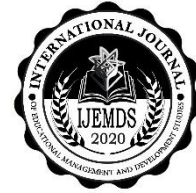


Employment Status and the Challenges Encountered by Criminology Graduates



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Abstract

It is the primary aim of educational institutions to produce quality graduates who will contribute to the nation's workforce. Thus, higher education institutions (HEI) have to equip graduates with knowledge, skills, and values that will qualify them to work. Hence, this descriptive study was conducted to trace the employability status and determine the challenges or problems encountered by 90 Bachelor of Science in Criminology graduates from batch 2014 to 2016 who were chosen using non-probability sampling. Findings revealed that most of the respondents are permanently employed in course-related jobs. The salary and benefits of the agency/institution are significant factors valued by graduates in considering their first career as well as staying on their current jobs. However, graduates took a longer period of time getting employed while the foremost reason for non-employment was family concerns. It was further identified that the qualifications set by the agency/institution applied for is the topmost challenge/problems encountered by the graduates. While the BS Criminology program offers a breadth of possibilities and career opportunities, the graduates need to be properly prepared and equipped with skills to match the standards set by companies. Thus, colleges and universities should take responsibility in upgrading the curriculum to meet the industry needs and demands.

Keywords:

employability, graduates tracer study, criminology graduates, employment challenges

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1. Introduction

Many people are becoming fascinated to careers in criminal justice and criminology, because not only it was their dream, but they are also being influenced by the popular shows such as CSI, Criminal minds and Law and Order (Roufa, 2017). Criminology, as defined by English (2016), is the scientific study of crime, criminals, criminal behaviours and correction. It includes the examination of evidence, hereditary and psychological causes of crime, various modes of investigation, conviction and the efficacy of differing styles of punishment, rehabilitation and corrections. In the Philippines, the Criminal Justice Education includes degree programs in Criminology, Law Enforcement Administration, Correction Administration, Industrial Security Administration and Forensic Science under the provisions of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Memorandum Order No. 21, Series of 2005.

In the context of a public university, the College of Criminal Justice Education of the Laguna State Polytechnic University-San Pablo City Campus (LSPU-SPCC) offering Bachelor of Science in Criminology is a new independent department previously under the College of Arts and Sciences. The program was first offered in 2011 under the College of Arts and Sciences until it became an independent department in 2013 under the College of Criminal Justice Education and had its first batch in 2014 with 49 graduates. With the aim to produce quality graduates, the department was accredited Level 1 by the Accrediting Agency for Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines (AACUP). However, one of the identified deficiencies was the lack of tracer studies to monitor the graduates.

Graduate Tracer Studies among universities worldwide became a common identifiable practice that provides viable opportunities for HEIs to evaluate their academic curriculum and activities (Badiru & Wahome, 2016). Tracer studies also known as graduate surveys, alumni surveys, or graduate tracking use a standardized survey to analyze employment profile of graduates, which takes place normally between 6 months and 3 years after graduation. At present, tracer studies are becoming more and more popular though it is already common in higher education (European Training Foundation, 2017). As such, many countries experience a growing demand to introduce a system of tracer studies due to reaccreditations requirements and quality management. Education institutions are even forced by law to implement regular tracer studies. In addition, demand from various donor

agencies or stakeholders is also growing to gather empirical evidence about the relevance of the education/training (Schomburg, 2016).

With the demand by both the accrediting agency and institutional quality assurance, the conduct of a tracer study is timely and relevant. Thus, this study assesses the employment status of the BS criminology graduates of LSPU-SPCC specifically from Batch 2014 to Batch 2016. It was conducted to identify match or mismatch with the degree program and the type of employment; reasons for job application, staying in the current job, and non-employment; and challenges or problems encountered in finding a job.

2. Literature review

2.1. Employability of Graduates

Based on statistics, the adult employment rate in Switzerland for the year 2020 was higher than any other Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) country, at 79.9 percent followed by the Iceland with 77.9%, then Netherlands on the 3rd with 77.8%. In Asia, Japan, ranked 4th with 77.3% employment rate (Szmigiera, 2021). In the Philippines, the special report of Cepeda (2020), based on the preliminary results of the Philippine Statistics Authority's quarterly Labor Force Survey in December 2020, the month of October report shows the lowest unemployment rate with approximate 8.7% or 3.8 million Filipinos where 23.9% of the unemployed are college graduates. A study revealed that one out of three Filipino college graduate is employable which means that overall employability needs improvement since it shows that about 65 percent of graduates in the country are not qualified for the jobs they are applying for because they do not have the right skills and training (Campos, 2017; The Philippine Star, 2017).

According to Lina (2019), after graduation is the time where fresh graduates confront with the realities beyond the academic world and become an active jobseeker, but will face the harsh statistics that only 35 to 40% will land a job and barely 10% will start a career related to the degree earned and the rest will join the unemployed status. In the practice of criminal justice of which 63.8% are employed, the most common job 15 months after graduation is welfare and housing associate professional while the police officer, legal associate professional, prison service officer and probation officer are also among the top ten jobs (AGCAS, 2020).

The causes of unemployment in high-income countries can be categorized in two ways: either the natural rate of unemployment caused by factors in labor markets, such as government regulations regarding hiring and starting businesses, or the cyclical unemployment which is caused by recession in the economy (Greenlaw et al., 2017). In general, Amadeo and Estevez (2020), identified seven causes of unemployment as voluntarily leaving the workforce, relocation, newly entering the work force, re-entering the workforce, advances in technology, job outsourcing, and demand-deficient unemployment. The first four causes create frictional unemployment, the 5th and 6th causes create structural and the seventh lead to cyclical unemployment.

Due to limited job opportunities, job mismatch becomes a common scenario. Greaves (2020) argues that the primary reasons for accepting job offers: fits into their career plan, they need to earn a living and pay off debts, there is an opportunity for progress, they will gain and broaden experience, there is a support for their mental health and well-being and that they are well paid. Moreover, Marr (2016) identified the seven good reasons for employees to stay on their job that includes seniority, stability, competition, networking and references, financial stability, dependability and perseverance. On the other hand, there are things that need to be considered if employee chooses to retain job such as foods on the table, backup plan when leaving the job, enough savings, benefits, chances of getting promotion, learning from the job, like and dislike, sense of purpose, healthy self-esteem, established network and reference, and the guarantee on next job (Claire, 2018). Moreover, Sunshine (2021) stresses on culture team environment in the company, purpose and meaning, recognition and appreciation, respect among co-workers, mentor to encourage them, trust with their leaders, emotional investment and fair treatment.

2.2. Challenges/Problems Encountered by Graduates

Getting a career is common as the next chapter of life among the fresh graduates after earning their degree and it is not a surprise that they will encounter challenges and problems since it is their first exposure to a working environment (Heang, et. al, 2019). The Burning Glass (2018) reports that 43% of the recent college graduates are underemployed in their first job out of college. Of those, two-thirds are still underemployed after five years, and just over half remain so after ten years. By contrast, just one in ten graduates who land a first job

appropriate to their skill level slip into underemployment after five years. On the other hand, Anderson (2021) cites the survey administered by Cengage showing half among graduates decided not to apply to entry-level positions because they felt they were not qualified, and nearly one-fifth of recent graduates of two- and four-year institutions said that their college education did not provide the skills necessary for their first job. In a survey conducted by Monster India, 58 % among fresh graduates found their first job within the span of three months and 66 % among new graduates are not prepared for their first employment (Pant, 2018). Similarly, in another study of Monster.com, over one third of the Malaysian fresh graduates quit their first job in less than a year because majority stated the lack of industry knowledge and experience affecting confidence in the given role (Human Resource Online, 2017). This may imply that formal education provided by universities may not be enough to prepare its students in the career world.

The statistics and scenarios of unemployment and underemployment are unsurprising (Cooper, 2018) because graduates develop and expand the skills for better jobs later on. However, Porter (2012) stressed that most of the college graduates struggle in finding jobs due to a lack of practical and professional skills. For instance, Magnaye (2020) stressed the students' self-perception on their need to develop soft skills such as self-confidence, creativity, independence and resourcefulness. This was further argued that students entering undergraduate programs also need further improvements in academic and social-emotional preparedness (Magnaye, 2020). In another study cited by Campos (2017) that around 65 percent of college graduates in the Philippines does not have the right skills and trainings to qualify for their chosen jobs. Due to the lack of skills, graduates find it difficult to land a job as employers no longer provide trainings like they used to be in the past (Kasriel, 2018).

2.3.Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored with John Holland's Theory of Career Choice (Holland, 1959), systems theory framework (STF) of career development (Patton & McMahon, 2018), Frank Parsons Trait and Factor Theory (Parsons, 1909) and the Super's Theory or the Donald Super Developmental self-concept theory (Super, 1957).

The Theory of Career Choice upholds that people choose a career chosen by other people like them. People search for environments that will let them use their skills and

abilities, and express their attitudes and values while taking on enjoyable problems and roles. Holland's theory believes that interaction between environment and personalities types (realistic (doers), investigative (thinkers), artistic (creators), social (helpers), enterprising (persuaders), conventional (organizers), affect people in choosing their career. People are initially attracted to a career by their personalities and other factors such as age, gender, culture, social class, intelligence, including the level of education that constitute their personal background. The closer the match of personality to job, the greater the satisfaction (Ruiz et al., n.d.; Sanchez & Diamante, 2017; Giobbi, 2018).

Meanwhile, the systems theory framework (STF) of career development incorporates systemic thinking and systemic mapping to show career development as a dynamic and complicated process negotiated by individuals in the context of their systems of influence. The traditional approach to career needs to be understood in the context of an era in the world of work when vocational guidance was applied to decisions about jobs for life, usually at school leaving age. The world of work changes has changed the understanding of career and career development. While the elements of the systems of influence on individual career behavior are the same, their nature and their relevance to the individual and his/her career behaviour at different points throughout life are different (McMahon & Patton, 2018). As the current study focused on the employability status of BS Criminology graduates, this traditional approach shows how one's career changed over time as it changes the knowledge and understanding of an individual. This theory argues that career decisions may be influenced by how someone perceived himself and how the world of works changes.

The Frank Parsons Trait and Factor Theory suggests that ideal career is based on personal traits like skills, values and personality matched and correspond with job factors, such as pay and work environment. The better the fit, the higher an individual's job satisfaction and success. Individuals have unique traits that can be objectively measured and matched against requirements of occupations. Choosing an occupation involves trying to match an individual to a job so that their needs will be met and their job performance will be satisfactory (Giobbi, 2018; Sanchez & Diamante, 2017)

Another existing theory related to the current study is the Super's Theory or the Donald Super Developmental self-concept theory which emphasizes that development of self-concept has important and greatest contributions to career development. Developing a

sense of self and realization of change over time is important when planning a career. Self-concept changes over time and develops as a result of experience. This suggests that career development is lifelong (Super, 1957). In relation to the present study, it is assumed that the LSPU-SPCC graduates may develop self-concept changes that can make them change their career preference over time as they finished their course.

3. Methodology

The study used the descriptive research design that involves the use of survey questionnaire, observation and description of the behavior of the respondents without influencing it in any way. Descriptive research is often used in quantitative research designs, wherein the general overview gives some valuable pointers as to what variables are worth testing quantitatively.

The research population are 90 out of one 159 alumni of the Bachelor of Science in Criminology in LSPU-SPCC. Accordingly, two graduates already passed away, 67 were not traced or did not respond, and some are undergoing training at the bureau or agencies where any communication is restricted. The study used non-probability convenience sampling due to the availability of the respondents. The study was conducted in the year 2017.

Table 1 shows the distribution of graduates as respondents of the study.

Table 1

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Graduates by batch or year of graduation

Batch/Year	No. of Graduates	No. of respondents	% each batch/year	Total Percentage (%)
Batch 2014	49	21	42.86%	23.33%
Batch 2015	54	31	57.41%	34.44%
Batch 2016	56	38	67.86%	42.22%
TOTAL	159	90	56.60%	100.00%

The checklist survey questionnaire used in the study was lifted from the CHED Tracer Questionnaire and the Tracer form prescribed by the University with the content-validation of the office of the Alumni Affairs. These two instruments were modified to fit the

purpose of the study. The final questionnaire comprises the employability profile which include employment profile, relatedness of job to course completed, status of employment, year spent before landing on the current job. It also include reasons of non-employment, reasons in accepting/applying on the first job, reasons on staying in the current job and the challenges encountered in looking for a job after graduation. The rating scale used was (4) Always; (3) Often; (2) Sometimes; and (1) Never. The questionnaire was distributed personally to the graduates.

The frequency count, percentage, ranking, and mean were used as statistical tools in the study.

4. Findings and Discussion

Table 2

The Employment Profile of the Graduates

Respondents	Employed		Unemployed		Total	
	Frequency	(%)	Frequency	(%)	Frequency	(%)
Batch 2014	15	20.83%	6	28.57%	21	23.33%
Batch 2015	26	36.11%	5	16.13%	31	34.44%
Batch 2016	31	43.06%	7	18.42%	38	42.22%
Total	72	80.00%	18	20%	90	100%

Table 2 shows that out of 90 respondents included in the survey, 72 or 80% of them were employed while 18 out of 90 or 20% of the graduates are unemployed.

It simply implies that criminology graduates are employable. Most of the graduates opt to be employed with the Philippine National Police (PNP), Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) and the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) but many are not aware of the breadth of opportunities within and beyond the field of criminal justice. The provision of RA 6506 as amended by Republic Act Number 11131 which regulates the practice of Criminology Profession, extends the scope of practice of criminology. In line with the law enforcement, practice of profession or occupation include but not limited to law enforcement administrator, executive, adviser, consultant, officer, investigator, agent or employee in any private or government agencies performing law enforcement and quasi-police functions at the PNP, the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA), the BFP, the BJMP, the Provincial Jail, the Bureau of Corrections

(BUCOR), the Probation and Parole Administration (PPA), the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), the Bureau of Customs (BoC), the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), other government and private banks, the Philippine Postal Corporation (PPC), the Sea and Air Marshalls, the VIP Security, Airport and Seaport Police, the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency (NICA), the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (ISAFP), and agencies of the government exercising similarly related functions in the field of national security, public safety, and peace and order.

In line with teaching profession, scope of practice includes professor, instructor or teacher in any university, college or school duly recognized by the government on any professional and component subjects of the criminology program. Likewise, scope of practice also includes being a technician, examiner/criminalist, or specialist scientific in any crime detection and investigation or forensic science. Further, among any rehabilitation, correctional, and penal institution or facility, he would practice as correctional administrator, executive, supervisor, or officer. Furthermore, one can be employed as a counselor, consultant, adviser or researcher in any government or private agency on any aspect of criminological research or criminology-related projects. Moreover, under the laws of the Philippines, one may practice as a private investigator, administrator, consultant or agent, or detective in any private security and investigation agency.

To abridge, it is implied that criminology graduates are employable since there are numerous career path for criminology program. Thus, it is important that criminology student or alumni should be aware that there are a lot of opportunities and career possibilities open to them.

As revealed in Table 3, out of 72 employed graduates, 48 or 66.67% are related to the course completed. Most of the employed graduates to criminology-related jobs are from Batch 2015 with 18 or 37.5% and most of the employed graduates to non-criminology related jobs are from Batch 2016 with 15 or 48%. This shows that most of graduates having course-related jobs are senior batch while most of the new graduates are in non-related careers.

Table 3

The Relatedness of Graduates' Job to Completed Course

Respondents	Related	Non-related	Total
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	Frequency	(%)	Frequency	(%)	Frequency	(%)
Batch 2014	14	29.17%	1	6.67%	15	20.83%
Batch 2015	18	37.50%	8	30.77%	26	36.11%
Batch 2016	16	33.33%	15	48.39%	31	43.06%
Total	48	66.67%	24	33.33%	72	100.00%

It implies that graduates pursue and choose jobs related to criminology. This is not surprising since BS Criminology program has a breadth of career possibilities and opportunities to choose. Most of the employed graduates are in the government sectors such as PNP, BFP and BJMP in which the roles and functions on law enforcement are related to BS Criminology program.

Table 4

The Graduates' Status of employment

Respondents	Contractual		Probationary		Permanent		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Batch 2014	2	7.69%	0	0.00%	13	30.95%	15	20.83%
Batch 2015	7	26.92%	1	25.00%	18	42.86%	26	36.11%
Batch 2016	17	65.38%	3	75.00%	11	26.19%	31	43.06%
Total	26	36.11%	4	5.56%	42	58.33%	72	100.00%

Among the respondents that are currently employed, majority of them have permanent status with 42 or 58%, 26 or 36.11 % are contractual and only 4 or 6% are under probationary/temporary status as reflected in Table 4. It was observed that majority of employed graduates under contractual status are from Batch 2016 with 17 or 65.38%. On the other hand, majority of employed graduates with permanent status are from Batch 2015 with 18 or 43%. One significant observation is that employed under contractual status are those employed in non-criminology related jobs.

It implies that criminology graduates tend to choose job under permanent status similarly with other graduates of different programs. Permanent employment acceptably mean that employees are paid time-off, have benefits such as insurance, retirement benefits, career development and advancement opportunities, sense of stability, and sense of security in having a job. Similarly, in the tracer study of Guadamor & Eusebio (2017), it revealed that

most of the Criminology graduates are employed in their fields of specialization are on a permanent status. Clinching from the results, Criminology program has great possibilities and opportunities to be employed in permanent positions and graduates tend to choose permanency since it has many promising advantages.

Table 5

The Number of Years Spent Before Landing on the Current Job

Respondents	Within a Year		2 Years		3 Years		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Batch 2014	5	10.87%	5	26.32%	5	71.43%	15	20.83%
Batch 2015	13	28.26%	11	57.89%	2	28.57%	26	36.11%
Batch 2016	28	60.87%	3	15.79%	0	0.00%	31	43.06%
Total	46	63.89%	19	26.39%	7	9.72%	72	100.00%

The waiting period for graduates to land a job is reflected in Table 5. The majority spend at least 1 year before landing a job. Based on observation, majority of employed graduates within a year after graduation are from Batch 2016, considered fresh graduates while some spend 2-3 years before landing a job. It should be noted also that 12 out of 18 unemployed are processing/on-going application in different bureaus.

It shows that employability of graduates within the span of 1-3 years is quite high. Apparently, majority of those employed within a year are under contractual statuses who still pursue their application to criminology-related careers. Moreover, majority of the graduates who tend to choose the Tri-bureaus (PNP, BJMP, and BFP) as their career path spend at least 1-3 years to qualify and complete the requirements set by the agencies. Based on observation, graduates who want to pursue permanent jobs choose to review and pass the Criminologist Licensure Examination before looking for a job. Similarly, in the tracer study of Guadamor and Eusebio (2017), they have concluded that graduates of BS Criminology in CSU-Piat Campus took a long period before getting employed.

Generally, it is observed that even if graduates took 1-3 years before being employed, most are guaranteed employment to a course-related job with permanent positions. It can be inferred then that the demand or need for criminology graduates is no question. Like other bureau or industry, criminology-related careers adhere to the strict standards on hiring

employees, which requires preparation. As most of the career path and opportunities for Criminology is in the government sector, required eligibilities and extensive recruitment and screening process take time for graduates to be employed.

Table 6

Reasons of non-employment of BS Criminology graduates

Reasons of non-employment	f	Rank
Further Study	3	3.5
Family concerns	15	1
Health related reasons	7	2
Lack of work experiences	2	5
Low job opportunities	3	3.5
Did not look for a job	1	6

**Multiple response*

As seen in Table 6, family concerns ranked first among the reasons of non-employment with a frequency count of 15, followed by health-related reason. Least reasons include further study, low job opportunities and did not look for a job. It should be noted however that 12 out of 18 unemployed have on-going application to different bureaus aside from the reasons identified by the respondents.

It infers that majority of BS Criminology graduates needs to address some family concerns after graduation as their reason for unemployment. Similarly, in the study of Ruiz, et al. (n.d.), it also revealed that the unemployed graduates tried to join the law enforcement but failed due to health reasons or family concerns. According to Lina (2019), fresh graduate faces the harsh statistics that only 35 to 40% will land a job and barely 10 % will start a career related to the degree earned and the rest will join the unemployed status, which means that majority or about 50 to 55% among graduates are possibly under unemployed status after graduation.

The results imply that BS Criminology graduates chose to stay unemployed until family concerns are resolved similar to graduates of other programs. However, various sources indicated that most cause on unemployment is job or supply mismatch, economic/global recession, demand-deficient unemployment, lack of skills among job

seekers and more (Greenlaw et al., 2017; Amadeo & Estevez, 2020). This contradiction on the results implies a degree of case-by-case scenario.

Table 7

Reasons for accepting/applying on the first job

Reasons	f	Rank
Salary and benefits	50	1
Career Challenge	37	2
Related to special skills	34	3.5
Proximity to residence	21	5
Peer/family influence	19	6
Related to course	34	3.5

**Multiple response*

As shown in Table 7, the leading reason why a graduate accepted or applied to their first job after finishing the BS Criminology program is the salary and benefits. Though salary ranked as the foremost reason, other reasons include the career challenge, relatedness to special skills, proximity to residence, peer/family influence or related to course. This contradicts Greaves (2020) that a high salary isn't so important and being well-paid in taking a job was the least common motivator, with only 3.6% stating this as the main reason for taking their job.

The results imply the practicality of the graduates in terms of the competitiveness of the salary and benefits. Practically, living in the third world country such as the Philippines, salary and benefits are great factors to support a living and/or family. This is also an implication that even salary and benefits are highly considered, other factors such as career challenge, relation of job to special skills and course earned, nearness of residence, and influence of the peers/family is being considered. This interesting set of data allows employers to understand the behavior of graduates who are seeking for a job. Graduates are attracted to a job that offers opportunities to earn for a living, which at the same time gears towards career and professional growth.

Table 8

Reasons for staying on the current job

Reasons	f	Rank
Salary and benefits	54	1
Career challenge	45	2
Related to special skill	41	3
Related to course/program of study	23	5.5
Proximity to residence	23	5.5
Peer influence/ Family influence	29	4

*Multiple response

Table 8 reflects that majority of the respondents stayed in their job because of salary and benefits, the same reason for their first job application. Similarly, the other reasons include career challenge, related to special skill, related to course/program of study, proximity to residence and peer influence/ family influence. It appears that majority value the competitiveness of salary and benefits as it will compensate the competency acquired from earning the degree.

Career challenge is also one of the reasons why employees stay in their current job. The preference for exciting but fulfilling job imply that the respondents have stimulating job that makes them better professionals by improving and developing their skills. The Criminology career paths are challenging because it requires action and trainings especially the crime detection and investigation, crime prevention and other law enforcement activities.

Generally, the results dictate that even if salary and benefits are the foremost reasons among the respondents, employers should not assume that employees stay merely for money. Regardless of the type of industry and company, the company management should take proactive steps in order to keep their employees. If the job gives chances for success and career growth opportunities, it will motivate the employees to stay on their job.

The table 9 shows the challenges and problems encountered by the graduates in looking for a job. The foremost challenge faced was the “*Qualifications set by the agency/institution applied for*” with the highest mean of 2.84 and an interpretation of “Often”. It must be noted that based on observation, most BS Criminology graduates tend to apply in government agencies/institutions specially in the PNP, BJMP, and BFP. The minimum qualifications are stipulated under Republic Act Number 6975 as amended by

Republic Act No. 8551, which indicates application and employment in these agencies require long and proper preparation.

Table 9

Challenges/problems encountered in looking for a job after graduation

Challenges/Problems encountered	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1. Few jobs vacancies/lack of position or item	2.80	Often	3
2. Inadequate experience	2.77	Often	4
3. Mismatch of Educational qualifications	2.81	Often	2
4. Personality Factors	2.50	Sometimes	7
5. Passing the pre-employment interview	2.58	Often	5
6. Lack of political patronage	2.44	Sometimes	9
7. Passing the pre-employment exam	2.46	Sometimes	8
8. Not meeting requirements	2.39	Sometimes	10
9. Inadequate knowledge or skills	2.51	Often	6
10. Qualifications set by the agency/institution applied for	2.84	Often	1

Furthermore, the “*Mismatch of Educational qualification*” got the second highest weighted mean of 2.81 with an interpretation of “*Often*”. This reflects the graduates employed in the non-criminology related jobs. Most of the disqualified applicants especially on the tri-bureaus tend to work in any other careers not related to criminology. Meanwhile, “*Few job vacancies*” got the third highest weighted mean of 2.8 and a verbal interpretation of “*Often*”. This signifies the reality that graduates outnumbered the job vacancies, which also open the challenge of program oversubscription and oversupply of graduates. Of the few vacancies, the requirements look for adequate experience which most of the fresh graduates lack.

On the other hand, “*Not meeting requirements*” got the lowest rank with a total mean of 2.39 and an interpretation of “*Never*”. This indicates that the respondents did not perceive this as hindrance in finding a job since the requirements needed are easily available. Meanwhile, “*Lack of Political patronage*” got the second lowest rank with a total mean of 2.44 and a verbal interpretation of “*Never*.” This signifies that Criminology graduates do not embrace political patronage. The respondents believe that their qualifications, knowledge and

skills are still the best weapons to be part of the world of work. Additionally, “*Passing the pre-employment exam*” got the third lowest rank with a mean of 2.46 and a verbal interpretation of “Never”. It indicates that majority of the Criminology graduates did not find the pre-employment exam as impediment. This denotes the knowledge and competencies of the graduates acquired through their program which could also be applied in the practical scenarios at work.

The results of the current study confirm the findings of several studies that the challenge to job seekers include the lack of skills, graduates’ preparation is lacking or not enough and preferences or qualifications of companies (Anderson, 2021; Porter, 2021; Kasriel, 2018; Cooper, 2018; Pant, 2018; Campos, 2017). Since the graduates are challenged oftentimes by many factors such as the recruitment and screening process of companies or agencies, the readiness of the graduates in terms of employability skills is a significant factor on the high probability of being employed. The agencies or institutions set high qualifications or standards for their applicants since they hire people who can contribute to the institution’s growth and development. However, most new graduates still have dilemmas about these qualifications.

5. Conclusion

With the aim of assessing the employment status of the BS criminology graduates of LSPU-SPCC Batch 2014 to Batch 2016, this study found that, the graduates are employable whom majority were employed in permanent positions. The salary and benefits of the agency/institution are significant factors to apply in the first chosen career and stay in the current jobs. However, as graduates mostly aim to join the Tri-bureaus (PNP, BJMP, and BFP), it took them at least 1-3 years to be employed. The primary reasons for non-employment were family concern and health-related issues. The foremost challenge faced by the graduates was the qualifications set by the agency/institution.

The University may utilize the result as basis for intervention programs to equip graduates with the necessary skills and proper preparation for their chosen careers. The College may develop an intervention program especially for those who were unemployed and underemployed. The intervention program must include continuous career path orientation and seminars related to career development. Similarly, seminars or trainings are encouraged

to develop the soft skills and other needed employability skills of graduates. With this, there is a high probability of employment match after graduation. As part of the program quality assurance, program admission requirements may be set based on the qualifications provided by the different agencies/companies. Moreover, further research on the employability of the graduates is highly recommended to monitor the status of the graduates and help ensure the acquisition of the needed employability skills.

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