



The Lived Experiences of Psychology Professionals towards the Challenges of Continuing Professional Development at the University of Cabuyao

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the experiences of psychology professionals concerning the challenges of continuing professional development. A phenomenological qualitative approach was employed, with six (6) participants selected through purposive sampling. (1) Participants in the study are psychology professionals from the University of Cabuyao (PnC) who are actively engaging in continuing professional development. By using thematic analysis, five themes emerged from the data: (1) motivation for professional growth, (2) challenges in CPD acquisition, (3) CPD's relevance to professional practice, (4) coping Strategies for CPD challenges, and (5) long-term implications of CPD. The study recommends coping strategies and methods for psychology professionals. Research should also examine how professional development impacts service quality and address logistical and financial barriers to support professionals and the community.

Keywords: Continuing Professional Development, Lived Experience, Psychology Professionals, Self Determination, Social Cognitive

1. Introduction

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) promotes ongoing learning and the improvement of skills, knowledge, and practices. Most individuals engage in CPD to stay current with the latest research, teaching methods, and best practices that evolve in their profession. CPD helps guide them in achieving these development goals. According to Srinivasacharlu (2019), CPD is a process that includes activities aimed at enhancing a person's skills, knowledge, expertise, and other professional attributes.

In the UK, CPD is tracked annually, with activities categorized into work-based learning, professional activity, and formal education. These activities can be either directed (formal training or supervised projects) or self-directed (self-reflection or counseling). Professionals must record their progress in portfolios. The Health and Care Professions Council (2019) also categorizes CPD activities as work-based learning, professional activity, formal education, and self-directed learning. Tulo and Lee (2022) highlighted four challenges for university educators: the quality of CPD activities, work-related issues, personal factors, and financial constraints. This study seeks to address the gap in research regarding the experiences of psychology professionals in CPD by exploring and understanding the challenges they encounter during their professional development journey.

The Professional Regulatory Board of Psychology Resolution No. 04 (2021) called for a matrix of CPD activities that can further pursue career development in psychology in the Philippines. Formal learning is similar to formal education in that activities under this banner involve continuing education with Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs).

Meanwhile, volunteer engagement activities include community-based assignments such as outreach programs, disaster or calamity assistance, and much more. Lastly, informal learning, under this umbrella, includes CPD activities that may occur daily but are recognized, validated, or accredited to be an improvement in professional development. Professionals usually record or file their activities in some way, and the CPD council assesses and approves them in exchange for points.

Despite the recognized importance and processes of CPD, professionals also face significant challenges in pursuing them. According to Breeze Academy (2021), a major challenge professionals continuing their professional development face is time and accessibility. This may be due to time constraints from their busy schedule or the lack of facilities or funds to participate in CPD activities. Moreover, Mlambo *et al.* (2021) have summarized that the challenges faced by their participants in CPD are mainly due to a lack of organizational support. This lack of support contributes to the conditions that allow the lack of funds and time to hinder their professional development. Personal challenges are defined as the conflict of carrying professional and home-life stress and the lack of time to deal with both, which have proved to be the most troublesome. As well as work-related, dealing with workload and scheduling, lack of support, and information distribution of CPD within the workplace are second to personal challenges. There are also financial-related challenges that are heavily brought up due to the high cost of registration fees for CPD programs. While the quality of CPD activities is the least challenging among the four, this reflects the lack of CPD providers and available experts in the field, as brought up by the respondents.

With all these in mind, the researchers find that the lack of focus specifically on the journey of psychometricians and psychologists in CPD can be improved. That is why, the researchers aimed to conduct a study based on the testimonies of psychology professionals within the University of Cabuyao on their own experience of CPD.

The study seeks to fill the gap in research studies on the experiences of psychology professionals conducting CPD by learning and understanding the essence of those lived experiences and the challenges they faced while pursuing professional development. Despite the valuable insights provided by the three psychology professionals who participated in our phenomenological study, the limited number of participants presents a notable research gap. With only three professionals, the findings may not fully represent the broader spectrum of experiences and perspectives within the field of psychology. Additionally, the study only included psychometricians and psychologists, which further limits the diversity of professional insights.

Moreover, our focus on the lived experiences of these professionals in terms of their challenges in continuing professional development, while insightful, narrows the scope of our study. This approach may overlook other important aspects of their professional lives and development.

Future research should aim to include a larger and more diverse group of psychology professionals, encompassing various roles and specializations. This would enhance the generalizability and depth of the findings. Additionally, expanding the focus beyond just the challenges in continuing professional development to include other dimensions of their professional experiences could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the field.

2. Methodology

A. Research Design

This study used a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore the experiences of psychometricians and psychologists with continuing professional development at the University of Cabuyao. Phenomenology, as described by Neubauer, Witkop, & Varpio (2019), is a qualitative approach focused on understanding an individual's lived experiences by asking "How?" and "What?" The researchers

collected data through semi-structured interviews to capture detailed narratives and identify key themes. Purposive sampling was used to target participants, and thematic analysis was employed to find patterns in the data. Ethical guidelines were followed in compliance with the Philippines' Data Privacy Act (Republic Act No. 10173), ensuring participant anonymity and secure storage of data. Personal identifiers were removed, and access to the data was limited to the researchers, the adviser, and the qualitative data analyst. Data storage was secured digitally, and data will be deleted after the first semester of the 2024-2025 academic year.

B. Research Locale

This study is conducted in the Philippines, specifically in the province of Laguna in Region IV-A, City of Cabuyao, at the University of Cabuyao, a public higher education institution. The University of Cabuyao provides an appropriate context for this study as it is a prominent institution for the professional development of psychology professionals in the area. The university has a dedicated CPD program for its practicing psychologists in the region, which is the focus of this research. By selecting the University of Cabuyao as the research locale, the study can delve deeply into the lived experiences and challenges of psychology professionals engaged in the university's CPD program, ultimately contributing to enhancing continuing professional development in psychology.

C. Population and Sampling

The study focuses on psychology professionals, specifically registered psychometricians and psychologists, who are actively earning Continuing Professional Development (CPD) credits for license renewal. Using a phenomenological research design, the researchers applied purposive sampling to select participants from this group. According to Campbell *et al.* (2020), purposive sampling is chosen because it aligns the sample with the research's goals and objectives, thus enhancing the study's rigor and ensuring the reliability of the data and results.

D. Research Participants

The participants in this study are registered psychometricians and psychologists from the University of Cabuyao, selected to share their personal experiences with the challenges of continuing professional development (CPD). A purposive sample of five to seven professionals was chosen to provide insights into the obstacles they face while pursuing professional growth and maintaining their licenses. The aim was to gather meaningful data on how these professionals navigate the demands of CPD in their careers.

E. Research Instrumentation

This study aims to examine the lived experiences of psychology professionals at the University of Cabuyao regarding the challenges they face with Continuing Professional Development (CPD). The researchers developed their own interview questions, drawing on Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory and Self-Determination Theory. The goal is to explore factors affecting their self-efficacy, the role of observational learning, and the decision-making strategies they use, as explained by Social Cognitive Theory. Additionally, the study seeks to understand how CPD influences their professional identity, competence, and overall motivation, as framed by Self-Determination Theory.

The researchers consulted subject matter experts affiliated with the University of Cabuyao to review and validate the proposed self-designed interview questions. This step was crucial to ensure the research instrument would generate detailed and meaningful data that would effectively address the study's research objectives.

F. Data Gathering Procedure

Once the research instrument was validated, the researchers began collecting data for the study. They purposefully selected five to seven qualified participants who were invited to join at their discretion. Participants were scheduled for interviews at times that suited them, ensuring their convenience, and were provided with an informed consent form in advance. These steps adhered to the ethical guidelines of the University of Cabuyao.

After collecting sufficient interview data, it was transcribed by the qualitative data analyst (QDA), who had been consulted beforehand. The QDA assisted in analyzing the data and identifying emerging themes, helping to answer the study's research questions through thematic analysis.

H. Ethical Consideration

To protect the rights, dignity, and privacy of participants, researchers must uphold their well-being, build trust, maintain research integrity, and prevent misconduct. The participants' personal details and responses to the questionnaire were treated with the highest level of confidentiality. Ethical guidelines were strictly followed, ensuring that no identifying information was disclosed.

3. Results and Discussions

This chapter presents the key findings from the data gathered and discusses how they relate to the study's research questions, which explored the lived experiences and challenges faced by psychology professionals at the University of Cabuyao in pursuing continuing professional development. The study addressed the following research questions.

The results and discussion are organized into three sections: the first addresses the research and interview questions, the second presents the themes that emerged from the testimonies of psychology professionals, and the third proposes programs based on these identified themes.

Research Question #1: How do they view the importance/essence of continuing professional development?

Research Question #2: How do they describe their lived experience as a licensed psychologist/psychometrician terms of their challenges of maintaining professional development at the University of Cabuyao?

Table 1: Interview Question #1: Describe the experiences you've had in your CPD journey as a psychology professional as of now.

Interviewee	Response	Observation
Participant 2	<i>"The CPD journey has been dynamic and multi-faceted, involving continuous learning, professional interactions, and a commitment to enhancing my skills. I believe that this ongoing process is essential for providing effective and compassionate care in the ever-evolving field of psychology."</i>	The participant illustrates a deep sense of responsibility and motivation to improve both professionally and personally, driven by the belief that their development directly impacts the quality of care they provide.

Participant 2 emphasized the importance of self-motivation and responsibility in CPD. This aligns with theories linking autonomy to learner engagement and Bandura's idea that personal beliefs and attitudes shape professional growth and effectiveness.

Table 2: Interview Question #2: How has holding a psychology license for several years altered Your perception of your role and the associated responsibilities?

Interviewee	Response	Observation
Participant 2	<i>"Years of holding a psychology license enrich the understanding of the role's significance, leading to a more informed, responsible, and empathetic approach to practice."</i>	The participant describes how years of holding a psychology license clear the role's significance of their profession makes them proficient and passionate psychology professional.

Participant 2 shared that over time, their role as a licensed psychologist shaped them into a more responsible and empathetic professional. This supports Rupert and Dorociak's (2019) view that professional development boosts confidence and reduces burnout, and aligns with Bandura's theory that environmental influences and observations promote empathy in practice.

Table 3: Interview Question #3: What motivates you to fulfill those responsibilities despite the challenges you encounter in your CPD?

Interviewee	Response	Observation
Participant 1	<i>"My motivation to fulfill my duties as a psychology professional is the dearth in the profession. There's a lot of people who are struggling mentally and emotionally and the insufficient awareness regarding mental health."</i>	The participant's motivation is also fueled by the need to increase awareness and understanding of mental health. This highlights their role as not just a practitioner, but also an advocate for mental health awareness.

Participant 1 stays committed to CPD despite challenges, driven by a desire to promote mental health. This reflects how personal motivation, behavior, and environment interact, as described by Bandura and supported by Rupert and Dorociak's view on professional growth.

Table 4: Interview Question #4: What intrinsic factors do you find essential to your motivation in CPD?

Interviewee	Response	Observation
Participant 2	<i>"Personal growth, sense of achievement, professional identity, social connection and Autonomy."</i>	The participant's intrinsic motivation is to enhance their knowledge and skills, Achieving milestones in CPD to create a sense of accomplishment and pride, to foster a strong sense of professional self that helps them define their expertise, and to gain support, collaboration, and a sense of belonging within the professional community

Participant 2's intrinsic motivation for CPD reflects long-term dedication to growth, expertise, and meaningful connections. This supports Rupert and Dorociak's (2019) findings on confidence-building and aligns with Ryan and

Deci's (2020) Self-Determination Theory emphasizing autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

Table 5: Interview Question #5: What external factors do you find essential to your motivation in CPD?

Interviewee	Response	Observation
Participant 1	"Influence, network with other psychology professionals".	The participant's motivation in terms of external factors fosters a dynamic environment where knowledge, skills, and professional standards are continually enhanced through the influence of other colleagues, and also, they find networking with other psychology professionals as important in building and maintaining professional relationships.

Participant 1's external motivation for CPD highlights the importance of professional networks and peer support. Suliman *et al.* (2020) found that peer assistance encourages CPD participation, while Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory explains how observing others in a network motivates learning and engagement.

Table 6: Interview Question #6: How do you solve the common problems you face regarding those challenges in your CPD?

Interviewee	Response	Observation
Participant 2	"In relevance of CPD opportunities, it is by regularly assess my professional goals and needs. For financial constraints, it is by looking for free or low-cost CPD opportunities. For lack of motivation, it is by setting achievable goals and celebrate small milestones." Also, there are access to resources by utilizing online platforms".	the participant utilizes online platforms to access resources demonstrates adaptability and resourcefulness in navigating CPD challenges. they are really committed to continuous improvement and professional growth despite the obstacles faced.

Participant 2 manages CPD challenges by using online platforms, setting goals, and celebrating progress. This aligns with Bandura's theory on proactive behavior and Alvarez *et al.*'s (2020) findings that online CPD is efficient and flexible for busy professionals.

Table 7: Interview Question #7: How does your current work environment support your CPD journey?

Interviewee	Response	Observation
Participant 3	"All means to support my CPD is from my own initiatives".	The self-reliance traits of the participant highlight the determination and proactive approach to professional growth, however, it may contribute to a slower progress in acquiring their desired personal and professional growth.

Participant 3 is self-motivated and self-directed in their CPD initiatives, demonstrating the importance of personal responsibility and proactive behavior in managing

professional growth, a concept backed by Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory.

Table 8: Interview Question #8: What other support systems, like organizations, groups, or colleagues contribute to your CPD?

Interviewee	Response	Observation
Participant 2	"Some of the major support systems that support my CPD are the Psychological Association of the Philippines and its different special interests groups, my friends and colleagues in the field, and my affiliated institutions. They serve as instruments in motivating me to attend and participate to different workshops and conference which aid and give contributions to my continuing professional development."	The participant emphasizes the importance of support for continuing professional development. It lightens up the load of challenges they face because it guides them to keep on track in their career.

Participant 2 shares support systems for CPD, including PAP organization, friends, colleagues, and affiliated institutions, influenced by Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which highlights the interaction between personal factors, behavior, and environment.

Table 9: Interview Question #9: Based on your experience as a licensed psychology professional, how essential is continuing professional development to you?

Interviewee	Response	Observation
Participant 1	"It makes me practice my profession in a responsible and ethical manner. It makes the clinical practice more regulated".	The participant highlights that continuing professional development contributes to a more regulated clinical practice, underlining its importance in maintaining high standards of professionalism and integrity.

Participant 1's experience as a licensed psychology professional emphasizes responsibility, ethical work, and integrity in continuing professional development. Bandura's social cognitive theory highlights the impact of observational learning and social reinforcement on behavior. Self-determination theory highlights the role of intrinsic motivation factors like competence and relatedness. CPD helps professionals feel more competent and connected to their professional community, which aligns with their intrinsic motivations for practicing ethically and maintaining regulated clinical standards. As stated by Crispino and Rocha (2021), they discovered advantages for Filipino health professionals in continuing their professional development, namely, that it further made them competent. Participating in CPD programs enhances the essential knowledge and skills they need to be promoted and grow professionally and personally

Research Question #3: What themes emerged from psychology professionals' testimonies about their challenges of continuing professional development at the University of Cabuyao?

Table 10: Theme 1. Multifaceted Experiences in CPD

Theme	Sub-Theme	Initial Coding	Interviewee	Highlighted Responses
Multifaceted Experiences in CPD	Commitment to Continuous Learning	Seminars and training	Participant 1	<i>"It needs a lot of seminars and training for professionals to renew our license."</i>
		Dynamic journey	Participant 2	<i>"The CPD Journey has been dynamic and multi-faceted, involving continuous learning and professional interactions."</i>
	Growth and Compliance	Skill enhancement Compliance with requirements	Participant 1	<i>"Experiences I've had in earning my CPD is somehow excellent since I had my renewal in 2022."</i>

Table 11: Theme 2: Enhanced Professional Responsibility

		Ethical practice	Participant 2	<i>"Years of holding a psychology license enrich the understanding of the role's significance."</i>
		Informed Approach		
	Engagement with Organizations	Engagement	Participant 3	<i>"Associated responsibilities in my profession became more promising and engaging to different psychological organizations."</i>
		Professional growth		
Theme	Sub-theme	Initial Coding	Interviewee	Highlighted Responses
Enhanced Professional Responsibility	Strengthened Ethical Practice	Responsibility	Participant 1	<i>"It makes me fulfill my duties in a responsible and ethical manner."</i>

Table 12: Theme 3: Motivation to Overcome CPD Challenges

Theme	Sub-theme	Initial Coding	Interviewee	Highlighted Response
Motivation to Overcome CPD Challenges	Service to Others	Mental health awareness	Participant 1	"There's a lot of people who are struggling mentally and emotionally."
			Participant 2	"I use CPD as an opportunity to expand my knowledge, enhance my skills, and stay current in my field."
	Personal and Professional Growth	Helping others	Participant 3	"Fulfilling my responsibilities as a psychologist motivates me to gain and learn more knowledge and skills."
		Learning more knowledge and skills		

Table 13: Theme 4: Intrinsic Drivers of CPD Motivation

Theme	Sub-theme	Initial Coding	Interviewee	Highlighted Response
Intrinsic Drivers of CPD Motivation	Growth and Achievement	Personal growth	Participant 2	"Personal growth, sense of achievement, professional identity, social connection, and autonomy."
		Sense of achievement	Participant 3	"Essential factors are the new and additional knowledge and learnings to gain regarding my profession."
	Altruism	Service to others	Participant 1	"Service to other people."
		Impact		

Table 14: Theme 5: External Drivers of CPD Motivation

Theme	Sub-theme	Initial Coding	Interviewee	Highlighted Response
External Drivers of CPD Motivation	Professional and Organizational Networks	Influence of networks	Participant 1	<i>"Influence, network to other psychology professionals."</i>
		Peer relationships	Participant 3	<i>"Essential factor is the social relationship with other professionals."</i>
	Technological and Institutional Support	Online platforms	Participant 2	<i>"Organizational support, professional networks, including trends and access to technology/E-learning."</i>
		Organizational Support		

Table 15: Theme 6: Problem-Solving in CPD Challenges

Theme	Sub-theme	Initial Coding	Interviewee	Highlighted Response
Problem-Solving in CPD Challenges	Financial Solutions	Self-funded learning	Participant 1	<i>"I just attend seminars and training at my own expense."</i>
		Budget-friendly CPD	Participant 2	<i>"For financial constraints, by looking for free or low-cost CPD opportunities."</i>
	Goal-Oriented Approaches	Setting achievable goals	Participant 2	<i>"By regularly assessing my professional goals and needs, and setting achievable goals."</i>
		Regular assessment		

Table 17: Theme 8: The Importance of Support Systems

The Importance of Support Systems	Professional Associations	Psychological Association of the Philippines (PAP)	Participant 3	<i>"Some of the major support systems are the Psychological Association of the Philippines and its special interest groups."</i>
		Special interest groups		
	Peer and Community Support	Colleagues	Participant 2	<i>"Professional associations, online platforms and communities, conferences, and webinars."</i>
		Webinars and online platforms		
Theme	Sub-theme	Initial Coding	Interviewee	Highlighted Response

Table 18: Theme 9: Essential Nature of CPD

Theme	Sub-theme	Initial Coding	Interviewee	Highlighted Response
Essential Nature of CPD	Ethical and Professional Practice	Ethical practice	Participant 1	"It makes me practice my profession in a responsible and ethical manner."
		Regulated clinical work	Participant 3	"The CPD really helps me in developing my profession and personal well-being."

Tables 10-18 were the 9 sections that show the themes that emerged from each question that were used to inquire the lived experience and challenges psychology professionals at the University of Cabuyao towards their continuing professional development, into the following: Multifaceted Experiences in CPD, Enhanced Professional Responsibility, Motivation to Overcome CPD Challenges, Intrinsic Drivers of CPD Motivation, External Drivers of CPD Motivation, Problem-Solving in CPD Challenges, Role of the Work Environment in CPD, The Importance of Support Systems, and Essential Nature of CPD. Psychology professionals at the University of Cabuyao navigate a complex journey in their Continuing Professional Development (CPD), shaped by both internal motivation and external influences. Their experiences reveal a deep commitment to lifelong learning,

driven by a passion for self-improvement, professional responsibility, and the need to overcome challenges such as time constraints and financial limitations. While intrinsic factors like personal growth and excellence fuel their drive, external forces such as institutional policies and workplace support also play a crucial role. Problem-solving becomes an essential skill in addressing CPD hurdles, with mentorship, collaboration, and organizational backing providing necessary reinforcement. Ultimately, CPD is regarded as an indispensable element of their professional identity, ensuring continuous growth and adaptability in an evolving field.

Research Question #4: What programs are proposed based on the emerging themes?

Table 19: "Maximizing Professional Growth: The Essential CPD Program Guide"

Objectives	Activities	Resources	Person Involved	Time	Projected Budget	Success Indicator
Explore the challenges faced by psychology professionals at the University of Cabuyao in advancing their professional development, with the goal of discovering ways to enhance growth and progress in the field.	Hold a seminar to share skills/ experiences learned	Printed Materials: Provide handouts, brochures, and informational pamphlets	Researchers University Representative	1st week of February (4 hours) to 2nd week of February (5 hours)	PHP 30,000	90% of participants reported heightened awareness of challenges in psychology professional development at the University of Cabuyao.
Educate participants on key concepts and developments in the field.	Address on the importance of Professional Development	Whiteboards or Flip Charts: Use whiteboards or flip charts and presentation slides	Practicing Psychologist			Level of participant engagement during interactive activities, Q&A sessions, and discussions throughout the seminar.
Enhance participants' skills and competencies.	Interactive Workshops to Address Challenges	Interactive Activities: sticky notes, index cards, pen, or posters, papers.	Panelist			Assess knowledge gain and understanding of CPD challenges and strategies through pre- and post-seminar scores.
Facilitate discussions and interactions among attendees.	Q&A Session with Experts in the Field	Foods & Drinks	Facilitators			Count networking connections during the seminar and follow-up communication between participants and speakers.
Inspire new ideas and perspectives.		Speakers/ Lighting/ Audio Equipment	Volunteers			Monitor how participants' professional growth is influenced over time, including career progress, skill enhancement, and involvement in CPD activities.

Table 19 shows the program proposed in this study titled "Maximizing Professional Growth: The Essential CPD Program Guide". The program emphasizes the value of continuing professional development (CPD) for job advancement, skill improvement, and keeping up with industry developments through a strong emphasis on organized learning via seminars, workshops, online classes, and practical instructions.

Chapter IV Summary of Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The study focused on the experiences of psychology professionals at the University of Cabuyao in pursuing Continuing Professional Development (CPD). Based on the results shown, the participants have a multifaceted experience in CPD, having committed to continuous learning through seminars and training, and growing professionally

and personally. They believe that improving in their field benefits others and brings a sense of accomplishment. However, they face challenges during CPD acquisition, such as financial and logistical constraints, limited CPD program offerings, time constraints, and lack of institutional support. To overcome these challenges, participants find strategic planning valuable, such as adjusting schedules and using digital and real-life peer networks. They adapt to their budgets and goals, finding the best fit for their budgets. Despite these challenges, the participants still see CPD as integral to attaining competence and staying aligned with evolving professional standards, especially in specialized fields. The relevance of current CPD programs at the University of Cabuyao is evident, as they directly apply to their work and offer a diverse range of topics. The long-term implications of CPD for psychology professionals at the University of Cabuyao include career advancement, self-efficacy, and ethical practice. It also provides job security, qualifications, and a globally competitive edge, helping shape their long-term plans for growth and opportunities. Because the study focused on the experiences of psychology professionals' CPD within a university setting, the researchers found that the experiences of these professionals may not be universally applicable, and therefore, they emphasize the need for further exploration of other fields' CPD experiences within other sectors and universities. Additionally, the environment also plays a role in shaping the experience of these professionals. There is a lack of research on the general study of professionals' CPD experiences, particularly in the ever-evolving field of psychology.

CPD is essential for professional development and character growth, as it allows professionals to share experiences and learn from each other. Researchers believe that this can be beneficial for other psychology professionals and students, providing context on the background work behind professional careers and guiding them in the future. The results can also provide ideas for university administrators to support employees in continuing professional development. Collaboration between researchers and professionals is suggested to help each other find ways to develop their careers, as the topic of CPD remains relevant as professionals continue to expand their profession.

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