
**THREATS, OPPORTUNITIES, WEAKNESSES AND STRENGTHS ANALYSIS OF
CRIMINOLOGY HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS: BASIS FOR
ACCREDITATION**

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities of criminology programs in higher education institutions (HEIs) from the perspectives of faculty, administration, students, and alumni. The results showed that overall, stakeholders had a positive view of the HEIs, with higher mean scores for strengths than weaknesses. Alumni were seen as the top promoter of opportunities, while the administration was the most cautious. Availment of "Higher Educational Development Funds" was identified as the top opportunity, and the absence of CHED moratorium in offering the Criminology Program was the main threat. There was no significant difference in the assessment of the five groups of respondents as to the threats and opportunities of criminology HEIs.

Key Words: TOWS Analysis, Criminology HEIs, Accreditation Framework Policy, Commission on Higher Education.

1. INTRODUCTION

Improving the quality of higher education institutions in the Philippines is of great interest to the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). One of the initiatives is CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) Number 05 Series of 2018, which outlines the Policy Guidelines and Standard of the Bachelor of Science of the Criminology program under the umbrella of Criminal Justice Education. The revision of the criminology curriculum is in accordance with RA 7722, the "Higher Education Act of 1994," and the implementation of CMO 46 s. 2012, "Policy Standards to Enhance Quality Assurance (QA) in the Philippines Higher Education Through Outcomes-Based and Typology- Based QA," which advocates for the outcomes-based education as the new paradigm shift of quality teaching and learning methods in criminology programs.

The schools and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) in the Bicol Region have collaborated to shift to the new system with the compliance of OBEdized Syllabi of criminology programs under the new curriculum. To guide parents on quality education and to make those involved in education aware of the standards of excellence they should strive to attain, accreditation status is awarded to member institutions that have met the rules and possess quality standards, along with unremitting efforts to maintain them at a high level.

This study focuses on criminology higher education institutions with accreditation status under the Philippine Association for Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation (PACUCOA). The researcher proposes an accreditation framework policy derived from the TOWS Analysis aimed at developing strategic options from an external-internal analysis of the SWOT of the criminology education higher institutions.

This policy is expected to help teachers and school heads build and sustain their program towards the promotion of future-ready quality graduates.

The study assesses the criminology program offered in various schools in Camarines Sur using the SWOT Evaluation Model. Specifically, the study seeks answers to the following questions:

1. How do the respondents assess the external threats and opportunities when they are grouped into administrators, faculty, students, and alumni?
2. Is there a significant difference in the assessment of external threats and opportunities among administrators, students, alumni, and faculty?
3. How do the respondents assess the internal weaknesses and strengths when grouped into administrators, faculty, students, and alumni?
4. Is there a significant difference in the assessment of internal weaknesses and strengths among administrators, students, alumni, and faculty?
5. What are the issues and concerns that must be addressed by the higher education institutions offering Criminology programs?
6. Is there a significant difference in the issues and concerns as identified by the four (4) groups of respondents?
7. From the findings of the study, what accreditation policy framework may be formulated?

The researcher hypothesized that there is no significant difference in the assessment of external threats and opportunities, internal weaknesses and strengths, and issues and concerns among the four (4) groups of respondents.

This study was conducted in the province of Camarines Sur, Bicol Region, specifically to the two (2) Universities offering a criminology program that has at least level I in PACUCOA accreditation.

2.METHODOLOGY

This researcher made use of the descriptive-exploratory research design. Among the various methods, the researcher utilized the descriptive method of research with the survey questionnaires and interviews as techniques in data gathering. Descriptive research involves some type of comparison or contrast and attempts to discover relationships between existing and non-manipulated variables (Best and Khan, 1989). It involves description, recording, analysis, and

interpretation of the conditions that now exist (Fonolera, 1993). The descriptive method of research utilizes the techniques of interviews, observations, and the questionnaire. It involves determining information about variables rather than individuals. This method employs to measure existing phenomena without inquiry into why it exists.

Described in this study were the characteristics of the criminology education higher institutions in the province of Camarines Sur, Region 5.

The study was exploratory because it is an examination of the criminology education higher institutions current situations, issues, or problems through a process of SWOT Analysis in an attempt to gain further insight of the data or information gathered through surveys, interviews, focus group discussions and observation.

Four (4) groups of respondents were involved in this study. The groups were the Faculty vs. Administration, Faculty vs. Students, Faculty vs. Alumni, Administration vs. Students, and Administration vs. Alumni. The faculty were full time and part-time teaching professional and general education courses in the criminology program. The respondents are the administrators who refer to Deans and Program Chair, students, preferably senior years, and alumni that were already employed.

This study used both descriptive and inferential statistics to treat the data.

In describing the population represented by the sample respondent's simple frequency count and percentage technique were used.

Respondents' insight was measured using a 4-point weight as to the degree of agreement between respondents, with the following points: 1 for strongly disagree, 2 for disagree, 3 for agree and 4 strongly agree.

This study utilized the PACOCUA Standards of Quality Education as the basis of an interview to determine the current status of the criminology education higher institutions in the province of Camarines Sur. The survey questionnaire was formulated as a result of the interview and validated by the experts. Also, utilizing interview to supplement the information which the questionnaires might have failed to gather.

There were three (3) experts from the Commission on Higher Education, PACUCOA accreditor, and test and measurement expert who conduct validation of the survey questionnaire. Afterward, the researcher asked the respondents, particularly the deans and program chair of the HEIs respondent, to validate the instrument. Upon acceptance of the content of a survey by the HEIs respondent, the researcher then submitted to the Dean for approval.

In procedure in the gathering of data, the researcher sought permission from the Heads of Criminology Higher Education Institutions for the distribution of survey questionnaires to their students, faculty, deans, program chairs, and alumni.

The researcher personally conducted the distribution of questionnaires with the respondents assisted by the deans and program heads and retrieval of the same.

All data gathering activities were aided by interview to record comments and valuable information which might be supplied by the respondents, especially in clarification with their answer to issues/concerns.

The data which were collected, tabulated, tallied, analyzed, and treated with statistical measures.

As to the profile of the respondents, the researcher used the frequency and percentage distribution. In counting each group or categories of the variables by using frequency distribution while getting the fractional part of the categories concerning the totality of the respondents using the percentage distribution.

To answer the first, third and fifth research questions, the weighted mean and ranks were used to describe the assessment of the five groups of respondents of the criminology higher education institutions in the province of Camarines Sur. Moreover, the means, the standard deviation, and the t-test for independent samples use to answer the second and fourth research questions.

3.RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Assessment of the respondents as to the threats and opportunities of criminology HEIs.

Overall, the stakeholders assessed that there are more opportunities than threats as manifested by the over-all mean scores of 3.36 and 3.09, respectively. Specifically, the alumni group is seen as the top promoter of the opportunities of the criminology programs while the administration group seen as the most cautious or the less "risk-taker" group.

1.1. In terms of opportunities the faculty and administrators look at Availment of the "Higher Educational Development Funds" of the Commission of Higher Education as the top opportunities with weighted mean scores of 3.62 (strongly agree) and 3.50 (strongly agree) while in terms of the threats the administration and

faculty look at the same parameter of Absence of CHED moratorium in the offering of Criminology Program as the main threat with mean scores of 3.59 (Strongly Agree) by the faculty and 3.50 (Strongly Agree) by the administration.

1.2. Both faculty and students look at the same parameters of opportunities of Availment of the "Higher Educational Development Funds" of the Commission of Higher Education and Adoption of other HEIs best practices along with operation and management of the program with the mean scores of 1.5 (Strongly Agree). The faculty and students have the same perspective of the threats wherein they look at the Absence of CHED moratorium in the offering of Criminology Program as the highest threat among parameters with mean scores of 3.59 (Strongly Agree).

1.3. In terms of opportunity, the faculty and alumni have different perspectives; moreover, the faculty look at Availment of the "Higher Educational Development Funds" of the Commission of

Higher Education as the top opportunities with weighted mean scores of 3.62 (strongly agree) as the highest among the parameters. In contrast, the alumni look at Undergoing accreditation to strengthen the program as the highest among the parameters with weighted mean scores of 3.64 (Strongly Agree). Moreover, the faculty and alumni have a different assessment wherein the faculty look at the Absence of CHED moratorium in the offering of Criminology Program with mean scores of 3.59 (Strongly Agree). In contrast, the alumni look at Implementation of the “Free Tuition Miscellaneous Fees Program” in State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) and Local Universities and Colleges (LUCs) with mean scores of 3.46 (Strongly Agree).

1.4. In terms of opportunities, administration and students look at Availment of the “Higher Educational Development Funds” of the Commission of Higher Education as the top among the parameters with weighted mean scores of 3.50 (Strongly Agree) and 3.57 (Strongly Agree) and in terms of threats administration and students look at Absence of CHED moratorium in the offering of Criminology Program with mean scores of 3.50 (Strongly Agree) and 3.59 (Strongly Agree).

1.5. In terms of opportunities, the administration looks at Availment of the “Higher Educational Development Funds” of the Commission of Higher Education with mean scores of 3.50 (Strongly Agree). In contrast, the alumni look at Undergoing accreditation to strengthen the program with mean scores of 3.64 (Strongly Agree). Administration and alumni have the different perspectives in looking at the threats of HEIs, the former look at Absence of CHED moratorium in the offering of Criminology Program with mean score of 3.50 (Strongly Agree) and the latter look at Implementation of the “Free-Tuition Miscellaneous Fees

Program” in State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) and Local Universities and Colleges (LUCs) with mean scores of 3.46 (Strongly Agree).

2. Test of Significant difference in the assessments of the respondents as to the threats and opportunities of criminology HEIs.

The test results indicate that there is no significant difference in the assessment of the five groups of respondents as to the threats and opportunities of criminology HEIs.

2.1. The t-test results when faculty and administration were compared in terms of opportunities and threats. Along opportunities, the 29 faculty ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 0.47$) compared to the 2 administrators ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 0.00$) did not significantly differ in their ratings, $t(30) = 1.443$, $p = .160$. Likewise along threats, there was no significant difference on their ratings, $t(30) = -0.338$, $p = .738$, despite the administration ($M = 3.17$, $SD = 0.00$) giving higher ratings than faculty ($M = 3.08$, $SD = 0.36$).

2.2. The t-test results when faculty were compared to students in terms of opportunities and threats. Along opportunities, the 29 faculty ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 0.47$) compared to the 306 students ($M = 3.45$, $SD = 0.45$) did not significantly differ in their ratings, $t(333) = 0.380$, $p = .704$. Likewise along threats, there was no significant difference on the ratings, $t(333) = -0.207$, $p = .836$, between faculty ($M = 3.08$, $SD = 0.36$) and students ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 0.33$).

2.3. The t-test results when faculty were compared to alumni in terms of opportunities and threats. Along opportunities, the 29 faculty ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 0.47$) did not significantly differ in their ratings, $t(146) = -0.097$, $p = .922$, compared to the 119 alumni ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 0.43$). Likewise along threats, there was no significant difference on their ratings, $t(146) = 0.652$, $p = .516$, with the administration ($M = 3.08$, $SD = 0.36$) giving very close ratings with alumni ($M = 3.03$, $SD = 0.37$).

2.4. The t-test results when administration and students were compared in terms of opportunities and threats. Along opportunities, the 2 administrators ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 0.00$) compared to the 306 students ($M = 3.45$, $SD = 0.45$) did not significantly differ in their ratings, $t(306) = -1.404$, $p = .161$. Likewise along threats, there was no significant difference on their ratings, $t(306) = 0.316$, $p = .752$, despite the administration ($M = 3.17$, $SD = 0.00$) giving higher ratings than the students ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 0.33$).

2.5. The t-test results when administration and alumni were compared in terms of opportunities and threats. Along opportunities, the 2 administrators ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 0.00$) compared to the 119 alumni ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 0.43$) did not significantly differ in their ratings, $t(119) = -1.600$, $p = .112$. Likewise along threats, there was no significant difference on their ratings, $t(119) = 0.510$, $p = .607$, despite the administration ($M = 3.17$, $SD = 0.00$) giving higher ratings than the alumni ($M = 3.03$, $SD = 0.37$).

3. Assessment of the respondents as to the strengths and weaknesses of the criminology HEIs.

The test results are more strengths assessed by the stakeholders than of the weaknesses with overall mean scores of 3.55 and 3.39, respectively, as presented in the data that alumni have a positive outlook with the HEI as the opposite of the administration's perspective that has conservative outlook. In contrast, alumni and administration conformed the same level of assessment of weaknesses.

3.1 For faculty, it obtains the highest score as to the assessment of the strengths is Well monitored students with mean scores of 3.72 (Strongly Agree), while the administration looks at the three topmost among the parameters as strengths of the criminology HEIs are Well-defined grading system and computation of grades, understood by faculty members, students, and parents; Well monitored students; and Improved faculty performance with mean scores of 4.00 (Strongly Agree) respectively. In terms of weaknesses, faculty look at a Lack of student performance monitoring with a mean score of 3.55 (Strongly Agree) and administration are Low performance of students in classes due to absence of academic consultation and Lack of student performance monitoring with the mean score of 4.00 (Strongly Agree).

3.2 For faculty, it obtains the highest score as to the assessment of the strengths is Well monitored students with mean scores of 3.72 (Strongly Agree), moreover, the assessment of the students that the topmost strength is The different sectors of the school demonstrate acceptance of the institutional philosophy and the educational objectives of the different academic programs as their own with the mean score of 3.69 (Strongly Agree). In terms of weaknesses, for faculty, the topmost among the indicators is Lack of student performance monitoring with a mean score of 3.55 (Strongly Agree). In contrast, the students, the topmost among the parameters of weaknesses, is

The physical environment inside the school that does not mirror the school's concern for the environment with the mean score of 3.60 (Strongly Agree).

3.3 In the assessment of strength, for faculty, it obtains the highest score as to the assessment of the strengths is Well monitored students with mean scores of

3.72 (Strongly Agree) that has been sustained by the alumni as the Enhanced and updated syllabus indicating the expected student learning outcomes, methodology, assessment, and evaluation of student performance as the topmost among the parameters with the mean score of 3.85 (Strongly Agree). For weaknesses assessment results, Lack of student performance monitoring with mean score of 3.55 (Strongly Agree) is the topmost among the parameters assessed by the faculty while the alumni look at The physical environment inside the school do not mirrors the school's concern for the environment with the mean score of 3.73 (Strongly Agree).

3.4 The administration looks at the three topmost among the parameters as strengths of the criminology HEIs are Well-defined grading system and computation of grades, understood by faculty members, students, and parents; Well monitored students; and Improved faculty performance with mean scores of 4.00 (Strongly Agree), but the students look at the topmost strength is The different sectors of the school demonstrate acceptance of the institutional philosophy and the educational objectives of the different academic programs as their own with the mean score of 3.69 (Strongly Agree). The administration, the first identified weakness of the HEI is Low performance of students in classes due to the absence of academic consultation and Lack of student performance monitoring with the mean score of 4.00 (Strongly Agree). In contrast, the students look at the topmost among the parameters of weaknesses is The physical environment inside the school do not mirror the school's concern for the environment with the mean score of 3.60 (Strongly Agree).

3.5 The administration look at the three topmost among the parameters as strengths of the criminology HEIs are Well-defined grading system and computation of grades, understood by faculty members, students and parents; Well monitored students; and Improved faculty performance with mean scores of 4.00 (Strongly Agree), then the alumni as the Enhanced and updated syllabus indicating the expected student learning outcomes, methodology, assessment, and evaluation of student performance as the topmost among the parameters with the mean score of 3.85 (Strongly Agree). In terms of assessment of weaknesses, administration look at HEI are Low performance of students in classes due to absence of academic consultation and Lack of student performance monitoring with the mean score of 4.00 (Strongly Agree) and alumni look at The physical environment inside the school do not mirrors the school's concern for the environment with the mean score of 3.73 (Strongly Agree).

4. Test of Significant difference in the assessments of the respondents as to the strengths and weaknesses of criminology HEIs.

The test results indicate that there is no significant difference in the assessment of the five groups of respondents as to the threats and opportunities of criminology HEIs.

4.1 The t-test results when faculty and administration were compared in terms of strengths and weaknesses. Along strengths, the 29 faculty ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 0.46$) compared to the 2 administrators ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 0.71$) did not significantly differ in their ratings, $t(30) = 0.309$, $p = .760$. Likewise, along weaknesses, there was no significant difference on their ratings, $t(30)$

$= -0.028$, $p = .738$, despite the administration ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 0.82$) giving higher ratings than faculty ($M = 3.35$, $SD = 0.44$).

4.2 The t-test results when faculty were compared to students in terms of strengths and weaknesses. Along strengths, the 29 faculty ($M =$

3.52 , $SD = 0.46$) compared to the 306 students ($M = 3.59$, $SD = 0.49$) did not significantly differ in their ratings, $t(333) = -0.711$, $p = .478$. Likewise along weaknesses, there was no significant difference on their ratings, t

$(333) = 0.062$, $p = .951$, with the faculty ($M = 3.35$, $SD = 0.44$) giving almost similar ratings with the students ($M = 3.35$, $SD = 0.38$).

4.3 The t-test results when faculty were compared to alumni in terms of opportunities and threats. Along opportunities, the 29 faculty ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 0.47$) did not significantly differ in their ratings, $t(146) = -0.097$, $p = .922$, compared to the 119 alumni ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 0.43$). Likewise along threats, there was no significant difference on their ratings, $t(146) = 0.652$, $p = .516$, with the administration ($M = 3.08$, $SD = 0.36$) giving very close ratings with alumni ($M = 3.03$, $SD = 0.37$).

4.4 The t-test results when administration and students were compared in terms of opportunities and threats. Along opportunities, the 2 administrators ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 0.00$) compared to the 306 students ($M = 3.45$, $SD = 0.45$) did not significantly differ in their ratings, $t(306) = -1.404$, p

$= .161$. Likewise, along threats, there was no significant difference on their ratings, $t(306) = 0.316$, $p = .752$, despite the administration ($M = 3.17$, $SD = 0.00$) giving higher ratings than the students ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 0.33$).

4.5 The t-test results when administration and alumni were compared in terms of opportunities and threats. Along opportunities, the 2 administrators ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 0.00$) compared to the 119 alumni ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 0.43$) did not significantly differ in their ratings, $t(119) = -1.600$, $p = .112$. Likewise, along threats, there was no significant difference on their ratings, $t(119) = 0.510$, $p = .607$, despite the administration ($M = 3.17$, $SD = 0.00$) giving higher ratings than the alumni ($M = 3.03$, $SD = 0.37$).

5. Issues/ concerns that must be addressed by criminology HEIs.

The issues/ concerns identified by the stakeholders wherein the teachers got the highest scores of 3.30 (Strongly Agree) followed by research with the scores of

3.28 (Strongly Agree). Financial concerns with the scores of 3.21 (Agree), moreover the outdated laboratories got 3.15 (Agree) and finally board examination with the scores of 2.77 (Agree) and considered as the least among the concerns/ issues as identified by the stakeholders.

6. Test of Significant difference in the issues/ concerns as identified by the respondents.

The results revealed that there is significant relationship between the issues / concerns among stakeholders; therefore, the null hypothesis of the relationship is Rejected.

The research and teachers are having a highly significant relationship with the rating of 0.310, likewise the research and outdated laboratories with a rating of 0.458. Moreover, Financial concerns and teachers are having a significant relationship with the rating of -0.112, respectively; further, board examination and research are having a significant relationship with the rating of 0.117.

6. Proposed Accreditation Policy Framework.

As an output of this study, the proposed accreditation policy framework is now formulated based on the TOWS Analysis of the current status of criminology HEIs in the province of Camarines Sur.

It intends to assist the administration for further improvement of the existing management system regulating continuous quality improvement to maintain the standards and the accreditation as the measures of quality education. Hence, the participation of the stakeholders in the journey of pursuing quality and standards as shared quality responsibilities for transparency and accountability.

The framework focused on enhancing success factors with clear pathways towards the attainment of the school goals through systematic evaluation and assessment methods and practices.

Ultimately, the continuous assessment or sustainability assessment in the proposed framework can be used for the institutional change based on cost-efficient measures of the criminology HEIs to examine the recent trends in teaching and learning.

Based from the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The administration preferred strategic risks taken at strategic times and they are aware of relationship conflicts and the amount of hard work because they look farther into the future. It is simply ensuring the success outcomes of every decision relative to quality instruction and school management.
2. There is no relative difference in the assessment of the four groups of the respondents, which is focusing the opportunities of availing of Higher Educational Development Funds and with the conventional assessment of threats, which is the absence of CHED moratorium in the offering of criminology program.
3. Alumni have a positive outlook with the HEI as the opposite of the administrator's perspective that has a conservative outlook. Then, alumni and administration have the same level of assessment of weaknesses, particularly the teaching and learning aspects.
4. The stakeholder identified the common weaknesses which strategically translated into a unique proposition by capitalizing on the strengths.

5.The standards are focused on quality instruction through cost-effective implementation of faculty development programs but often neglected the personal and financial concerns of the teachers. Also, it has connections with the research that the teachers not motivated to produce output since the policies on incentives are not clear.

6.The motivation of the teachers implies the research culture of the HEI, which is the teachers' primary activity is teaching, with a small percentage of their time devoted to research and writing.

7.The proposed accreditation policy framework will provide a comprehensive review of standards and indicators for quality assurance and accreditation of criminology HEI and formulated strategies of quality assurance system through integrated skills certification curriculum as a core competency.

From the findings and conclusion of the study, the researcher strongly recommends the following to sustain the quality education in criminology HEIs in Camarines Sur through accreditation.

1.Formulate and implement a game plan for Center of Excellence (COE)/ Center of Development (COD) using the TOWS Analysis;

2. The strategic use of available funds, scholarship, and implementation of student financial assistance programs to promote inclusive or open education.

3. Establish Alumni-School Partnership to invest in the future: curricular reform, research grants, and student career advancement program.

4. The implementation of academic intervention, coaching, remediation program, and other student academic supports must be reviewed to maintain the standard of the program.

5. Provide a program on financial literacy and financial planning to improve the teaching and research productivity of the faculty.

6. Conducting regular review of policies and guidelines on research in order to improve faculty productivity through excellent teaching performance, quality research output, and achieving goals.

7. The consistent evaluation and assessment of the success factors of quality education through TOWS Analysis as a preparation on managing the dramatic changes in the educational arena.

8. Other researchers to conduct similar study to include other areas and parameters which are not included in the present study.

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