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Research Article

Exploring Employability, Program Relevance and Job Satisfaction among BS Criminology Graduates

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ABSTRACT

Workplace fulfillment is critical for motivating workers, boosting productivity, and improving general wellbeing. It also emphasizes relevance of the program to match the industrial demands, as this drives the creation of educational policies, practices, funding allocation, and curriculum design to effectively meet the demands of the general public, employers, and students. This descriptive study investigated the employment status, program relevance, and job satisfaction of LSPU-SPCC BS Criminology graduates from batches 2015 to 2019. The study utilized a descriptive design with a mixed-methods approach having 205 graduates that responded the self-made questionnaire. Result shows that majority of graduates were found to be male and of single civil status, and they were mostly employed by governmental agencies with permanent status, particularly the Philippine National Police. The ratings for skills, curriculum, OJT programs, faculty competency and expertise, instruction and work-related values were favourable to their career but there are prospects for development. Graduates feel quite satisfied with their jobs, particularly with regard to the pay, perks, and job security, although there is space for improvement in terms of promotion chances. Job satisfaction was found to be influenced by healthy working relationships. Employers can take advantage of these findings to foster a positive work environment and provide opportunities for career growth, leading to increased job satisfaction and overall organizational success. The findings suggest that continuous program improvement, guided by program administrators and educators, is necessary to better prepare graduates for careers in criminology.

Keywords: *BS Criminology graduate, Employment, Employability, Graduates' tracer study, Job satisfaction, Program relevance*

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Introduction

Criminology graduates have diverse career paths, including law enforcement, corrections, victim services, research, policy-making, academe and the like. With these, job satisfaction plays a critical role in their engagement, productivity, and commitment to work, however, there is limited research exists on job satisfaction among criminology graduates as a whole. Understanding the relationship between employability status, program relevance, and job satisfaction among criminology graduates is crucial for criminal justice practitioners in the field. Existing research has mostly focused on employability status and job satisfaction separately, with little attention to their relationship among criminology graduates and there is a need for further research to understand the factors that contribute to job satisfaction in this population and identify strategies to enhance it.

Relative to this, the Laguna State Polytechnic University (LSPU) is dedicated to provide quality education, research, and community services, and the College of Criminal Justice Education at LSPU offers the BS Criminology program. One of the responsibilities of the school or institution is to keep track of its graduates. It is essential to find out whether the graduates are employed or unemployed in the program or vocation for which they were trained or they are employed to nonrelated jobs to their finish program. It is necessary to the institution to be informed of what these graduates are doing after finishing their course.

Hence, the study aimed to determine the employability relative to employment profile and status of BS Criminology graduates from Batch 2015 to Batch 2019 at LSPU-SPCC. Moreover, it seeks to evaluate the relevance of the BS Criminology program to graduates' career choices and assess their level of job satisfaction in their chosen career path. The findings of this study can contribute to the improvement of the employability and career prospects of BS Criminology graduates, inform curriculum development and teaching strategies, highlight the benefits of education for individuals and communities, and advance research in the field. Result from this study will be utilized to develop an action plan based on the data gathered to address

issues related to employability enhancement, program relevance to career, and job satisfaction.

Methods

Research Design

To evaluate the career profile, program relevance, and job satisfaction among graduates of the College of Criminal Justice Education, a descriptive design with a mixed-methods approach was used. The study used a multi-faceted data collection technique, including document analysis of college records and the Office of Alumni Affairs and Placement Services.

A quantitative survey was conducted utilizing a properly constructed self-made questionnaire to gain a comprehensive insight. Concurrently, an informal discourse was established to validate and extend the quantitative findings by collecting the diverse views of graduates. This dual-method approach sought to improve the study's reliability and depth. The survey data was subjected to thorough statistical analysis in order to find important patterns and linkages, which contributed to the research's overall soundness.

This research design, which combined quantitative and qualitative approaches, provided unique insights into the career experiences and job satisfaction of graduates of the College of Criminal Justice Education. It also ensured a well-rounded perspective, which contributed to the study's credibility and usefulness.

Population and Inclusion Criteria

With a total of 205 respondents out of 236 graduates from Batch 2015 to 2019, the study includes a research population of ninety (90), 23 out of 47 from Batch 2014, 25 out of 55 from Batch 2015, and 42 out of 56 from Batch 2016. The respondents for this study were identified and chosen using the stratified sampling by batch/year graduated and purposive sampling technique with a fixed criterion. First, the respondents must be a graduate of BS Criminology program from LSPU-SPCC. Second, they must belong to Batch 2016 to 2019 in which the researcher assumed that they have been employed at least once after graduation, and third is the availability and/or willingness of the

respondents to participate in the research at a given time. It must be noted that the researcher aimed for a complete enumeration of graduates however, due to certain circumstances such as

ongoing training or busy schedules of some graduates, a complete enumeration was not feasible. Table 1 below shows the distribution of respondents.

Table 1. Group of respondents by Batch

Group of Respondents	f	On-going training	No response	Total	%
2015	48		6	54	88.89%
2016	50		7	57	87.72%
2017	25	1	2	28	89.29%
2018	34	3	4	41	82.93%
2019	48	4	4	56	85.71%
	205			236	86.86%

Treatment of Data

In this study, data analysis was conducted in two main ways. Firstly, employment data obtained from the college (CCJE) and office of AAPS were utilized to determine the employability profile and current employment status of the graduates. This involved examining factors such as job placement rates and the types of positions obtained by the graduates.

Secondly, a weighted mean approach was employed to assess the relevance of the college program and activities to the graduates' current jobs, as well as to measure their level of job satisfaction. This assessment was conducted using a 4-point Likert scale, allowing the graduates to rate the extent to which they perceived the program's relevance and their satisfaction with their chosen career. The weighted mean calculation allowed for a comprehensive analysis of the aggregated responses and provided valuable insights into the graduates' perspectives on program relevance and job satisfaction.

Result and Discussion

Result

Table 2 detailed the demographic and employment characteristics of the respondents, including the respondents' sex, civil status, current employment profile, type and status of employment, and work affiliations. As shown

there 56.36% male and 43.64% female graduates. As can be seen, the majority of respondents (75.00%) were single, while 25.00% were married. In terms of employment, the majority of respondents (81.36%) reported having a job at the time of the poll, a minor percentage (5.51%) reported being self-employed, and some (10.59%) reported not having a job at all. A small number of respondents (2.54%) did not answer at all or were not monitored.

The majority (60.59%) of those who responded that they were employed worked for governments. 20.76% of people worked in the private sector or for non-profits, while 5.51% were self-employed. Likewise, the employed majority (53.39%) had permanent positions, 2.12% held temporary or probationary roles, while 25.85% had contractual or other non-permanent jobs. In terms of employment, the Philippine National Police (PNP), which accounted for 34.32% of the respondents, was the most prevalent sector. 11.86% of the total was accounted for by other government law enforcement agencies, and 15.25% was accounted for by businesses and industries in non-governmental organizations. The Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP), security services in commercial and non-profit institutions, and the academe (private and government) were also represented among the responders.

Table 2. Data on Employment

2.1. Sex	f	%
Male	133	56.36
Female	103	43.64
Total	236	100.00
2.2. Civil Status	f	%
Single	177	75.00
Married	59	25.00
Total	236	100.00
2.3. Employment Profile	f	%
Employed	192	81.36
Self Employed	13	5.51
Not currently employed	25	10.59
No Response/Not tracked	6	2.54
Total	236	100.00
2.4. Type of Employment	f	%
Government	143	60.59
Private/ Non-Government	49	20.76
Self Employed	13	5.51
2.5. Status of Employment	f	%
Permanent	126	53.39
Temporary/Probationary	5	2.12
Contractual/Casual	61	25.85
Self-Employed	13	5.51
2.6. Work Affiliation	f	%
BFP	12	5.08
BJMP	22	9.32
PNP	81	34.32
Other Law Enforcement Agencies in the Government	28	11.86
Armed Forces of the Philippine (Philippine Army)	2	0.85
Security Services in Private/ Non-Government Institutions	8	3.39
Academe (Private/Government)	3	1.27
Business and Industries (Private/Non-Government Institutions)	36	15.25
Self-Employed	13	5.51

Meanwhile, the results from Table 3 indicate that among the factors evaluated in the study, work-related values (3.73) received the highest overall mean, followed by skills acquired (3.38) and faculty competency and instruction (3.32) which are all interpreted as

"very much relevant" by the respondents. The OJT programs and activities (3.24) and curriculum (3.08) obtained the lowest ranks but with interpretation as "much relevant" by the respondents.

Table 3. Relevance Level of the BS Criminology Program in Meeting the Demands of Present Employment

Indicators	Overall Weighted Mean	DI
3.1. Skills Acquired	3.38	Very Much Relevant
3.2. Curriculum	3.08	Much Relevant
3.3. OJT Programs and Activities	3.24	Much Relevant
3.4. Faculty Competency and Instruction	3.32	Very Much Relevant
3.5. Work -Related Values	3.73	Very Much Relevant

Legend:

- 3.26-4.00* *Very much Relevant*
- 2.51-3.25* *Much Relevant*
- 1.76-2.50* *Slightly Relevant*
- 1.00-1.75* *Not Relevant*

Finally, according to Table 4's findings, alumni of the LSPU-SPCC's BS in Criminology program shows high level of satisfaction in their career path especially with their work relationships and the use of skills and abilities as

the highest with 3.44 overall weighted mean followed by work activities with 3.43 over-all weighted mean, then general working conditions with 3.40 and lastly the salary and promotion potential with 3.32.

Table 4. Level of Job Satisfaction Among Graduates in their Current Employment.

Indicators	WM	DI
4.1. General Working Conditions	3.40	Very Satisfied
4.2. Salary and Promotion Potential	3.31	Very Satisfied
4.3. Work Relationships	3.44	Very Satisfied
4.4. Use of Skills and Abilities	3.44	Very Satisfied
4.5. Work Activities	3.43	Very Satisfied

Legend:

- 3.26-4.00* *Very Satisfied*
- 2.51-3.25* *Satisfied*
- 1.76-2.50* *Dissatisfied*
- 1.00-1.75* *Very Dissatisfied*

Discussion

Table 2 reveals a gender disparity among BS Criminology graduates, with more men than women. This suggests that social and cultural factors may influence career choices based on gender. It is important to promote gender diversity and encourage women to pursue criminology careers. The demographic profile of BS Criminology graduates may also affect career opportunities, highlighting an underrepresentation of women in certain roles. As data indicates that the majority of BS Criminology graduates find employment after graduation, with a low number being self-employed. Some graduates are unemployed, which could be due to various factors such as the labor market, economy, and individual preferences. Also, it is shown that majority of graduates are employed in the government sector, with permanent employment being the most common. This suggests a demand for criminology professionals in government agencies such as law enforcement and corrections. Private/non-government employment is the second most common,

indicating opportunities in related organizations. Self-employment is relatively low. The dominance of government employment and permanent status implies stability and long-term careers in criminology. Temporary/probationary employment is minimal, while contractual/casual employment shows fluctuations. These findings have implications for career choices, job opportunities, and employment arrangements in the criminology field, requiring further research and analysis. Moreover, as revealed, the Philippine National Police (PNP) is the most common employment affiliation for BS Criminology graduates from Batch 2015 to Batch 2019. This indicates a significant number of graduates choosing careers in law enforcement. The specialized knowledge and skills acquired in the Criminology program make graduates well-suited for roles in the PNP. Job opportunities in law enforcement organizations contribute to this trend. The alignment between the Criminology program's curriculum and the demands of the law enforcement sector underscores the need for career

guidance, support services, and efforts to expand career options for graduates. The practical nature of criminology as a discipline also influences graduates' decisions to pursue law enforcement careers.

Table 3 demonstrates that the BS Criminology program at LSPU-SPCC is highly relevant in meeting the demands of the current job market. The program effectively equips students with work-related values, essential skills, competent faculty instruction, effective on-the-job training (OJT) programs, and a well-designed curriculum that prepares them for careers in criminology. The findings indicate that the work-related values instilled in the program, such as honesty, punctuality, hard work, and professionalism, are highly regarded and considered essential by the respondents in their current job roles. The skills acquired through the program, including communication, management, critical thinking, and investigative skills, are also deemed highly relevant. The competency of the faculty, including mastery of subject matter and quality instruction, is perceived as very relevant, underscoring the importance of effective teaching. To enhance instruction, providing regular professional development opportunities for faculty is recommended. To corroborate, Castrillion, (2020) emphasized that job satisfaction is influenced by the alignment of values with the work environment, emphasizing the importance of instilling work-related values in graduates. Employers expect graduates to possess technical and discipline-specific competencies, as well as a broader range of skills such as teamwork, communication, leadership, critical thinking, problem-solving, and potentially managerial skills.

While the curriculum is seen as relevant, there may be room for improvement in aligning it more closely with the needs and expectations of the current job market. Regular review and updates of the curriculum are necessary to ensure graduates have the relevant knowledge and skills required for their careers. Similarly, the OJT programs and activities can be enhanced to better prepare students for their future careers. This can involve improving the quality and variety of OJT experiences, providing more opportunities for practical application of knowledge and skills, and strengthening

industry partnerships. Incorporating careers into the curriculum can be achieved through initiatives such as teacher visits to industries, establishing employer connections, inviting employers to classrooms, developing subject-specific career activities, and including career prompts in planning documents. Successful examples include upskilling staff through business visits, fostering curriculum-leader-employer partnerships, and creating industry-focused work streams. These measures help bridge the gap between education and the demands of the job market, enhancing students' career readiness.

The study's respondents provided valuable insights, comments, and suggestions for improving the college's ability to produce high-caliber graduates. Recommendations included upgrading learning facilities, incorporating in-service instructors from relevant fields, connecting with organizations beyond PNP, BJMP, and BFP, assisting graduates in obtaining field-related jobs, enhancing communication and investigative skills, and incorporating industrial skills into the curriculum (Electronic Communications, 2021-2022). These recommendations have implications for the college's leadership, faculty, and students. The administration needs to invest in modern tools and facilities to provide high-quality education and better prepare students for their chosen fields. Collaboration with professionals in the field can bridge the gap between theory and practical application. Continuously updating the curriculum based on industry needs and collaborating with industry specialists are crucial for incorporating relevant industrial skills into the program. Building a strong alumni network and industry partnerships can help graduates find employment opportunities aligned with their studies. Enhancing students' communication abilities, intellect, and investigative skills requires integrating these skills into the curriculum and providing practical opportunities. Collaboration with professionals in the field can offer hands-on instruction in authentic settings.

Overall, the BS Criminology program was assessed as relevant to the respondents' job, but there is still room for improvement in the curriculum, OJT programs, faculty competency, and instruction to align with the job market.

The program's ongoing improvement should consider the suggestions from the respondents. Collaboration between professors and college management is essential for implementing these advancements and equipping students with the necessary skills.

Finally, Table 4 indicates that graduates in law enforcement and criminology are generally satisfied with their jobs, particularly in terms of workload, work-life balance, pay, benefits, and job security. This suggests that the course/curriculum effectively prepares graduates for their careers in criminology and meets the demands of the labor market. However, promotional opportunities could be improved as graduates express slightly less satisfaction in this aspect. The survey also revealed that respondents expressed gratitude and admiration for their professors, mentors, and instructors, which contributed to their job satisfaction. They emphasized the value of a good education, perseverance, hard work, and prayer. Concerns were raised regarding making wise decisions about degrees and future careers, indicating the need for guidance and support in navigating educational and professional pathways. The expressions of gratitude and appreciation for educators suggest their significant influence on students' learning experiences. The importance of a quality education, individual accountability, and drive for academic achievement are emphasized. There may be a need for more advice and support for students in making informed decisions about their degrees and future employment, which could impact how educators and institutions assist students in acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills for their desired careers.

While graduates overall are satisfied with their current jobs, improvements can be made in terms of promotion opportunities. Employers and organizations can utilize this information to provide a positive work environment, competitive compensation packages, and avenues for career growth, leading to increased job satisfaction, employee retention, and organizational success. The study underscores the significance of positive relationships between students and educators, personal responsibility and motivation, and guidance and support for academic and professional success.

These findings have implications for the development of educational policies and programs aimed at enhancing student outcomes and fostering positive learning experiences.

Conclusion

Majority of graduates were male and single civil status who are mostly employed by governmental organizations especially in the Philippine National Police (PNP), and other law enforcement agencies, including the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP), Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) and security agencies/services in private institutions with permanent status.

The BS Criminology program at LSPU-SPCC is highly relevant in meeting job market demands, with positive ratings for skills, curriculum, OJT programs, faculty competency, and work-related values. The program instills important ethical and professional values in graduates, contributing to their success in their current job roles. However, the recommendations made by the respondents offer valuable insights into areas for improvement, which should be considered by program administrators and educators. To achieve these improvements and provide students with the necessary skills, the college administration and faculty must work together. There are opportunities for further improvement in the curriculum, OJT programs, faculty competency, and instruction to maintain relevance to the job market. Continuous program improvement, guided by program administrators and faculty members, is necessary to better prepare graduates for careers in criminology and meet the needs of graduates and employers in the field.

Also, graduates of the program are highly satisfied with various aspects of their work, such as working conditions, salary, benefits, and job security, indicating that the program has prepared them well for careers in criminology and law enforcement. They are content with their workload, work-life balance, and opportunities to learn new skills. However, there is room for improvement in terms of promotion opportunities, suggesting that employers could focus on providing more career advancement prospects. Positive work relationships also contribute to job satisfaction, highlighting the

importance of a supportive work environment. Employers can leverage these findings to foster a positive work environment, offer competitive compensation packages, and provide opportunities for career growth, which may result in increased job satisfaction, employee retention, and overall organizational success

While the BS Criminology program has received high ratings and positive perception, continuous improvement is encouraged. Improving the BS Criminology program at LSPU-SPCC may include continuous curriculum enhancement and OJT program improvement, likewise include faculty competency development, and instructional enhancement. Program administrators and educators should regularly review and update the curriculum to align with job market demands, incorporate new technologies and best practices, and provide practical OJT experiences that align with real-world challenges. Faculty should receive ongoing professional development opportunities, such as workshops and conferences, to enhance their skills and knowledge. Instructional methodologies and techniques should be regularly evaluated and improved, including adopting innovative teaching approaches, incorporating real-world case studies, promoting critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and encouraging active student participation in the learning process.

Likewise, employers may concentrate on offering opportunities for career advancement, encouraging a positive work environment, providing competitive compensation packages, offering opportunities for learning and skill development, and placing a high priority on employee retention in order to ensure high job satisfaction among employees, which in turn will lead to increased retention rates, higher productivity, and overall organizational success. This can be achieved by creating clear pathways for promotion, fostering positive work relationships, ensuring competitive compensation packages, providing training programs and continuous learning opportunities, and implementing retention strategies such as conducting employee engagement surveys and implementing career development programs, recognition and reward programs, and flexible work arrangements based on the positive job

satisfaction reported by graduates of the program.

Furthermore, continuous research and further investigation into the employability, program relevance, and job satisfaction of graduates should be conducted to consistently monitor the status of graduates. This research serves as a crucial factor in evaluating the effectiveness of the department's quality instruction, ensuring that graduates are equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills, and values to excel in their respective fields.

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