examination retakers perceive their self-concept. Also, this is to bring attention to the need for studies focusing on individuals who have passed the licensure examination after multiple attempts and the importance of understanding their experiences and challenges as retakers. Specifically, the context of discouragement and self-doubt makes them question their abilities and worth, striving to prove they can

pass the examination despite retaking it multiple times (Lal & Varma, 2021).

This study aims to uncover how licensure examination retakers perceive their self-concept. The findings significantly contribute to the shortage of works of literature on the self-concept of licensure examination retakers. Importantly, the information will also help individuals comprehend the struggle of test anxiety and pressure, providing information to work on areas that may not have been tackled in this study, such as refining ways to render support to board examinees during and after their examination journey.

## 2.0. Framework of the Study

The Hope Theory of Charles Snyder emphasizes the role of agency thinking and pathways thinking and the reciprocal relationship between the two. Definitions and explanations are given for the core concepts of Snyder's (2002) cognitive model of hope, which includes goals, pathways, and agency. According to Snyder, goals refer to the abstract mental targets that guide human behaviors. In this study, the goal of the participants is to successfully pass the psychometrician licensure examination by retaking the test. On the other hand, agency thinking refers to the level of intention, confidence, and the ability to follow various pathways toward the desired future. This manifests through the level of confidence, type of mindset, and skills of the examinee to instigate change and achieve their goals. People are usually motivated to retake an exam to assess their improvement in a particular area (Guskey, 2023). In addition, retaking an assessment plays an indispensable role in fulfilling a goal, and this can also motivate a person to restore their desire to learn and increase achievements. Pathway thinking refers to generating various routes from the present to the desired goal (Rand & Cheavens, 2009). Suppose a person is motivated to retake an exam. In that case, they will decide to move along a particular path in a certain period to prepare for achieving the goal. Furthermore, they may enter review centers to help refresh their understanding of the topics or exert effort by reviewing alone.

In addition, emotions are also conceptualized as sequelae of goal-directed thoughts and actions and function as feedback regarding the perceived success or failure of a goal. Research on hope is reviewed, and high hope corresponds with superior academic and athletic performance, greater physical and psychological well-being, and enhanced interpersonal relationships. This theory could advance people's knowledge of how people who fail an exam on their first try can bounce back and succeed on their second or tried attempt by developing as strong

sense of agency, resilience, and positive self-concept, according to Lopez and Snyder (2003). It also explains why retakers continue to achieve their desired future goals despite initially failing. Moreover, this could provide information on how to assist people who have encountered in achieving their goals

### 3.0. Methodology

*Research Design.* This research utilized an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. It is a qualitative research design used to study a particular recurring phenomenon based on people's perceptions of its meaning (Bhandari, 2023). This research design was suitable for the study because it aimed to know how psychometrician licensure examination retakers perceive their self-concept. It dove deeper into the personal perception of retakers and how they subjectively interpreted their own experiences. Prompt questions were designed to obtain more profound insights and responses on the participants' experience, steering the conversation towards the desired research objectives. Through this approach, the researchers acquired more substantial and valuable data. They facilitated a more comprehensive analysis and interpretation of the findings.

*Participants.* This research utilized purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Purposive sampling is a method wherein researchers select participants based on a strictly predetermined criteria set, according to Nikolopoulou (2023). All participants satisfied the set inclusion criteria and could partake in the study. The second is the snowball technique. Likewise, this sampling method involves finding and recruiting participants through referrals from existing or initial participants.

Based on these two sampling methods. The researchers utilized the two main methods. Researchers initially started with a potential participant selected from a group of samples discovered through social connections. Publication material was used to post across social media platforms. In addition, the second method that was done to make sure that there would be enough participants was to analyze the official lists of BLEPP examinees published by the PRC for potential participants; this recurring process continued until a pool of participants was formed enough for the study (Nikolopoulou, 2023).

The inclusion criteria required all participants to graduate either a Bachelor of Science or Bachelor of Arts in Psychology in any duly recognized tertiary school in Region 1 by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) that offers a psychology course. For the examination, the participants must have failed the first take, attempted to pass the licensure examination at least two times, and succeeded after the retakes regardless of the board subjects and the

gap between the retakes. The second or subsequent takes that marked the participant's passing must have occurred by the 2024 BLEPP. The participants may come from a timeframe beginning from the very first psychometrician licensure examination (2014) up to the present.

In addition, potential participants who were graduates of the BS/AB psychology program, possess a psychometrician license, work in the academe, human resources, or research, and have further pursued a career in medicine, law, management, or other psychometrician-related fields are also eligible to participate in this study (Bouchrika, 2023).

On the other hand, potential participants working on any psychometrician-related tasks without a license were immediately excluded from the study. With the inclusion criteria established, seven (7) participants participated in the research study. The selection of these participants reflected and represented the homogeneity among the participants' sample pool. The essence of conducting an IPA research study with homogenous participants is to gauge better and understand the overall perceptions of the participants' lived experiences (Alase, 2017).

*Measures.* An individually administered semi-structured interview consisting of questions necessary for analysis and interpretation was utilized for this study. This includes the participants' demographic information and rapport-building questions that revolved around the participants' motivation and preparation for retaking the licensure examination. The main questions were about the subjective interpretation of self-concept and perceived success, and the prompt questions were about social support, coping mechanisms, and availability of resources. This measure was designed to ascertain subjective responses from persons regarding their experiences as retakers of BLEPP. The interview questions the researchers created were subjected to a pilot interview for content validity. This ensured that the instrument was generally applicable to all participants, and most importantly, it covered all necessary areas and domains of the matter being studied. This was conducted online using Google Meet or Zoom.

*Data Collection Procedure.* The data collection involved a series of systematic procedures ensuring quality information collection. The first step was determining the initial participants through snowball sampling and community recruitment. This method encourages existing participants or other individuals knowledgeable about the study's inclusion criteria to recommend suitable candidates for participation. The publication material also included the following contents: the nature and topic of the study, information about the participant criteria, contact details of the researchers, and a Google form for the

demographics and contact details to be filled out by potential participants. This publication material was prominently displayed online, ensuring widespread visibility to reach a larger audience. The third method was to investigate the official lists of examinees published by the PRC to contact potential candidates to partake in the study.

The next step was to find a participant who would be counted in the pool of participants and tasked with participating in the pilot interview. The researchers obtained an agreement and signed consent from the potential participants to participate in the pilot interview. After completing all necessary adjustments and modifications for its final version, the measure was prepared for the actual data gathering.

The researchers reviewed and then streamlined the pool of participants who fit the criteria obtained from the Google forms as advertised by the online publication material. Once the official participant pool was created, the researchers established contact with each participant through phone calls, text messages, or social media accounts. After this, each participant was sent a letter of invitation to partake in the study alongside informed consent. The consent form contained the researchers' contact details, the study's objective, and the conditions agreed upon by all parties. Every participant had completed all documents sent and was returned to them within a given time frame.

After obtaining the agreement and signed consent of the participants to partake in the study, the researchers set an interview schedule based on their most convenient time, preferred setting, and mode of communication. The participants had decided whether to use Google Meet or Zoom for the interview. The researchers gathered data once the participants confirmed their availability for the scheduled time and date. The researchers reminded the participants about their interview date at least two days prior via message or email. The researchers prepared the meeting platform on the interview day and reminded the participants hours prior.

The researchers facilitated the interview online. The platforms were only Google Meet or Zoom due to their enhanced security features. The preparations included sending the platform meeting link days or weeks before the interview date, setting up the recording features of the platform, and the interview location. A semi-structured interview questionnaire was utilized to explore their entire journey. The researchers also used prompt questions based on the participants' answers to uncover their encounters further. The interview revolved around the journey of the retakers and how it shaped their self-concept.

Participants' responses were utilized for probing. Before the interview session, the researchers obtained

the participants' approval so that they could be video and audio-recorded for transcription purposes. The interview duration depended on the amount of information or narrative of the participant and whether there were any more questions after the concluding part of the interview process. Upon concluding the interviews, the researchers summarized the salient points for the participants to validate the gathered information. Afterward, the researchers appreciated the participants for their cooperation and time. They guaranteed that any information shared will be kept confidential. The researchers then transcribed each audio recording and subjected the gathered information to analysis.

*Ethical Considerations.* Throughout this study, the researchers strictly adhered to the Code of Ethics of the Psychological Association of the Philippines. To ensure that the rights of the respondents are protected and given priority following the institution's standards, the researchers submitted their proposal to the Saint Louis College Research Ethics Review Board (SLC-RERB) for review. Before the actual interview, the researchers discussed with the participants the purpose of the research, the expected duration of the interview, and its procedure. The participants were also informed about their right to decline to participate and to withdraw from the research once participation has begun due to foreseeable factors that may cause them potential risks or discomforts.

In addition, instead of asking for an electronic signature from the participants, the researchers instructed the partakers to send a message to the researcher who contacted them to send their name, date, time, and the word "yes" to signify their voluntary participation in the study. If any of the participants decided to withdraw from the study, any information and recorded video and audio tapes relating to their identity as participants of the study would immediately be deleted and destroyed. In addition, they were also informed about the protection and limits of the confidentiality agreement and their anonymity. All the anticipated uses of the disclosed information gathered from them, including their recorded voices and images, were also discussed before the interview.

Participants were informed about the researchers' duty to safeguard any information divulged, regardless of the medium where it was stored, and any personal identifiers such as name and address would not be disclosed. The researchers had a single Google Drive folder that stored all the documents and information gathered from the participants, and all records taken from the participants were immediately deleted or destroyed after the completion of the transcription process.

After the interview, the researchers discussed

with the participants whom to contact for questions about the research. During the report consultation, only relevant information was revealed for communication. All the information gathered from the participants was also not fabricated (American Psychological Association, 2017).

*Data Analysis.* This study used Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as the mode for data analysis. Politz (2023) discussed that in IPA, researchers have to collect data first via interview and analyze it to uncover themes and meanings, which would help the researchers understand how the participants make sense of their experiences. The use of IPA allowed the researchers and the readers to understand the meaning behind the motivation and experiences of the licensure examination retakers. This also allowed the participants to make meanings from their own experiences, especially with how the encounter affected them as a person and as licensure examination retakers.

According to Charlick et al. (2016), there are seven steps in conducting an IPA data analysis. The first step involves immersing oneself in the original data by reading and re-reading it. After conducting interviews, the researchers used a table for each participant and transcribed the recorded interview data. Next, they began to explore the semantic content through initial noting. The researchers then extracted interview quotes that addressed the research question and developed emergent themes by analyzing the transcript notes. This is followed by looking for connections across these emergent themes and integrating them into initial superordinate themes. Similar individual superordinate themes were merged, resulting in the clustered superordinate themes. The researchers then delved deeper into the analysis, using metaphors and temporal referents and applying theories to understand the investigation better. This resulted in the generated final theme, which encapsulates the overall encounter and the participants' perspectives.

The researchers reviewed and validated the findings through investigator triangulation with the help of two licensed psychometricians. This method provided a synchronized understanding of the phenomenon based on the assistance of different experts. During the analysis phase, investigators analyze the collected data independently to avoid bias and preconceived notions. The experts' analyses are then compared and synthesized to identify patterns, themes, and discrepancies. Through this process, the researchers enriched the interpretation of the data and generated a valid conclusion that encapsulates what the study is trying to unveil. This collaborative effort contributes to the reliability and validity of the study.

The three superordinate themes and the final

theme that the researchers determined based on the data gathered from the participants were also validated by including the investigators' suggestions. In addition, the researchers asked for consultations from the research panel members to ensure the quality. They confirmed whether the theme names encapsulated the narrative from the participants' perspective. The cooperation between the researchers and the investigators helped this present research to be trustworthy and valid.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) prescribed the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to assess validity and reliability. The researchers established trustworthiness during each phase of thematic analysis to increase the probability that the research findings and interpretations were credible (Nowell et al., 2017). A pilot interview with field notes collection was conducted to assess the paper's credibility. On the other hand, the researchers used purposive sampling, citing the inclusion and exclusion criteria to establish transferability. Auditing the research process is vital in attaining dependability, and the researchers achieved this by using a data collection matrix wherein all the data collection steps and possible accommodations were documented. When the process is logical, traceable, and well-documented, then this domain is achieved (Tobin & Begley, 2004). If all three domains - credibility, transferability, and dependability, are finally attained, and once the interpretation and findings clearly reflect and derive their outputs solely from the data, confirmability is accomplished (Tobin & Begley, 2004). The investigator triangulation also allowed checking the consistency and credibility of findings to be validated across different professional lenses.

#### 4.0. Results and Discussion

Many factors contribute to the idea of success in a licensure examination. However, it falls short of explaining how the journey towards the end goal has affected the perception of the individual who underwent the trial. This research discovered three self-concepts that emerged from the collective lived experiences of psychometrician licensure examination retakers. Each explains how integrating different compelling factors and elements of the experience has shaped their overall self-concept as retakers.

##### Introspective Self-Concept

Introspective self-concept is the first superordinate theme that results from undergoing meaningful changes through introspection. By assessing the self by looking at the whole picture and not only at the self apart from experience, but they could also judge what areas they should improve to help them pursue their goal.

Examining oneself may prompt individuals to learn more about themselves and seek diagnostic feedback about their competencies. This would then uncover their strengths and drawbacks, resulting in the participants' understanding of their needs and the manifestation of their personal growth and identity. Participant Rover expressed that being a retaker should be an opportunity to examine one's capabilities. On the other hand, Miney, one of the participants, mentioned that their entire experience of failing the licensure examination had become a transformative catalyst for them to change their perception of being a retaker.

Being a retaker, however, is not necessarily bad because you can see it there; you can learn that not everything is something you know, or not everything is known to me; there are still things I do not know. (Rover, online interview, February 22, 2024)

What I thought back then when I was a retaker is, what if, there were many what ifs. I had so many down moments, and how did it help me? It aided me in growing more, becoming mature enough to think about what should be done instead of constantly wondering about what ifs. (Miney, online interview, March 20, 2024)

The challenge experienced by the participants helped them assess what should be done while looking at the whole picture. They took the situation as an opportunity to improve themselves based on their judgment of their performance and how they handled it. Their self-reflection served as their assistance in making themselves grow and develop. This action implies the ability of a person to enhance their well-being based on the facts gained during the experience, dissecting it critically to gain an in-depth understanding of what aspects should be developed.

### **Hopeful Self-Identity**

Hopeful self-identity is the second prominent superordinate theme. It refers to the sense of self of a person, focusing on possibilities of what to achieve rather than limitations. For the retakers, it reflects their commitment to their positive aspiration of passing the psychometrician licensure examination despite setbacks by having an optimistic attitude, thus producing a self-concept grounded upon the idea of being hopeful. It is characterized by an individual's optimism to aim for the success of their desired goals in life. It is an attitude that acknowledges failing as a temporary hurdle leading to success rather than the end of the adventure. It allows an individual to have

a mindset that looks at things on the brighter side of every situation, enabling them to seize it as a chance and opportunity to equip themselves to become persistent and determined to pursue and achieve the goals they aim for. By adopting this perspective, people can develop a feeling of direction and purpose that helps them deal with life's obstacles more calmly and confidently.

The analyzed data is accurate to the pronouncement of the core concept of Hope Theory by Snyder (2002) when he mentioned that individuals' view of the future may influence their present thoughts of generating alternate routes in reaching their goals. The study's findings say that the participants' experience of failing the licensure examination molded them into courageous and driven individuals searching for attainable pathways. These findings agree with the studies of Shogren et al. (2015) and Petalla (2024), which expressed that actions by individuals who are self-directed function to enable a person to make progress toward chosen goals and to respond to opportunities and challenges in life.

In addition, the participant's way of thinking may have stemmed from the fact that they are graduates of the Psychology program and have learned coping mechanisms from their course. Their response to bouncing back from the setback is partly controlled by their personality, ability to handle a stressful environment and the resources they had from being a psychology major.

*Optimistic Self-Concept.* A positive mindset is an advantage, especially in times of difficulties and uncertainties. Having an optimistic self-concept is being grateful for what you have and focusing on the good things. It helps an individual to navigate a mindset that allows one to look for solutions rather than dwelling on the problems. It empowers individuals to create unwavering positivity while dealing with life setbacks that make them better. However, having a positive attitude does not mean merely focusing on what is good and ignoring the negative. It is acknowledging what is terrible and remaining optimistic by looking for avenues to overcome the challenge.

A participant mentioned that it did not matter if they failed the first, second, or third time in trying to pass the psychometrician licensure examination since they believed there would always be a time that they could still pass the exam. This entails that the participant looks on the brighter side of the situation in which success will still be possible amidst every setback in achieving desired goals.

I became a fighter. I think being a fighter in life means, when something happens, for example, if a sudden problem arises, facing it, not letting it eat us up. (Miney, online interview, March 20, 2024)

A positive attitude toward motivation produces a solid disposition to attain a goal (Petalla, 2022). In a study conducted by Marton et al. (2020), optimism was found to be a strategy for making a better future. Specifically, pessimistic individuals usually expect bad experiences in the future. Optimistic people, on the other hand, tend to expect positive experiences. In the general population, dispositional optimism is a favorable individual resource that can be especially relevant when facing new or intense adversities and stressors.

*Goal-Driven Self-Identity.* This refers to a person's sense of self, shaped by their aspirations and goals in life and becoming career-oriented individuals. Also, the retakers perceived their self-concept as goal-driven, wherein they aspire to achieve their specific goals no matter how hard it is. Having life goals makes a person desire growth and improvement within themselves. The desire to make those goals into actual achievements pushes individuals to set clear and specific goals and drive themselves to cultivate determination in conquering every obstacle of life that can pave the way to success and fulfillment. Also, being determined means an individual possesses a strong sense of perseverance, commitment, and willingness to make intentional actions toward a specific goal. Taylor, one of the participants, pointed out that the success of being a retaker is an inspiration to themselves that shapes who they are. On the other hand, participant Gracie stated that being a retaker shapes and molds them to become courageous in trying to fight the battle of setbacks in life. This empowers the participant to grow from every mistake and failure, making them more committed and persistent in aiming for success.

As a retaker, it became an inspiration to me and also served as someone I could look at, viewing my success as a retaker as an inspiration to me, and at the same time, an inspiration or motivation for my students. (Taylor, online interview, February 25, 2024)

When you have a license, you are confident about what, right? As I mentioned, when we were starting as psychometricians, there were not many standards yet, like this should be or that should be. So, you will become the standard for the next psychometricians,

which I think is what I hope for. (Gracie, online interview, March 28, 2024)

As the participants fought the battle of setbacks and failures of life, they could withstand and view it as a way for them to aim for success as they could manifest positivity despite adversity and become determined to succeed in their specific goals. They used failure as an inspiration, not as a discouragement that fuels their desire to persist in achieving their desired goals. Being goal-driven is also essential for both pathways and agency thought, according to Snyder, as it entails an active motivation that results in fast operative goal pursuance, which was present to the participants when they expressed that their initial failure was not perceived as a roadblock for them in pursuing their goal. Furthermore, this is also connected to the study of Shogren et al. (2015), wherein individuals who show self-determined behaviors often display volitional actions that give them control over their lives. Volitional actions refer to making conscious decisions that are both functional and self-regulatory.

### **Empowered Primordial Self-Concept**

Empowered primordial self-concept is the last superordinate theme generated by how the participants could remain steadfast in their original state and undergo redemption when disturbed by several setbacks. The retakers' empowered primordial self-concept manifested in their capacity to confront and successfully overcome adversities while preserving their core sense of self and beliefs intact. Despite facing obstacles, they maintained a steadfast self-perception, displaying an unwavering dedication to their rudimentary values and principles. Rather than letting setbacks shape their identity, they leveraged these challenges as opportunities for personal growth and rejuvenation.

In addition, the empowered primordial identity in individuals may also produce the development or return of a balanced state of functionality when fighting adversities in life. Some participants mentioned that they were not affected by the failure they had experienced in the examination.

*Unshaken Self-Concept.* A few retakers reported being slightly too unaffected by the experience of failing the board examination. For them, the indispensable significance of their goal to pass the psychometrician licensure examination holds paramount importance, downplaying the negative experiences of being a retaker posing as a hindrance. This led them to pay more attention to the experience of being a retaker. Such factors and elements that affect how individuals think and feel about

themselves impact how they perceive their potential in various or specific aspects of their lives (Cowin, 2001). Likewise, it reflects how self-concept is shaped or may remain unchanged through individual factors, including thoughts, emotions, and behavior (Jhangiani, 2022). Rover, one of the participants, mentioned that being a retaker did not affect him as it was not seen as a hindrance in his perspective.

It did not affect me much, [being a retaker], me being a retaker because I passed it, I passed during the second take. (Rover, online interview, February 22, 2024)

Failure is not a hindrance to stop attaining what you really want to do. (Rover, online interview, February 22, 2024)

This supports the research findings that being a retaker is their ultimate motivation and inspiration to work hard to achieve their goals. The participants perceived that the setbacks they had experienced did not hinder them from fulfilling their dreams in life. So, the failure that they encountered shapes their perspective that better opportunities and chances are coming along the way of conquering their life. Moreover, it also shaped their self-concept, enabling them to develop a strong determination and persistence that gives them a sense of confidence and courage to face every battle of life and find their purpose.

*Restored Self-Concept.* Being able to recover from the experience of encountering setbacks is the core definition of a restored self-concept. This can be explained by how a participant successfully overcame adversity, signifying redemption and reinstatement to their original state, bouncing back to the pathway of attaining their goal of passing the psychometrician licensure examination and acknowledging the impacts of setbacks but putting little value brought about by personal belief to oneself. Participant Irie expressed that although her experience of failure was painful, it still helped her build herself into someone with stronger belief and confidence.

Perhaps that is an experience for me to have my character be cut only for it to build me because after that experience. I have a stronger belief in myself that I can do it. (Irie, online interview, February 25, 2024)

So, my self-concept, self-confidence, and self-esteem went down first, but it did not last long. Only during that time did I increase again because I started

believing in myself. (Irie, online interview, February 25, 2024)

On the other hand, although some expressed that they had experienced their confidence decline, they could still reinstate their original self by bouncing back from the experience. This finding aligns with the study from Lopez and Snyder (2003) and Salami (2011), which tackles the effect of several factors like optimism, self-esteem, internal locus of control, and hope on a person's resilience.

Despite facing adversities, the participants successfully returned to their original state and once again built themselves. This demonstrates their remarkable ability to recuperate and get back on track to their goal of successfully passing the psychometrician licensure examination.

### **The Agentic Self: Unleashing the Power to Act from Setbacks to Breakthroughs**

This refers to the self-concept resulting from the overall perspective of the psychometrician licensure examination retakers. The narratives shared by the participants were essential in understanding the profound experience of their subjective interpretation of their self-concept that had undergone meaningful changes and their hopeful identity that had stayed intact as they grew in empowerment to pursue their future-oriented learning goals. This theme reflects the participants' unleashing their power to act from setbacks to breakthroughs. Likewise, it described their experiences from the perspective of gaining opportunities that developed their characters, relationships, and discoveries of talents amidst the challenge, as well as their sense of hope and determination for a better future.

The fundamental idea of "unleashing the power to act from setbacks to breakthroughs" is a radiation of hope that reassures individuals that despite the most challenging circumstances, there is always a possibility of overcoming them and coming out stronger.

A key finding of this study was the apparent need for more support for the retakers from their respective schools. The connection between the school and the student is usually severed after graduation. However, continuing supportive and connective relationships is one of the best ways for the school and the administration to support their alums, especially when they have passed or failed an examination. Schools offering psychology programs, administrations, and instructors can take up the responsibility of paying more attention to their students and their graduates to support their mental well-being.

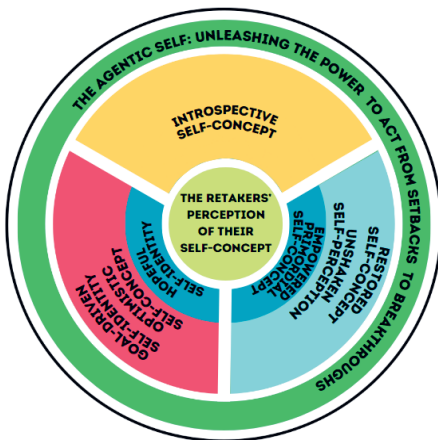
These self-concepts formed out of the perception of the collective experiences of the retakers explain



how these individuals possess the attributes of self-control and regulated learning by controlling their environment to achieve desired results. This positively corroborated with the study of Dinsmore et al. (2008), which mentioned that a person's ability to understand effort and persistence can lead them to control their learning environment successfully.

Findings also show that the participants achieved their goal of passing the licensure examination by perceiving themselves positively, navigating through setbacks by exerting efforts to reshape their self-concept to accommodate required changes, staying steadfast to their goal through pathway thinking, and remaining resilient. Furthermore, since the future board examinees are psychology majors, their ability to become well-versed and knowledgeable in possessing a clear vision of specific goals, providing practical strategies to overcome obstacles, and maintaining a positive outlook in every aspect of life serves as a sense of direction and motivation to their actions and decisions in achieving success as it can foster personal growth and resilience.

Figure 1  
Psychometrician Licensure Examination Retaker's  
Perception of Their Self-Concept



**5.0. Conclusion**

The study uncovered novel findings, indicating that the participants' transformation and rebuilding of their self-concept and their perception of it has been affected by several factors, including but not limited to their beliefs, personality traits, social support system, motivation, and resources they have, and even the feedback they had received from individuals around them. Likewise, this emphasized that individuals who experienced setbacks in life, like failing a licensure examination, could have a meaningful change to their

identity that might drive them to pursue their passions and obtain achievements without forgoing their self-esteem. However, it may also be a contemplation of whether individuals pursue self-esteem to satisfy their beliefs about what they need to be or do to have worth and value or if it is only a way to increase their competence and confidence in themselves. The idea of how self-concept works across different aspects and its effects, such as education, work, psychosocial development, and personal growth, can be a good subject for further studies. Future researchers can also dive further into the subjective concept of success for individuals and how people define it based on their perspectives shaped by circumstances. Another area worth exploring is the specific process the retakers take in their decision to retake the licensure examination. The progressive stages for them to give themselves another chance can shed light on understanding the diversity in decision-making psychology. This will allow organizations to explore possible avenues in developing such needs to enhance an individual's ability.

**6.0. Limitations of the Findings**

This study notes a few shortcomings that can be investigated further. The research was confined to the geography of Region 1, and the topic of this paper can be further studied through the lens of cultural differences to assess whether such a concept significantly impacts the perception of psychometrician licensure examination retakers. This can be done by utilizing a comparative analysis as an appropriate means to study psychometrician licensure examination retakers based on their respective culture.

The study's constraints, which focus on the sample size and geographic region of the participants, have limited the generalizability of the findings. Studies in the same context may not show the same results if the sample size focuses on a different area and geographic region. Future researchers interested in the study may consider participants from more prominent groups that share the characteristics relevant to the research, which can make the study's findings generalizable.

**7.0. Practical Value of the Paper**

This study is grounded upon the genuine idea of shedding light on the travails of the retakers, the small percentage often left unnoticed in studies concerning board examinations. As such, the current researchers aim to produce this study as a testament to the subject participants. This will allow readers to understand how retakers perceive their self-concept as they conquer life battles on their journey toward success. This serves as a motivation to fight setbacks in life where readers can gain valuable insights into

the determination and commitment that leads to personal growth to reignite one's confidence to face similar challenges with the retakers, such as retaking the licensure examination.

### 8.0. Directions for Future Research

The study probed the responses of the retakers regarding their experiences in the psychometrician licensure examination. Future researchers can develop this topic further by building upon its findings. It encourages a comprehensive investigation into the prevalence, patterns of learning practices and preparation behaviors, and factors that can affect the success and failure of individuals in taking licensure.

A semi-structured interview can be used to draw out findings that reflect the cultural values of each participant. This would unveil the underlying beliefs, practices, and the individual's way of addressing setbacks that may come along their way of achieving success based on their cultural backgrounds, such as religious beliefs, cultural norms, and ethnic influence. This would establish a connection between the practices of different cultures and their academic life, benefiting the socio-cultural status quo.

In the future, researchers may also examine how the retakers' intervention strategies and support system enhanced their self-efficacy and motivation, ultimately leading to better performance on a licensure examination. This will assist readers and future researchers in determining whether individuals who receive motivational support and interventions have a more significant impact on test takers' performance in licensure examinations than those who do not receive such support and interventions. Pursuing these future directions can allow interested researchers to continue deepening their understanding of these critical issues and work towards developing practical approaches to support individuals facing similar difficulties.

### 9.0. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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