

Employment Trends and Status of Misamis University Criminology Graduates: A Tracer Study

¹Ates, Mico; ²Gacasan, Joshua Earl; ³Fuertes, Joshua; ⁴Maquiling, Donna Marie; ⁵Elmie A. Allanic; ⁶Jose F. Cuevas, Jr.
Misamis University College of Criminology

Abstract:- Criminology Graduates are expected to possess the necessary knowledge and skills to meet job requirements. This tracer study examines the employability status and trends of criminology graduates from a higher educational institution in Ozamiz City, Misamis Occidental, spanning the years 2018 to 2023. Using a descriptive survey design, data were collected through the available documents in the college and analyzed using statistical methods, specifically frequency and percentage analysis. The findings reveal that a significant proportion of criminology graduates remain unemployed, with unemployment rates ranging from 50.72% to 95.91%. The highest employment rate occurred in the 2018–2019 cohort (49.28%), while the lowest rates were found in the 2021–2022 and 2022–2023 cohorts (4.09% and 5.27%, respectively). Employment trends show a gradual decline in job acquisition, largely due to transitional periods such as board exam preparations and awaiting results. Graduates are predominantly employed in the government sector, particularly in the Philippine National Police (PNP), though opportunities in both government and private sectors remain limited. Barriers to employment include the financial burden of licensure exams and the competitive nature of job openings, especially in law enforcement agencies. Despite these challenges, graduates demonstrate optimism and actively use transitional periods to prepare for their desired careers, particularly in policing and law enforcement roles. This proactive approach suggests a readiness to overcome barriers and apply their academic training in the workforce. The study provides valuable insights into the employability challenges and trends faced by criminology graduates, offering implications for curriculum development and employment support services.

Keywords:- Criminology Graduates, Employability, Employment Status, Employment Trends.

I. INTRODUCTION

The field of criminology plays a crucial role in understanding crime, its causes, and its impact on society (Jones, 2021). As a multidisciplinary field, criminology integrates elements of sociology, psychology, law, and public administration to develop comprehensive strategies for crime prevention and criminal justice reform (Bansal et al., 2023). The College of Criminology, dedicated to preparing students for careers in various facets of the

criminal justice system, offers rigorous academic programs designed to equip graduates with the necessary theoretical knowledge and practical skills (Collica-Cox & Furst, 2019). Criminology graduates are expected to possess the necessary knowledge and skills to address the complex issues related to crime and law enforcement (Kraska et al., 2020). The demand for criminology graduates in the job market is an important aspect to consider in assessing their employability status (Riva, 2023).

Employability, defined as the ability to gain and maintain meaningful employment, is a key indicator of the success of educational programs (Behle, 2020). For criminology graduates, this means not just landing a job but also finding roles that make use of their specific expertise (Rennison & Hart, 2022). Given the ever-changing landscape of the criminal justice industry, which includes law enforcement, prisons, forensic science, and legal services, knowing a graduate's employment status can provide important information about how well the college's training programs and curriculum are working (Kratcoski & Kratcoski, 2021).

In view of the present economic situation and increased competition for jobs, it is even more crucial to understand the employability status of criminology graduates. Employers in the criminal justice sector typically seek candidates with practical experience as well as soft skills like communication, critical thinking, and ethical judgment, in addition to college degrees (Baird & Parayitam, 2019). It is, therefore, possible to determine how well the college graduates are meeting these objectives and what additional support they may require in order to increase their prospects of landing a job by conducting a detailed tracer study (Ruiz, 2020).

Furthermore, prospective students and their families will receive valuable information from the outcomes of this tracer study to help them make well-informed decisions about their educational investments (HOWARD et al., 2021). Understanding how former students obtained employment may serve as motivation for present students and assist them in choosing their extracurricular and academic endeavors (Denault et al., 2019). Administrators and instructors can utilize the results to inform curriculum development, career services, and instructional strategies, enabling the college to remain responsive to evolving student demands and business trends (Refugia, 2021).

A report that was published in the Journal of Criminal Justice Education claims that the need for criminology graduates is rising across a number of industries, including the legal system, government agencies, private security companies, and law enforcement (Burns, 2023). However, as the job market changes, it is critical to evaluate how well these graduates are integrating into the marketplace and how their training relates to their desired career paths (Monteiro et al., 2021). A comprehensive examination is necessary to fully understand the complicated issue of the employability status of graduates from the College of Criminology (Refugia, 2021). Through the implementation of a tracer study, the college will be able to gather comprehensive data regarding the performance of its graduates in the labor market, pinpoint the elements that go into finding a job, and fill up any holes in its curriculum (Aydinan, 2019).

This study is important for reasons that go beyond the confines of academia (Hillyard & Tombs, 2021). The employment status of criminology graduates provides insights that can be useful to stakeholders in workforce development and higher education, as well as policymakers (Cheng et al., 2022). Colleges may support a more productive and efficient job environment that benefits both graduates and society at large by coordinating academic outputs with labor market demands (Almaleh et al., 2019). This alignment is necessary to develop a skilled and flexible workforce that can handle the problems facing the criminal justice system today.

II. METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach using the descriptive survey method to analyze the employability status of criminology graduates from a higher educational institution in Ozamiz City, Philippines, focusing on graduates from 2018 to 2022. Data were gathered through existing tracer study results, alumni records, and an alumni tracer form filled out by respondents. The researchers sought permission from the College of Criminology's Dean and adhered to ethical guidelines, ensuring confidentiality, voluntary participation, and proper handling of data. Frequency and percentage analyses were used to classify graduates as employed, underemployed, or unemployed, with the goal of identifying trends in employment status. The data were collected and analyzed, with findings presented in tabular and graphical formats. Ethical considerations, such as the principle of "do no harm" and adherence to the Board of Ethics review, ensured the study was conducted with objectivity and accuracy, contributing valuable insights into the employability trends of criminology graduates.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Profile of the Respondents in Terms of School Year Graduated

Understanding how graduates of the College of Criminology are distributed according to the academic year they graduated is crucial for analyzing their experiences and career status.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents based on School Year Graduate

School Year Graduate	Frequency	Percentage
SY: 2018-2019	69	29.11
SY: 2019-2020	47	19.83
SY: 2020-2021	15	6.33
SY:2021-2022	49	20.68
SY:2022-2023	57	24.05
Total	237	100

Table 1 summarizes the frequency and percentage of respondents by year of graduation for the cohorts participating in the tracer study. This information will be used to assess how their academic backgrounds and future professional paths relate to one another.

Table 1 shows the respondents' distribution according to the year they graduated from the College of Criminology. With 237 respondents overall, the sample is representative of graduates throughout the given time frame.

The data reveals that the highest proportion of respondents graduated in the school year 2018-2019, accounting for 29.11% of the total respondents. This significant percentage may indicate that this cohort has had more time to establish themselves in the workforce, thus providing more insights into their employment status and

experiences. Following closely are the graduates from the school year 2022-2023, who represent 24.05% of the sample. This relatively high percentage suggests that recent graduates are actively engaged in the tracer study, likely reflecting their interest in assessing the relevance of their education to their current job roles.

In contrast, the school years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 show lower representation, with only 6.33% and 20.68% of respondents, respectively. The low number of respondents from 2020-2021 may be attributed to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which significantly affected employment opportunities and may have hindered graduates from entering the job market promptly.

Overall, the distribution of respondents highlights trends in graduation years and their corresponding impact on employment experiences. The data will aid the College of Criminology in understanding the effectiveness of its

curriculum and identifying potential areas for improvement, ensuring that future graduates are well-prepared to meet the demands of the workforce.

Table 2. Data of the Graduates in School Year 2018-2019

Employability Status	Frequency	Percentage
EMPLOYED		
PNP and other Government Agencies	19	27.53
Private Agencies	15	21.73
UNEMPLOYED	35	50.75
Total Graduates	69	100.00

Table 2 outlines the employability statistics for graduates from the 2018-2019 school year, revealing that 49.28% of graduates are employed. The employment distribution is nearly balanced, with 27.53% working in government sectors, including the Philippine National Police (PNP) and other public agencies, while 21.73% are employed in private companies.

Despite this, the unemployment rate for this group remains high at 50.72%. A major contributing factor is likely the financial burden associated with licensure or eligibility exams, which are often required for positions in law enforcement and government agencies. Many graduates may postpone or forgo taking these exams due to the associated costs, thereby limiting their chances of securing employment in both the public and private sectors.

Table 3. Data of Graduates in School Year 2019-2020

Employability Status	Frequency	Percentage
EMPLOYED		
PNP and other Government Agencies	11	23.40
Private Agencies	5	10.63
UNEMPLOYED	31	65.95
Total Graduates	47	100.00

Table 3 highlights employment data for graduates of the 2019–2020 academic year. It shows a significant unemployment rate of 65.95%, compared to 34.03% who are employed. This disparity underscores the challenges graduates face in securing employment despite meeting eligibility criteria.

One notable factor is the limited availability of job quotas in government agencies such as the Philippine National Police (PNP) and other law enforcement organizations. Graduates report encountering difficulties due to inconsistent hiring practices and a highly competitive application process. Additionally, some graduates cite personal reasons, such as family obligations, which delay their transition to the workforce after graduation.

Table 4. Data of Graduates in School Year 2020-2021

Employability Status	Frequency	Percentage
EMPLOYED		
PNP and other Government Agencies	3	20
Private Agencies		
UNEMPLOYED	12	80
Total Graduates	15	100.00

Table 4 presents the employability data of graduates from the school year 2020-2021, highlighting a significant unemployment rate of 80%, with only 20% of graduates employed. This marked increase in unemployment reflects the ongoing challenges faced by this cohort in securing jobs within criminology-related fields.

Despite being eligible, graduates from this year face a tougher job market due to a reduction in available job openings in their desired sectors, particularly law enforcement agencies such as the Philippine National Police (PNP). The high level of competition for these positions has made it difficult for many to enter their preferred fields. Among the few employed graduates, only three out of fifteen managed to secure positions within the PNP, underscoring the limited opportunities in this sector.

Table 5. Data of Graduates in School Year 2021-2022

Employability Status	Frequency	Percentage
EMPLOYED		
PNP and other Government Agencies	1	2.04
Private Agencies	1	2.04
UNEMPLOYED	47	95.91
Total Graduates	49	100.00

Table 5 outlines the employability data for graduates of the 2021–2022 academic year, revealing a striking unemployment rate of 95.91%. This high rate is primarily due to many graduates having only recently passed the board exam or are actively preparing for upcoming licensure exams. Obtaining licensure remains a crucial step for employment in criminology-related fields, especially within law enforcement, delaying workforce entry for many graduates.

Despite the overall unemployment rate, two graduates from this cohort have already secured jobs, demonstrating that opportunities exist for those who have either completed licensure requirements or possess skills valued by employers. These findings highlight the importance of ongoing academic support and licensure exam preparation to help graduates meet the qualifications necessary for employment.

Table 6. Data of Graduates in School Year 2022-2023

Employability Status	Frequency	Percentage
EMPLOYED		
PNP and other Government Agencies	1	1.75
Private Agencies	2	3.50
UNEMPLOYED	54	94.73
Total Graduates	57	100.00

Table 6 presents the employability data of graduates from the school year 2022-2023. The data shows that 94.73% of graduates are still unemployed, which is understandable given that they have only recently completed the board exam. Many graduates are currently in a transitional period, awaiting their results and future opportunities to enter the workforce.

to step into their desired careers, particularly in policing. They are eager to apply their academic training to real-world situations and contribute to law enforcement. This period of waiting is seen positively by many, as they are using the time to further prepare themselves for the challenges of the profession.

Although the unemployment rate is high, the graduates report a sense of anticipation and optimism as they prepare

B. Frequency and Percentage of the Agencies to Which Criminology Graduates from School Year 2018-2023 are Connected.

Table 7. Employment Distribution of Criminology Graduates by Agency Type (2018-2023)

School Year Graduate	Government Agencies	Private Agencies
SY: 2018-2019	19	15
SY: 2019-2020	11	5
SY: 2020-2021	3	
SY: 2021-2022	3	1
SY: 2022-2023	1	2
Total	65	31

Table 7 shows the distribution of employed graduates from the school years 2018-2023 across government and private agencies. Out of the 96 employed graduates, 65 found work in government agencies, while 31 secured employment in private agencies.

Graduates from the school year 2018-2019 account for the highest number of employed individuals, with 19 working in government agencies and 15 in private sectors. This suggests that this batch had relatively strong employment outcomes in both sectors. However, for the succeeding school years, the number of employed graduates shows a noticeable decline. For example, only 11 graduates

from 2019-2020 found government jobs, and five secured positions in private agencies.

The drop becomes more pronounced in the more recent batches, with only three graduates from 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 working in government agencies and minimal employment in private agencies. The school year 2022-2023 saw only one graduate employed in a government agency and two in private companies. This trend may reflect the impact of economic challenges, such as fewer job openings and increased competition for available positions, particularly in law enforcement and criminology-related fields.

These findings indicate that while government agencies remain the primary employers for criminology graduates, opportunities in this sector have diminished in recent years. The private sector, although smaller in comparison, continues to provide alternative career paths. The data underscores the need for the college to explore strategies to help graduates navigate the evolving job market, including diversifying their career options and improving their competitiveness for roles outside of government agencies.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The employment status of criminology graduates from 2018 to 2023 shows a big drop in job opportunities, with unemployment rates between 50.72% and 95.91%. While graduates from 2018-2019 had better job rates (49.28%), recent graduates faced much lower rates of 4.09% to 5.27%. Main challenges include the high cost of licensure exams, limited job openings, and tough competition, especially in law enforcement. Many graduates have trouble meeting the job requirements and end up with jobs that do not match their training. Despite these problems, criminology graduates stay hopeful and use their waiting time to improve their skills for future law enforcement roles. To help, there should be support like financial help for exams, more job opportunities, and career development programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To improve employability for criminology graduates, several strategies may be implemented: offering financial subsidies for licensure exams, creating more job opportunities in law enforcement and related fields, and strengthening partnerships between academic institutions and employers. Additionally, universities may enhance skills development programs with practical training and certifications while providing robust career support services like job fairs and internships. Encouraging graduates to explore alternative career paths beyond traditional law enforcement, such as private security and forensic analysis, may also help reduce competition and open up new career opportunities.

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This study did not receive any grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

➤ Competing Interests Statement

The authors declare no competing financial, professional, or personal interests.

➤ Consent for Publication

The authors declare that they consented to the publication of this study.

➤ Authors' Contributions

All the authors took part in literature review, analysis, and manuscript writing equally.

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