

# The Career Readiness of Criminology Graduates in University of Eastern Pangasinan: An Evaluation

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## ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the perceived level of career readiness of criminology graduates from the University of Eastern Pangasinan in terms of self-information, career information, decision-making, and career planning. By understanding their readiness, they can identify the challenges faced when transitioning from university to employment. This helps ensure they possess the necessary skills and knowledge needed to succeed in their chosen fields. These insights can guide better support for their career development and decision making. The study employed a mixed-methods approach. A descriptive quantitative design was used to examine career readiness at the University of Eastern Pangasinan, with participants drawn from the CCJE Department. All fourth-year criminology graduates, participated in in-depth surveys and document reviews providing a comprehensive understanding of career readiness. To enrich the data, researchers conducted one-on-one interviews with respondents, generating qualitative data that addressed the research questions. Data collection stopped once new information no longer provided insights. The Average Weighted Mean served as the analytical tool for determining the perceived level of career readiness across self-information, career information, decision-making, and career planning. The key findings from this analysis are detailed next.

The findings revealed very high perceived level of career readiness among criminology graduates at the University of Eastern Pangasinan. The overall weighted mean was 4.29, indicating strength in self-information, career-information, decision-making, and career planning.

The study concluded that criminology graduates rated their readiness as very high in self-information, career-information, decision-making, and career planning.

However, they faced challenges such as time management during career preparation, emotional struggles in board exam preparation, and financial constraints. It is recommended that measures be implemented to further enhance the career readiness of these graduates at the University of Eastern Pangasinan.

**Keywords:** Career Readiness, Criminology Graduates, Law Enforcement Careers, Real-world Expertise, Profitable Jobs

## INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

Universities have increasingly prioritized enhancing students' employability by equipping them with real-world, field-related experiences that prepare them for professional careers after graduation. One widely recognized approach is work-integrated learning, which enables students to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and practical workplace experience (Beattie et al., 2019). Through such initiatives, higher education institutions aim to ensure that graduates possess not only theoretical competence but also the practical skills necessary for successful career entry and progression.

Career readiness, as defined by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), refers to a foundational set of competencies essential for success in the workplace and for long-term career management. For recent college graduates, being career-ready are crucial for a smooth transition into the labor market, as it

lays the foundation for sustainable meaningful employment. Institutions are therefore expected to monitor their graduates' employment outcomes, assess alignment between training and occupation, and evaluate post-graduation career trajectories (Refugia, 2024). On a broader scale, developing professional competencies through internships and experiential learning enables criminology graduates to navigate the complex and demanding nature of criminal justice-related professions.

Studies have shown that criminology graduates with hands-on experience demonstrate stronger workplace competencies, including investigative and operational skills aligned with law enforcement functions, which enhance overall professional effectiveness (Johnson et al., 2020). Workplace fulfilment has also been identified as a critical factor in motivating employees, increasing productivity, and promoting overall well-being. Nayoyos-Refugia emphasized the importance of aligning academic programs with industry demands, as this alignment informs curriculum development, instructional strategies, and policy formulation. While graduates generally express satisfaction with aspects such as compensation, benefits, and job security, opportunities for career advancement and promotion remain areas for improvement. These findings underscore the importance of on-going program evaluation and enhancement to better equip criminology graduates for professional practice.

Hands-on learning experiences, such as internships, play a vital role in developing students' career readiness by allowing them to engage in authentic work environments. Internships provide opportunities to explore career options, apply theoretical concepts, and acquire transferable skills that increase employability (Jogan, 2019). Internship experiences have been shown to influence students' work readiness through skill development, engagement, and communication, thereby facilitating a smoother transition from education to employment (Fakhri et al., 2019).

Despite these initiatives, criminology graduates continue to face challenges as they enter the workforce. One significant concern is the lack of practical experience, which often limits graduates' competitiveness in specialized fields such as law enforcement, forensic analysis, and criminal justice administration. Additionally, limited research has examined how personal motivations interact with external influences—such as family expectations and peer pressure—shape career decisions. These social factors may lead graduates to pursue career paths that are misaligned with their interests and competencies, potentially affecting job satisfaction and retention.

Another gap identified in the literature relates to career advancement opportunities for criminology graduates. While initial employment may be attainable, long-term career progression is often hindered by limited professional development, insufficient mentorship, and unclear career pathways within criminal justice institutions. Moreover, many graduates demonstrate limited awareness of the diverse career opportunities available within the field, which may result in missed employment prospects and mismatches between skills and job requirements.

Given these concerns, evaluating the career readiness of criminology graduates is essential. Career readiness encompasses self-information, career information, decision-making, and career planning—factors that collectively influence graduates' ability to make informed career choices and prepare for employment. Adequate knowledge of employment opportunities within agencies such as the Philippine National Police (PNP), the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP), and the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) is critical for guiding graduates toward suitable career paths.

This study therefore aims to evaluate the career readiness of criminology graduates from the University of Eastern Pangasinan by examining their perceived levels of self information, career information, decision-making, and career planning, as well as the challenges that hinder their readiness. The findings of this study are expected to provide valuable insights for curriculum enhancement, institutional planning, and the development of targeted interventions to improve graduates' preparedness for professional careers in criminology.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Graduating from college and transitioning into employment is a critical phase in an individual's career development. For many graduates, entering the workforce marks their first exposure to professional

environments, which often leads to adjustment difficulties. Heang et al. (2019) noted that fresh graduates frequently encounter challenges during this transition due to limited work experience and unfamiliarity with workplace expectations. Similarly, Refugia (2021) emphasized that although employment is viewed as the natural next step after graduation, many graduates struggle to adapt to professional demands. In this context, career readiness becomes an essential factor in facilitating a smooth transition from academic life to employment.

Career readiness as defined by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), is the attainment of essential competencies that enable individuals to succeed in the workplace and manage their careers effectively. These competencies encompass not only academic knowledge but also personal, cognitive, and behavioral skills necessary for long-term employability. As higher education institutions aim to prepare graduates for the labor market, emphasis has been placed on experiential learning and career development initiatives that enhance students' preparedness for professional roles.

Internships and experiential learning opportunities play a significant role in improving students' career readiness, particularly in applied disciplines such as criminology. Internships bridge the gap between theory and practice by allowing students to apply classroom knowledge to real-world situations. Careerlabs (2023) noted that internships provide criminology students with practical experience in criminal justice settings, enabling them to develop investigative, analytical, and communication skills.

Graduates who undergo internship programs tend to exhibit stronger workplace competencies and higher confidence in their professional abilities.

Several studies have demonstrated that internship experiences positively influence students' work readiness. Fakhri et al. (2019) found that the quality of internship experiences contributes to skill development, student engagement, and effective communication, all of which are essential for employment readiness. Jogan (2019) further emphasized that internships allow students to explore career options while increasing their chances of future employment. In addition, Md. Roknuzzaman and Shahanaz Akter (2021) stressed that successful career outcomes are closely linked to effective career planning, which involves deliberate career choice and the implementation of appropriate readiness and problem-solving skills, both of which are highly valued across industries (Wolfgran & Ahrens, 2022).

Self-information is a crucial dimension of career readiness, as it involves an individual's awareness of personal strengths, weaknesses, interests, and values. Developing self-awareness enables graduates to make informed career decisions and adapt effectively to professional challenges. Nissa et al. (2021) found that individuals with high self-awareness tend to demonstrate greater work readiness, as they possess stronger confidence in decision-making, resilience, and risk-taking. Understanding oneself allows graduates to align career choices with their abilities and aspirations, thereby enhancing career satisfaction and success.

Career information is another essential component of career readiness. Access to accurate information about job opportunities, industry requirements, and labor market trends equips graduates with the knowledge needed to prepare for employment. Seriani et al. (2023) reported that adequate career information, particularly regarding industry specific skills, significantly enhances students' perceived work readiness. However, despite strong academic preparation, many graduates lack a clear understanding of the actual demands of the workplace. A study published in the PSAKU International Journal of Interdisciplinary Research (2023) found that while graduates are knowledgeable in theory, they often lack awareness of job expectations and required competencies, which may hinder their employability.

Career decision-making involves a systematic process of identifying career options, evaluating alternatives, and selecting suitable career paths. Kulcsar et al. (2020) described career decision-making as a sequence of choices that include selecting an occupation, determining educational requirements, and deciding whether to remain in or change a job. Duru (2022) emphasized that effective career decision-making requires both rational analysis and intuitive judgment, particularly when individuals face time constraints and complex career options. Graduates who demonstrate strong decision-making skills are more likely to pursue career paths aligned with their interests and long-term goals.

Career planning further strengthens career readiness by enabling individuals to set goals, identify necessary competencies, and prepare for future employment. Teychenne et al. (2019) highlighted that integrating career planning into university curricula enhances students' adaptability and preparedness for the workforce. Marciniak et al. (2022) emphasized that career success depends on acquiring of relevant skills, knowledge, and attitudes that support long-term professional growth. Similarly, Carabali et al. (2023) noted that career planning facilitates the transition from academic learning to meaningful workplace contribution by equipping students with competencies needed for professional development.

Despite these findings, criminology graduates continue to face challenges related to career readiness and employability. Anderson (2021) reported that many graduates hesitate to apply for entry-level positions due to perceived inadequacy in skills, while Magnaye (2020) highlighted deficiencies in soft skills such as confidence, independence, and creativity. Kasriel (2019) further observed that employers increasingly expect job ready graduates, as organizations now provide fewer training opportunities than in the past. These challenges suggest that gaps persist between academic preparation and labor market expectations.

Higher education institutions are therefore under pressure to ensure that graduates are equipped with the competencies required for employment and career advancement. Bates et al. (2019) defined employability as the combination of knowledge, skills, experience, and personal attributes that enable individuals to navigate the labor market successfully. Gill (2020) similarly described employability skills as achievements that enhance graduates' capacity to gain and sustain employment, benefiting both individuals and society.

Although previous studies have examined career readiness, employability, internships, and career development among college graduates (Heang et al., 2019; Refugia, 2021; Bates et al., 2019; Gill, 2020), most research focuses on general graduate populations or on isolated aspects of career preparation. There remains limited empirical evidence that comprehensively examines career readiness among criminology graduates simultaneously considering self-perceptions, career information, decision-making, and career planning. Furthermore, while challenges such as skill gaps, lack of preparedness, and uncertainty in career choices have been identified (Anderson, 2021; Magnaye, 2020; Kasriel, 2019), few studies have systematically explored the specific challenges that hinder career readiness during the transition from academic life to professional practice within a local university context. In particular, there is a scarcity of studies focusing on criminology graduates from the University of Eastern Pangasinan that combine quantitative assessment of perceived career readiness with qualitative insights into the challenges they encounter. This gap underscores the need for the present study.

## **Theoretical Framework**

The following theories function as a support to the study in Career Readiness of Criminology Graduates in University of Eastern Pangasinan. The researchers cited three theories: Theory of Employability, Social Cognitive Theory, and Experiential Theory.

### **Theory of Employability**

This theory, proposed by Yorke et al, (2004), suggests that employability results from an individual's learning, achievements, and understanding of the personal skills required for success. This theory is relevant to the current study because it helps evaluate the skills and knowledge employers and managers seek. Essentially, this theory offers a framework for measuring the professional skills that are important for success and career growth. By applying this theory, the researchers and the study can evaluate whether criminology graduates from the University of Eastern Pangasinan possess the skills, knowledge, and qualities employers seek. This helps assess how well prepared the criminology graduates are to enter the workforce.

### **Social Cognitive Theory**

This theory proposed by Bandura (1986), includes reciprocal observational learning, and self-efficacy, and offers insights into how people can create an effective career development plan for success. By building a positive view

of their abilities and surrounding themselves with supportive mentors, individuals can improve their chances of reaching career goals. This theory closely aligns with the study context, emphasizing the need for graduates to focus on their strengths and foster a constructive professional environment. The theory suggests that individuals who excel in their roles leverage their strengths and foster a constructive networks, thereby contributing to their success in their chosen career paths. The career readiness of criminology graduates plays a key role in their entry into the workforce. This theory can serve as a foundation for individuals, mentors, and teachers. It can boost confidence, helping criminology graduates make better decisions and tackle challenges. Support from others, along with a positive attitude and guidance, can help them reach their career goals.

### **Experiential Learning Theory**

This theory, proposed by Kolb in 1984, highlights the importance of learning through direct experiences. This theory aligns seamlessly with the study's focus, as it suggests that students develop professional skills through a concrete experience, reflective observation, and active experimentation. It applies to academic, which serve as structured learning environments where criminology students gain firsthand exposure to law enforcement procedures, thereby refining their skills and bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. This theory is helpful for the study because it shows how real-life experiences, such as internships and other activities related to the criminology course, help graduates develop their skills. These experiences prepare them for their jobs and the practical use of their knowledge in their career paths.

By using these theoretical frameworks – Theory of Employability, Cognitive Information Processing Theory, and Experiential Theory – the study will understand and assess the career readiness of criminology graduates at the University of Eastern Pangasinan. These theories work together by helping evaluate whether graduates have the skills, knowledge and qualities needed in the field and how well they understand themselves when choosing their careers. Applying these theories also explains how mentor and teacher support builds confidence, how graduates apply their knowledge in real life situations, and how experiences from activities prepare them for actual work. These theories guide the study in assessing criminology graduates' readiness, the challenges they face, and ways to improve their preparation for future careers.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework of this study is anchored on the four dimensions of career readiness identified by the National Association of Colleges and Employers

(NACE): self-information, career information, decision-making, and career planning. These dimensions serve as independent variables, while the overall career readiness of criminology graduates represents serves as the dependent variable.

This framework illustrates how graduates' self-awareness, knowledge of career opportunities, ability to make informed decisions, and preparation for future employment collectively influence their readiness to enter the professional field of criminology. It also considers the challenges that may hinder this readiness, such as time management, emotional struggles, and financial constraints.

The researchers used a schematic diagram, (Figure 1), to illustrate the conceptual flow guiding the study. It shows the concept, variables, and their relationship in this study. This model begins by determining the Career Readiness level of Criminology graduates from the University of Eastern Pangasinan in the areas of Self-Information, Career Information, Decision Making and Career Planning. As the paradigm evolves, it also poses challenges that hinder the career readiness of criminology graduates at the University of Eastern Pangasinan. This model connects these elements to help create meaningful measures that improve the career readiness of criminology graduates at the University of Eastern Pangasinan. The schematic diagram visually presents this relationship, beginning with the assessment of career readiness across the four NACE dimensions. It also integrates the challenges that may hinder this readiness such as time management issues, emotional struggles, and financial constraints which act as mediating factors that can disrupt the positive influence of these dimensions. Ultimately, the framework guides the development of proposed measures enhance the career readiness of criminology graduates, ensuring that institutional interventions are both responsive and strategic.

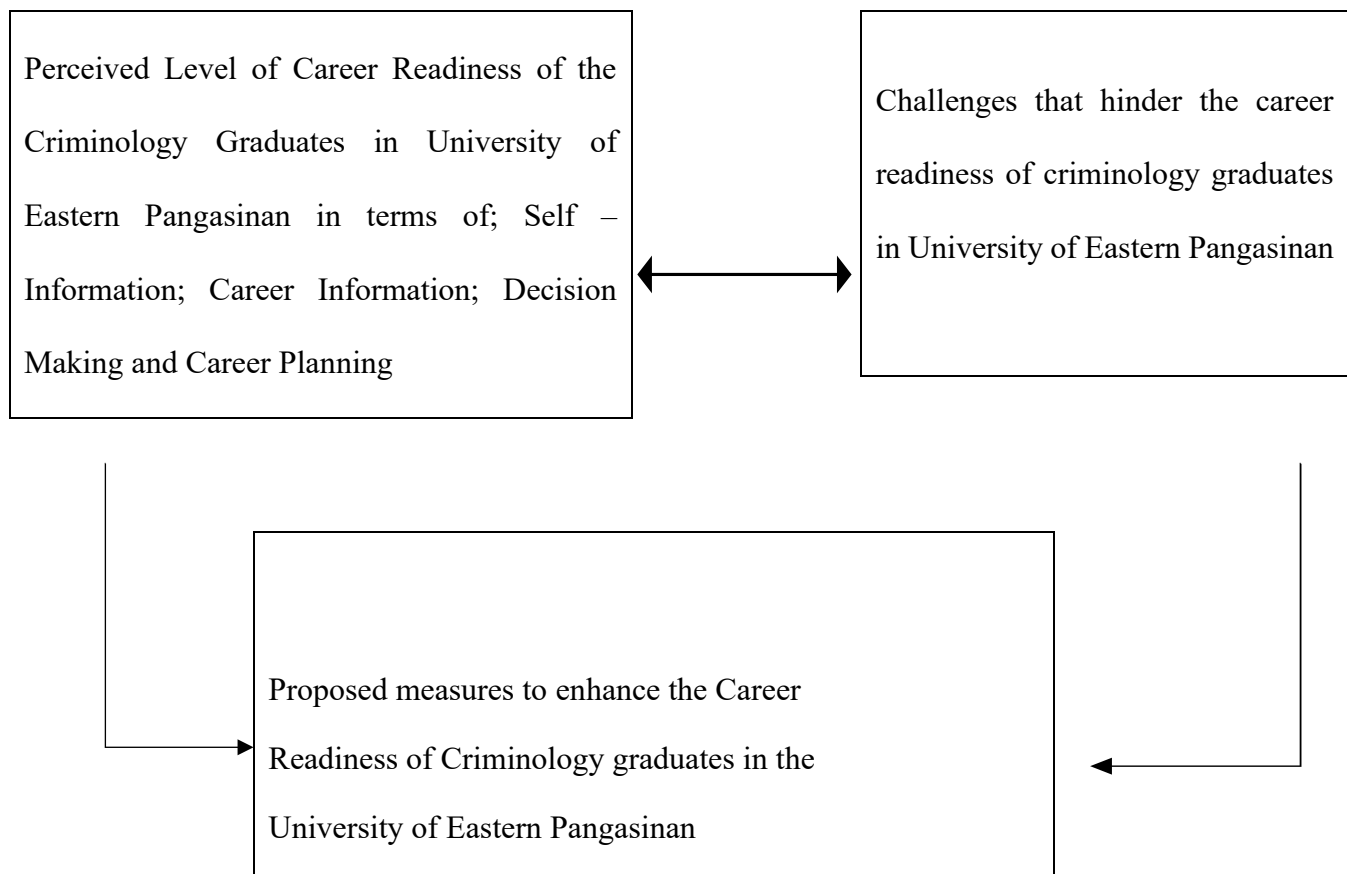


Figure 1. Schematic illustration of the Study

### Statement of the Problem

The purpose of the study was to assess the career readiness of Criminology graduates at the University of Eastern Pangasinan.

Specifically, it aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What is the perceived level of career readiness of the criminology graduates in

University of Eastern Pangasinan in terms of;

- a. Self -Information
- b. Career Information
- c. Decision Making and
- d. Career Planning?

What are the challenges that hinder the career readiness of criminology graduates in University of Eastern Pangasinan?

What measures can be proposed to enhance career readiness of criminology graduates in UEP?

### Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The study primarily focused on the Career Readiness of the University of Eastern

Pangasinan. This study was conducted at University of Eastern Pangasinan College of Criminal Justice Education, and it focuses on the Career Readiness of Criminology graduates this academic year (2024- 2025). Graduates are often the focus of career readiness studies because they are a key demographic for understanding the skills and knowledge needed to transition into the workplace successfully.

## METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodology used in the study. This chapter includes the research design, data gathering procedure, sampling design, research respondents, research instruments and data analysis.

### Research Design

This study employed a multi-method research design, which involves the use of more than one research approach within a single study to address different aspects of the research problem. This design was appropriate because it allowed the researchers to examine the level of career readiness of criminology graduates while also gaining deeper understanding of the challenges that hinder their employment-readiness.

The quantitative component of the design was descriptive and used to determine the perceived level of career readiness of criminology graduates across self-information, career information, decision-making, and career planning. This approach was suitable as the study sought to describe and assess the existing condition of career readiness based on respondents' perceptions without manipulating any variables.

The qualitative component complemented the quantitative approach by providing contextual explanations of the challenges criminology graduates encounter during their transition from academic life to professional practice. Through this approach, the researchers were able to capture detailed insights that could not be adequately measured through numerical data alone.

### Population and Setting of the Study

The study was conducted at the University of Eastern Pangasinan, located in Canarvacanan, Binalonan, Pangasinan. To explore the challenges that hinder career readiness among criminology graduates, ten participants—specifically graduates with academic distinction—were interviewed and purposive sampling was used in selecting them. For the quantitative component, the sample size was determined from the total population of fourth-year criminology graduates using the Cochran formula, yielding 183 of 347 students. After determining the sample size, convenience sampling was used to choose the respondents, allowing the researchers to gather data from participants who were readily accessible and willing to participate in the survey.

The study's population comprises of 4<sup>th</sup> year criminology graduates from batch 2024-2025 at UEP. The University of Eastern Pangasinan was selected as the setting because of its solid academic standing, particularly in the field of Criminology, and the criminology graduates were chosen because they align with the study's resources and aims.

The study used two sampling methods. For the qualitative part, purposive sampling was used to select the 10 criminology graduates with academic distinction. They were chosen because they could provide meaningful detailed information about the challenges affecting their career readiness. For the quantitative part of the study, data saturation was reached when the researchers noticed participants' responses were beginning to repeat. When no new ideas or information came out from the interviews, the researchers stopped collecting data. This meant the gathered information was sufficient to clearly show the experiences of the criminology graduates.

For the quantitative part the sample size of 183 graduates was determined using the Cochran formula. After computing the sample size, convenience sampling was used to select the respondents. This method ensured that the survey results accurately reflected the population while making data collection practical and feasible.

### Data Gathering Tool

In this study, the researchers used both survey questionnaires and an interview guide as the primary tools for collecting data. The research incorporated a single-section questionnaire comprising 40 questions for respondents to complete. This survey investigates the career-readiness of Criminology graduates from UEP, focusing on Self Information, Career Information, Decision-Making, and Career Planning. An interview guide was developed for a structured interview with the researchers introducing themselves, providing greetings, and obtaining consent followed by a sequence of open-ended questions to assess the issues that impede the career

readiness of Criminology graduates at the University of Eastern Pangasinan. This tool was deemed the most suitable and practical for this research, given the number of respondents involved in the data evaluation, and it facilitates easier tabulation of the results.

### Data Gathering Procedures

To collect data, the researchers obtained permission from the guidance office, the dean, and the College of Criminal Justice Education's adviser to conduct the study. The researcher submitted a letter to the guidance office requesting a student manual and then proceeded with the survey questionnaire for 4<sup>th</sup>-year criminology graduates of the BS Criminology Program at the University of Eastern Pangasinan batch 2024 -2025.

The researchers had to prepare their approved research problems use as the primary data collection instrument. The questionnaire validated by two (2) professionals in their respective fields of study after the question was validated and the validator approved it.

The researchers filed an application with the Research Ethics Committee and the Office of University Research for ethics review of the research proposal to ensure compliance with ethical guidelines. The researchers personally administer the questionnaires to selected respondents in the market after obtaining Research Office Approval.

Prior to conducting the study, a formal request letter was drafted and included with the questionnaire. The questionnaire was handed out to participants in both hard copy and via Google Forms. The responses gathered from the interview will be transcribed, coded, thematically analyzed, and tabulated by the researchers to assess the career readiness of criminology graduates at the University of Eastern Pangasinan. All information obtained from participants was handled in strict confidence.

For the qualitative part of the study, data saturation was reached when the researchers noticed participants' responses were beginning to repeat. When no new ideas or information came out from the interviews, the researchers stopped collecting data. This meant the gathered information was sufficient to clearly show the experiences of the criminology graduates.

Ethical considerations were taken into account throughout the study to protect participants' rights, safety, and well-being. The researchers ensured that each respondent participated voluntarily, and that informed consent was obtained prior to participation. Privacy and confidentiality were maintained at all times, and participants were treated with fairness and respect. The study also took careful measures to minimize any potential risks or harm, ensuring that all procedures were conducted responsibly and ethically.

### Treatment of Data

To obtain more accurate results, the following statistical tools were used for data analysis and interpretation. To determine the level of career readiness of Criminology graduates at the University of Eastern Pangasinan, the Average Weighted Mean was used with corresponding ranges and descriptive equivalents in transmuted ratings.

The Formula is:

$$\frac{5f_5 + 4f_4 + 3f_3 + 2f_2 + 1f_1}{n}$$

$$\text{AVM} = \frac{\text{sum of weighted frequencies}}{n}$$

Where:

$f_5$  = Number of respondents who Strongly Agree.

$f_4$  = Number of respondents who Agree.

$f_3$  = Number of respondents who Neutral.

$f_2$  = Number of respondents who Disagree

$f_1$  = Number of respondents who Strongly Disagree

$n$  = Total number of respondents.

### Likert Scale Analysis

The researchers used a 5 Point Likert Scale to assess the level of career readiness of criminology graduates in terms of career information, decision making and career planning. It involves analyzing responses to Likert-scale questions to determine the level of career readiness of criminology graduates. The study aimed to provide recommendations to help students develop career readiness strategies.

The respondent's level of agreement with the statements or questions posed would be determined through a Likert scale from one (1) to five (5): one (1) being strongly agree, two (2) being in disagreement, three (3) being moderate, four (4) agreeing, and five (5) being strongly agree.

Furthermore, the study used the following scale to investigate the perceived level of career readiness of criminology graduates. A mean of 4.21-5.00 is very high, which implies that criminology graduates are well-prepared; 3.43-4.20 is high, which implies they are as prepare; 2.61-3.40 is moderate, which implies they possess some essential skills but have gaps in specific areas; and 1.81-2.60 is low, which implies that graduates have a significant skills gap. Lastly, 1.00-1.80 is exceptionally low, indicating that criminology graduates are not prepared.

Scale	Range/Verbal	Descriptive Interpretation
5	4.21 - 5.00	Strongly Agree
4	3.41 - 4.20	Agree
3	2.61 - 3.40	Neutral
2	1.81 - 2.60	Disagree
1	1.00 - 1.80	Strongly Disagree

For qualitative data, thematic analysis was an appropriate research method for generating insights into people's ideas, opinions, knowledge, experiences, or values from a collection of qualitative data, such as interview transcripts, social media profiles, or survey results. Thematic analysis provided a great deal of flexibility in data interpretation and makes it easier to approach enormous data sets by categorizing them into broad topics. It is a subjective process that relies on the researcher's judgment, necessitating thoughtful reflection on choices and interpretations. In this study, the researchers used thematic analysis which it is a qualitative data analysis tool. It is mainly used to refer to a collection of texts, such as an interview or transcript. The researcher thoroughly studied the data to uncover common themes - subjects, concepts, and patterns of meaning that appeared repeatedly (Caulfield, 2023).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents an analysis, discussion and interpretation of the data gathered to answer the study's question. It includes overall discussions on the Level of Career readiness in terms of self -information, career information, decision making, and career planning among criminology graduates.

**Perceived Level of Career Readiness of Criminology Graduates in University of Eastern Pangasinan in terms of Self -Information, Career information, Decision-**

**Making and Career Planning**

Career-readiness encompasses the cognitive, academic, work-related, and social competencies that enable individuals to transition effectively from education to employment and a sustainable career path. A career is not merely a job but a sequence of employment opportunities that foster personal fulfillment and societal contribution. Navigating this path requires a blend of self-awareness, understanding of industry trends, and alignment between personal interests and market demands. Education, experience, and adaptability form the foundation of a meaningful professional journey. However, many students face challenges due to limited awareness of career options and labor market conditions, underscoring the importance of strategic career planning. This planning involves selecting appropriate paths, acquiring relevant skills, and preparing for long-term goals. As students move from classroom to workplace, their readiness translates into competencies that add value to organizations. Career decision-making is a structured process that involves gathering information, selecting a career, and securing education and employment. It demands both rational analysis and intuitive judgment within time constraints. Overall, successful career development hinges on informed choices, proactive planning, and continuous skill enhancement to meet evolving professional demands.

Table 1.1 below presents the perceived level of career readiness of the Criminology graduates in University of Eastern Pangasinan in terms of Self- Information

**Table 1.1**

**Perceived Level of Career Readiness of the Criminology Graduates in University of Eastern Pangasinan in terms of Self – Information.**

N= 183

<b>Self – Information</b>	<b>Weighted Mean</b>	<b>Descriptive Equivalent</b>
1.I am satisfied with the way I am carrying out my responsibilities at present.	4.44	Very High
2.I know my strengths and weaknesses.	4.43	Very High
3.I know the things I am good at.	4.39	Very High
4.I want to choose a work that allows me to do what I believe in.	4.48	Very High
5.I feel that there is great difference between what I am at present and what I would like to be.	4.42	Very High
6.At present I am more idealistic than realistic when I think of my future work.	4.25	Very High
7.I consider it important to use my abilities to the fullest in preparation for my future occupation.	4.40	Very High
8.When I am really interested in what I am doing, I can keep at it for hours.	4.44	Very High
9.I am aware that my interests changes all the time.	4. 25	Very High
10.I feel that I want to enjoy my future occupation.	4. 43	Very High

**Overall Average Weighted Mean 4.39 Very High**

The table shows the perceived level of career readiness of criminology graduates in Self-Information with an overall weighted average of 4.39, indicating that criminology graduates have a very high level of career readiness. This implies that all criminology graduates have a high level of self-awareness and self-understanding, both of which are essential components of career readiness. According to Career Development Theory by Parson (2000), which underscores the exploration of pathways to enhance professional growth, advance career trajectories, and ultimately foster overall job satisfaction. This theory aligns seamlessly with the study’s focus, as it implies that graduates engage in a thoughtful self-assessment of their strengths and weaknesses before charting a course toward their desired career.

Notably, “I want to choose a work that allows me to do what I believe in had the first highest weighted mean of 4.48, indicating that criminology graduates have a very high level of career readiness. This implies that graduates place great importance on values and meaningful work when choosing a career path and desire career alignment with their personal beliefs and principles. According to Azhenov et al. (2002), career readiness is built on career planning, personal beliefs, attitudes, motivation, feelings, abilities, behavior and action all of which are for successful career development. Work-integrated learning is a process in which students connect the knowledge they have gained at the university with the workplace (Beattie et. al. 2019).

In line with this, “I am satisfied with the way I am carrying out my responsibilities at present” and “When I am really interested in what I am doing, I can keep at it for hours,” both received a second highest weighted mean of 4.44, which indicates that the criminology graduates have a very high level of career readiness, representing the second highest scores in the study. These items indicate that criminology graduates feel confident and satisfied with their performance demonstrate high motivation and focus when engaged in tasks they enjoy. This reflects the graduate’s ability to maintain effort and interest over time, even when pursuing challenging objectives, which aligns with the concept of grit, defined as passion and perseverance for long-term goals (Duckworth, 2016)

Additionally, “I know my strengths and weaknesses” and indicator 10 “I feel that I want to enjoy my future occupation,” both had the third highest weighted means of 4.43, indicating that criminology graduates have a very high level of career readiness. This means they possess strong self- awareness, understanding both their abilities and limitations, which helps them build confidence, improve their weaknesses, and make better career decisions. According to Hu and Wang et al. (2022), students who have a clear understanding of themselves- such as knowing their strengths and weaknesses and who have a positive and hopeful view of their future careers tend to develop higher career adaptability and greater life satisfaction. The study supports the idea that self-knowledge and the pursuit of a fulfilling career directly improve career readiness.

On the other hand, “At present I am more idealistic when I think of my future work” and “I am aware that my interests change all the time” both received a lowest weighted mean of 4.25. which indicates that the criminology graduates have a very high level of career readiness, even though these are the lower scores in the category. This means that while they have ambitious and hopeful ideas about their future careers, they also recognize that their interests may evolve. Together, these indicators suggest that graduates are motivated by their goals but also understand the importance of flexibility and adapting their career plans as they grow, According to Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory (2000), individuals who combine a positive view of their abilities with a supportive environment are better able to plan and achieve career goals. This means that idealism and changing interests can be strengths when appropriately guided, as career development improves when students learn to adapt, build on their strengths, and connect with mentors and resources that help them turn aspirations into realistic career outcomes.

Furthermore, “I know the things I am good at had the second-lowest weighted mean of 4.39, which indicates that the criminology graduates have a very high level of career readiness. This implies that graduates are self-aware and can identify their strengths. However, some of them are still exploring and are unclear about how to fully apply these strengths in their future careers. The tendency to reflect about ourselves, ruminate about our weaknesses, and generally be mindful of our capabilities, needs, interests, and desires can be a disposition, an individual difference, such that some people are internally driven or have developed the ability or habit to engage in processes that sustain and increase their self-awareness (Sutton, 2016). It contributes to better decision-making and team performance (Dierdorff & Rubin, 2015).

Additionally, “I consider it important to use my abilities to the fullest in preparation for my future occupation had the third-lowest weighted mean of 4.40, which indicates that the criminology graduates have a very high level of career readiness. This implies that the graduates understand the value of developing and maximizing their skills for their future careers. However, some of them do not yet feel fully confident or consistent in applying these abilities in real-life situations. This result is supported by Ismail (2017), who employs the concept of employability capacities, including problem- solving, decision-making, and responsible skills, which significantly contribute to career adaptability encompassing curiosity, control, and confidence. It suggests that

graduates who values using their abilities entirely are better positioned to adapt and prepare for their future occupations.

Table 1.2 below presents the perceived level of career readiness of the Criminology graduates in University of Eastern Pangasinan in terms of Career -Information

Table 1.2 Perceived Level of Career Readiness of the Criminology Graduates in University of Eastern Pangasinan in terms of Career Information

N=183

<b>Career Information</b>	<b>Weighted Mean</b>	<b>Descriptive Equivalent</b>
1.I am aware of the related occupations in the field I am interested in.	4.37	Very High
2.I obtain information about career possibilities by using the library or other source of information (inquiries, reading, relevant literatures.	4.13	High
3.I know what a typical work day will be like in the occupation I am considering.	4.16	High
4.I have the knowledge about the working requirements of various jobs or works.	4.23	Very High
5.I have an idea of the possible works that suits me.	4.23	Very High
6.I know what study courses to take to prepare for myself for the occupations I am considering.	4.33	Very High
7. I have an idea what salaries people earn in the occupational field I am interested in.	4.25	Very High
8.I know what to do to obtain more information on possible occupations I have in my mind.	4.24	Very High
9.I usually research for possible careers in demand in the community.	4.30	Very High
10.I have an idea of the possible trainings to undergo with regards to the career I am interested.	4.37	Very High
<b>Overall Average Weighted Mean</b>	<b>4.26</b>	<b>Very High</b>

The table shows the perceived career-readiness levels of criminology graduates in Career Information with an overall weighted mean of 4.26, indicating very high career readiness. This implies that graduates demonstrate a high level of perceived awareness of occupational opportunities, requirements, and the necessary preparation within their chosen field. Such a level of readiness indicates that the respondents generally possess the critical information needed to make informed career decisions. The study by Sefriani, R. et al. (2023) indicates that career information including the specific skills demanded by industries, can significantly enhance students' perceived work-readiness. Career guidance equips students with a roadmap for skill development, enabling them to proactively seek opportunities and align their efforts with the requirements of their desired career paths.

According to the Theory of Employability by Yorke et. al, (2004), employability is the culmination of an individual's learning, accomplishments, and awareness of the personal skills essential for success in their chosen career. The relevance of this theory to the current study lies in its role as a yardstick for assessing the skills and knowledge employers and managers seek. It serves as a valuable framework for evaluating the performance of leaders, both as individual contributors and team members, providing a structured tool for analyzing their effectiveness in the workplace. In essence, this theory offers a lens for gauging the professional competencies crucial to success and advancement in a chosen career path. Participation and education are encouraged through experiential learning activities that allow students to fully engage in real-world settings. An internship offers students a fantastic chance to research various educational options. These internships not only provide interns with a wide range of experience, but also increase their chances of future employment (Jogan, 2019).

Notably, “I am aware of the related occupations in the field I am interested in,” and indicator 10, “I have an idea of the possible training to undergo with regards to the career I am interested in,” both got a weighted mean of 4.37, which indicates that the criminology graduates have a very high perceived level of career readiness. This indicates that graduates are well-informed about career options in their field and actively seek relevant training to prepare for their future jobs. Such awareness reflects strong personal interests and motivations, that guide their academic and professional paths, as Liaw et al. (2017) noted, emphasizing that personal interests significantly influence career decisions and learning outcomes.

In line with this, “I know what study courses to take to prepare myself for the occupations I am considering.” had the second highest weighted mean of 4.33, indicating that criminology graduates have a very high perceived level of career readiness. This implies the students are well-informed and confident in identifying the specific educational pathways required for their chosen careers. By knowing which study courses to pursue, students can efficiently plan their education, bridge potential skill gaps, and become more career ready. This clarity enables smoother transitions from school to employment and increases their employability in their desired fields. According to Azhenov et al. (2023), participation in career development courses significantly improves students’ career decision-making readiness and reduces difficulties in choosing educational and occupational paths. Their research demonstrates that targeted career education helps students gain the necessary self-awareness, identify required courses, and develop effective strategies for transitioning into careers, thereby directly enhancing preparedness for future occupations.

Additionally, “I usually research possible careers in demand in the community,” had the third-highest weighted mean of 4.30, indicating that criminology graduates have a very high perceived level of career readiness. This implies that students are proactive in staying up to date on labor market trends and in-demand careers in their community. By continually researching, students can make more informed career choices, ensure their skills align with employer needs, and adapt more effectively to changing economic conditions. This habit fosters lifelong learning, adaptability, and improves their employment prospects. Ho et al. (2022) highlight that engaging in ongoing career development learning, such as investigating labor market needs and seeking career information, increases students’ perceived employability and equips them to navigate university-to-work transitions more confidently.

On the other hand, “I obtain information about career possibilities by using the library or other sources of information (inquiries, reading, relevant literatures)” obtained the lowest weighted mean of 4.13, indicating that criminology graduates have a very high perceived level of career readiness. This implies that while criminology graduates demonstrate strong overall career readiness and self-awareness – as seen in their ratings for knowing job requirements, typical work, and necessary training- they tend to be less proactive in seeking information from various sources, which may reflect some uncertainty or idealism regarding their actual career search strategies. Employment Status and the Challenges Encountered by Criminology Graduates (ResearchGate, 2021). This study investigated the employment status of criminology graduates’ and the difficulties they faced in finding work. It highlights challenges such as a mismatch between graduates’ skills and industry needs, and competition in a saturated job market. This aligns with your finding that graduates may not be effectively using all available information sources because they might be focusing on specific, highly competitive career paths, such as the

Tri-Bureau, which was also the focus of a 2021 study on licensed criminologists in Lucena City. Furthermore, according to Gyesi, K. (2016). Information seeking behaviour of graduate students of the University of Professional Studies, Accra (UPSA). (MPhil thesis).

University of Ghana, Legon. A study of students’ information-seeking behaviour is an important prerequisite for a library to provide efficient information resources and services that meet their information needs.

Furthermore, “I know what a typical work day will be like in the occupation I am considering” had the second-lowest weighted mean of 4.16, indicating that criminology graduates have a high perceived level of career readiness. This implies that criminology graduates demonstrate strong awareness and preparedness for their careers, However, they may not be very familiar with what actually happens on a typical workday in their chosen field. This shows that they understand the job requirements and training needed but may lack real experience or

exposure to the actual work setting. According to the Illinois Center on Transition and Work (ICTW, n.d.), career exploration involves learning about different career options, understanding the pathways that lead to them, and developing a clear awareness of the nature of work, including daily tasks, responsibilities, and work environments. The study emphasizes that understanding what a typical work day entails helps students make realistic, informed career decisions.

Additionally, “I have the knowledge about the working requirements of various jobs or works” and “I have an idea of the possible works that suits me” both had the third lowest weighted mean of 4.23, which indicates that the criminology graduates have a very high perceived level of career readiness, though some gaps remain. While students generally understand their field, they may still lack detailed knowledge of specific job requirements, such as the skills and qualifications needed for roles in law enforcement, investigation, or forensic work. At the same time, some graduates are unsure which careers best match their strengths and interests, underscoring the importance of self-assessment and career exploration. Together, these indicators suggest that graduates’ awareness of career requirements and their alignment with personal abilities are closely linked, and strengthening both areas can improve their readiness to choose suitable and fulfilling career paths. According to the PSAKU International Journal of Interdisciplinary Research (2023), this finding is supported, showing that many college graduates know the academic side of their courses but lack a clear understanding of real job expectations and workplace skills, which can affect their readiness for employment and their alignment with suitable career paths.

Table 1.3 below presents the perceived level of career readiness of the Criminology graduates in University of Eastern Pangasinan in terms of Decision -Making

The table shows the perceived level of career readiness of criminology graduates in terms of decision-making with an overall weighted average of 4.26 indicating very high perceived career readiness. This implies that the high score reflects that the majority of respondents possess clarity in setting goals, evaluating options, and confidently tackling significant decisions regarding their professional paths. These characteristics suggest that the graduates are equipped with the decision-making abilities necessary for effective career planning and development. Career decision-making involves a step-by-step process, that includes gathering information, choosing a career, and securing education and employment. Making informed choices is vital to achieving success in career selection.

Table 1.3 Perceived Level of Career Readiness of the Criminology Graduates in University of Eastern Pangasinan in terms of Decision Making

<b>Decision Making</b>	<b>Weighted Mean</b>	<b>Descriptive Equivalent</b>
1. I have a clear goal in mind with regards to my future professions	4.39	Very High
2. I am aware of possible alternatives which I can consider in my chosen career field.	4.30	Very High
3.I can usually think of ways to solve important problems in my daily life.	4.28	Very High
4. I am motivated to take the necessary career decisions that are expected of me at this stage .	4.25	Very High
5.I can usually decide on priorities with respect to the things that are important to me .	4.34	Very High
6. I can make decisions for myself especially with important matters such as choosing a career.	4.32	Very High
7. I am an effective decision maker .	4.14	High
8.When I start something, I can usually see it through.	4.16	High
9. I know how to make a planned decision.	4.24	Very High
10.I’ve made up my mind when it comes to choosing a career track	4.22	Very High
<b>Overall Average Weighted Mean</b>	<b>4.26</b>	<b>Very High</b>

The process provides crucial information to shape the career path within a specific timeframe. Thus, it is essential to consider that career decision-making will involve time constraints and both rational and intuitive decision-

making (Duro, 2022). Furthermore, educational development refers to structured processes and interventions that help students understand their career interests, explore potential pathways, set goals, and prepare for future employment.

Notably, “I have a clear goal in mind regarding my future profession” had the highest weighted mean of 4.39, indicating that criminology graduates have a very high perceived level of career readiness. This implies that most criminology graduates have a clear sense of direction for their career paths. The high level of agreement with this item suggests that many criminology graduates are decisive and committed to following a path that aligns with their aspirations. Ambition, as defined by Quaglia and Cobb (cited in Hafsyhan, 2015), is the perception that an activity is important as a means to achieve a future goal. Thus, if a student has the desire to achieve or clear a future goal, s/he will be more ambitious and strive for the goal s/he has set for him/herself. Many decisions or goals are made based on the knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics (KSAs) that human resources personnel identify as potential for success on the job.

Furthermore, “I can usually decide on priorities with respect to things that are important to me” had the second highest weighted mean of 4.34, indicating that criminology graduates have a very high perceived level of career readiness. This implies that graduates are capable of recognizing and prioritizing their objectives efficiently, reflecting the maturity and practical judgement required for career readiness. According to Gati and Tal (2008), effective decision-making requires the ability to recognize and prioritize key personal values, particularly when faced with multiple alternatives or time constraints, enabling individuals to make informed timely choices. Similarly, Super (1990) supports this by explaining that career maturity is shown when graduates can organize and prioritize decisions based on their long-term goals, suggesting that graduates’ capability to prioritize reflects future career challenges.

Additionally, “I can make decisions for myself, especially with important matters such as choosing a career, ” had the third-highest weighted mean of 4.32, indicating that criminology graduates have a very high perceived level of career readiness. This implies that graduates are independent and self-confident, indicating they feel capable of directing their career journeys. This level of confidence indicates that they are ready to assess alternatives, establish personal objectives, and make decisions that reflect their ambitions. According to Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994), this notion is supported by Social Cognitive Career Theory, which holds that individuals with high self-efficacy are better equipped to make independent career decisions and pursue objectives that align with their personal interests and ambitions. Furthermore, people with greater self-efficacy in career decision-making tend to be more decisive and committed to their careers (Creed, Patton, and Prideaux 2007).

On the other hand, “I am an effective decision maker” had the lowest weighted mean of 4.14, indicating that criminology graduates have a high perceived level of career readiness. It implies that they are self-aware and thoughtful, but they also acknowledge the difficulties or uncertainties that may arise. It also shows that they are open to idealism and that their hobbies and career choices are somewhat flexible. As stated by Kulcsar et al. (2020), a career decision may involve choosing an occupation and the associated educational training, then a job and then whether to remain in that job or switch to another one, what formal and informal advanced training to take, and so on. When faced with such decisions, many individuals experience difficulties that prevent decision-making or lead them to choose a suboptimal alternative. In career psychology, career decision-making difficulties are defined as difficulties individuals encounter when making career-related decisions. They refer to all problems and challenges that need to be addressed prior to, during, or after the decision-making process.

According to the Cognitive Information Processing Theory by Sampson et al. (2004), career decision-making is a cognitive process involving gathering, processing, and applying information to make informed choices. For criminology students, it highlights how integrating academic knowledge with real-world law enforcement experience enhances problem-solving abilities, refines career plans, and strengthens their overall career readiness and professional competence.

Furthermore, “When I start something, I can usually see it through” had the second lowest weighted mean of 4.16, indicating that criminology graduates have a high perceived level of career readiness. This implies that some criminology graduates may find it hard to work toward long-term goals. Even though many believe they

can finish what they start, some struggle to stay committed, especially when things get difficult. Bandura’s (1986) Social Cognitive Theory holds that self-belief affects the effort a person puts in. So, people with less confidence may find it harder to complete important tasks. This means that even though criminology graduates show determination, they need to organize help and chances to gain experience to improve their ability to stick with career tasks. Furthermore, according to Duru (2022), those with lower confidence may begin tasks such as job applications or board exam review but find it hard to continue when challenges arise. This means they may need more support to build confidence and not give up on careers in the police and related fields.

Lastly, “I’ve made up my mind when it comes to choosing a career track” had the third lowest weighted mean of 4.22, indicating that criminology graduates have a very high perceived level of career readiness. This implies that some criminology graduates may start looking for jobs without a clear idea of what they want to do. This can slow their job search, lower their confidence, or lead them to choose the wrong career. Gati et al. (2012) argue that choosing a career is a process in which criminology graduates consider different options, compare them, and make a thoughtful decision over time. They note that even if someone is confident in their choice, they might still be unsure if they have not carefully considered all possible career paths.

Table 1.4 below presents the perceived level of career readiness of the Criminology graduates in University of Eastern Pangasinan in terms of Career Planning

Table 1.4 Perceived Level of Career Readiness of the Criminology Graduates in University of Eastern Pangasinan in terms of Career Planning

N=183

<b>Career Planning</b>	<b>Weighted Mean</b>	<b>Descriptive Equivalent</b>
1. I have a clear idea of what steps to take in planning my career.	4.21	Very High
2. It is a clear to me what I have to do to reach my career goals.	4.19	High
3.I have already made plans to reach my career goals.	4.29	Very High
4.I have already discussed my career plans with an adult whom I know very well.	3.99	High
5.I have planned what study courses to take or what occupations to choose.	4.25	Very High
6.I have a pretty good idea of the career I want to enter and how to go about it.	4.22	Very High
7. I often discuss my future plans with people whose opinion I value.	4.20	Very High
8. I regard career planning as a process that continues throughout life.	4.30	Very High
9. I think it is necessary to plan a career.	4.42	Very High
10. I have a need to learn more about career planning.	4.39	Very High
<b>Overall Average Weighted Mean</b>	<b>4.25</b>	<b>Very High</b>

The table shows the perceived level of career readiness of criminology graduates in Career Planning, with an overall weighted average of 4.25, indicating have a very high level of career readiness. This implies that the respondents are highly prepared to plan and organize their professional course. Graduates demonstrate a high level of awareness and initiative when establishing objectives, identifying necessary steps, and taking aggressive action to achieve their career goals. According to Wei, et al. (2021) and Tecilazic (2021), graduates in the criminal justice field are highly regarded for their ability to adapt to a wide range of tasks and responsibilities, demonstrating their aptitude to perform successfully across a variety of professional contexts. Furthermore, integrating career planning into early education stages is strategically vital to equip students with future -ready skills and direction. Early career interventions are associated with greater career clarity, higher academic motivation, and reduced career indecision (Hirschi & Lage,2020). Additionally, research shows that students who receive structured career guidance are more likely to pursue aligned educational pathways and exhibit stronger labor market transitions postgraduation (Hooley, Marriott, & Sampson, 2021).

Specifically, “I think it is necessary to plan a career” had the highest weighted mean score of 4.42, indicating that the criminology graduates have a very high perceived level of career readiness. This implies that criminology graduates recognize that career planning is crucial to achieving their goals. It shows that they know how important it is to be prepared for their future jobs. A successful career, however, mainly depends on meticulous

career planning, which entails logically selecting a career path and a job from available options and implementing appropriate career-readiness measures (Md. Roknuzzaman & Shahanaz Akter, 2021).

Furthermore, “I need to learn more about career planning” had the second highest weighted mean of 4.39, indicating that criminology graduates have a very high perceived level of career readiness. This implies that criminology graduates feel a strong need for more support and information to help them plan their careers. It shows that while they understand career planning is important, they may not have enough support, resources, or guidance from their academic programs to do it effectively. This concept has changed and it is now seen as a ‘continuous process’ requiring learning and advancement (What career, 2017). According to the Ministry of Education, (2020). It aims to provide students with opportunities to explore themselves, their knowledge, abilities, and skills as they pursue future careers and the capability to lead happy lives.

In addition, “I regard career planning as a process that continues throughout life” had the third-highest weighted mean of 4.30, indicating that the criminology graduates have a very high perceived level of career readiness. This implies that criminology graduates understand that career planning is a lifelong process, not just something done during college. It shows they are aware that career growth, learning new skills, and adapting to job market changes are ongoing parts of building a successful career

On the other hand, “I have already discussed my career plans with an adult whom I know very well”, had the lowest weighted mean of 3.99, indicating that criminology graduates have a high perceived level of career readiness. This implies that while criminology graduates are confident and well-prepared for their careers, there is still room improve by seeking guidance from experienced professionals to enhance their career readiness. Studies have shown that guidance from professionals in the field, as well as structured mentoring relationships, help students build confidence and gain a better understanding of the career paths available to them (Fitzgerald & Huxley, 2021). For criminology students, who may face uncertainty about the diverse career options within the criminal justice system, having access to experienced mentors can provide clarity and direction in their professional journey.

According to Social Cognitive Theory by Bandura (2000), provides insights into how individuals can strategically formulate career development plans for success. By cultivating a positive perception of their abilities and surrounding themselves with a supportive network of mentors, individuals can enhance their capacity to achieve career goals. This theory is closely linked to the study's context, underscoring the imperative for graduates to focus on their inherent strengths and cultivate a positive professional environment. The theory suggests that individuals who excel in their roles leverage their strengths and foster constructive networks, thereby contributing to their success in their chosen career paths.

In line with this, “It is clear to me what I have to do to reach my career goals” had the second-lowest weighted mean of 4.19, indicating that criminology graduates have a high perceived level of career readiness. This implies that respondents have a general idea of how to reach their career goals, but their understanding is not very strong. Some may still be unsure about the exact steps, qualifications, or options available. This could be due to limited access to career-planning resources, insufficient guidance, or few opportunities to explore different career paths. According to Latham, (2004), goal setting has been shown to increase employee motivation and organizational commitment. Furthermore, participation in goal setting encourages a search for new strategies to aid success. It utilizes our skills and pushes our abilities increasing task-relevant knowledge while enhancing self-efficacy and self-confidence (Schunk, 1985).

Lastly, “I often discuss my plans with people whose opinion I value” had the third lowest weighted mean of 4.20, indicating that criminology graduates have a very high perceived level of career readiness. This implies that respondents do discuss their plans with people they trust, indicating they appreciate advice and support. However, compared to other career-related actions, these statements may occur less frequently or receive less attention, suggesting the need to encourage more regular and meaningful discussions about career goals. According to Ahn & Lee (2024), informational influence occurs when individuals seek guidance from important others, relying on reviews, expert opinions, or influencer recommendations to reduce uncertainty in their choices.

Table 1 below presents the overall perceived level of career readiness of the Criminology graduates in University of Eastern Pangasinan.

Table 1 Overall Perceived Level of Career Readiness of the Criminology Graduates in University of Eastern Pangasinan

Indicators	Average Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
Self-Information	4.39	Very High
Career Information	4.26	Very High
Decision Making	4.26	Very High
Career Planning	4.25	Very High
<b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>	<b>4.29</b>	<b>Very High</b>

The table shows the overall perceived level of career readiness of criminology graduates at the University of Eastern Pangasinan, with a weighted mean of 4.29, indicating that they have a very high perceived level of career readiness. This implies that the criminology graduates from the University of Eastern Pangasinan have a very high perceived level of career readiness or are well-prepared to transition from school to work.

The result is supported by Social Cognitive Theory (Wang, D. et al., 2022), which emphasizes how you can make well-informed professional decisions that align with your strengths by evaluating your self- efficacy, expectations for the outcome, learning experience, and personal drive- in career development. In addition, as Magallanes (2022) explains, career readiness can increase a person’s value because by preparing them for all possibilities. Not only that, but Sagita et al. (2020) also believe that career readiness can serve as an indicator of long- term performance and career progress.

**Regarding Self-Information, the weighted mean was 4.39, indicating that**

criminology graduates have a very high perceived level of career readiness. This implies that criminology graduates have strong self-assessment skills, enabling them to determine a career that suits them. It is supported by Chan (2018), who emphasizes that career self- efficacy is an important factor influencing career decision-making among graduates and is positively related to job satisfaction. This was explained by Li et al. (2019), who stated that career self-efficacy refers to the level of confidence individuals have in their ability to perform the tasks needed to make career decisions. Nisa et al. (2021) also stated that individuals with career self- efficacy tend to have high work readiness because they have the confidence to make career decisions, face challenges, and take risks.

Regarding Career Information, the researchers obtained a weighted mean of 4.26, which indicates that criminology graduates have a very high perceived level of career readiness. It implies that criminology graduates are actively seeking the information they need about the type of work and career opportunities they aim for. By understanding the professional standards and job expectations in their field, criminology graduates can meet employer needs and adapt effectively to the workplace environment. This study is supported by the Theory of Employability by Yorke et al. (2004), which emphasizes that employability is rooted in awareness of skills and job requirements, both of which are critical for success and advancement in the workplace.

In terms of Decision-Making, the average weighted mean is 4.26, indicating that criminology graduates have a very high level of career readiness. It implies that graduates have a clear goal in mind for their future profession based on their abilities, skills, and talents. Criminology graduates can deal with their problems and solve them. This suggests that criminology graduates have strong career decision-making skills, are more responsive, and are aware of potential career alternatives. This is supported by rational action theory, which states that individuals use rational calculation to make decisions and achieve outcomes aligned with their objectives and goals. Furthermore, according to Chuang et al. (2020), criminology graduates who believe in their career goal- selection view the university and the course they take as steps toward attaining their career goals and as a direction toward achieving their career vision.

In terms of Career Planning, it obtained a weighted average of 4.25, indicating that criminology graduates have a very high perceived level of career readiness. It implies that criminology graduates show commitment to the future career they are interested in. Criminology graduates with career planning tend to have identified careers that suit them and have determined the proper steps to achieve these goals. This explained by Savickas and Porfeli (2012), individuals with high levels of career adaptability can become concerned with preparing their career tasks, have the control in becoming responsible towards their career development, display the curiosity to think about the self in various situations and roles by exploring possible future selves and collecting information regarding career opportunities, and have the confidence to face challenges in their future career and succeed in resolving any career-related problems. Furthermore, Teychenne et al. (2019) suggest that incorporating career planning into university curricula improves students' career adaptability. At the same time, students are well-prepared to set career goals and start planning for jobs relevant to their field.

As for the qualitative approach, it presents a thematic analysis and interpretation of the findings on the challenges that hinder the career readiness of criminology graduates. Themes were identified from information gathered in interviews with 10 criminology graduates from the University of the Eastern Pangasinan, who from the awards batch 2024/2025, who have had internships in different related offices. Based on careful analysis, three (3) themes emerged for the study, time management as a core challenge in career preparation, emotional and mental struggles in board exam preparation, and financial constraints and their impact on career readiness. The themes hindering career readiness among criminology graduates were common challenges, difficulties and strategies that impact their career readiness. Lastly, the themes of the proposed measures to enhance the career readiness of criminology graduates at the University of Eastern Pangasinan are discussed.

## **Challenges that Hinder Career Readiness of Criminology Graduates in University of Eastern Pangasinan**

The path to career readiness is often marked by many challenges and demands as well as practical ways to reach goals and successfully transition from student to professional. This study explores the experiences of recent criminology graduates from the

University of Eastern Pangasinan as they prepare for their careers. The central theme as seen in the interviews is "Challenges that hinders Career Readiness of Criminology Graduates in University of Eastern Pangasinan," which includes the problems graduates face and the adaptive mechanisms they employ to overcome them.

### **THEME 1: Time Management as a Core Challenge in Career Preparation**

Across many interviews, time management consistently emerged as a significant problem. Graduates expressed difficulty in balancing intensive board exam preparation, internships, and personal commitments. Participant 2 highlighted the pressure of managing quizzes and exams alongside reviewing, which caused sleepless nights; this was echoed by Participant 1. Participant 3 described struggles with time for both studies and personal responsibilities, often leading to exhaustion. This highlights that mastering time management skills is fundamental for career readiness among criminology graduates. Criminology students find it hard to balance studying, internships, and personal life. This can cause stress and tiredness. Good time management and support are important for staying healthy and succeeding in exams and future jobs.

Impact time administration is a panacea for authoritative adequacy, not placebo. Effective time management will enhance staff efficiency, make employment planning less demanding, enable staff to perform tasks at their highest level, ensure staffing to organize and fulfill essential tasks, record and direct the association towards achieving its set objectives. This section is principally committed to the presentation and examination of information gathered in the course of this exploration study. (Khalil, F. et al. 2019).

### **THEME 2: Emotional and Mental Struggles in Board Exam Preparation**

Preparing for the board exam is not just about studying hard; it also brings significant emotional and mental challenges. Many students feel stressed, worried, and sometimes overwhelmed as they try to balance their review with other parts of their lives. These feelings can make it harder to focus and stay motivated, which is why understanding these struggles is important for anyone going through this process. Participant 3 described struggling with motivation due to difficulty visualizing themselves working in the field. Participant 7 identified

the mental shift required to move from a student to a professional mindset as a significant challenge. External pressures such as family expectations and fear of failure further increased emotional burdens, as noted by Participant 8. Uncertainty about career paths can reduce motivation in criminology graduates, showing the need for guidance and support. Negative emotions such as self-disappointment, can affect focus, underscoring the importance of emotional support during exam preparation. Transitioning from student to professional requires mental and emotional readiness. Additionally, social pressure from supporters can motivate but also cause stress, so managing these influences is essential for successful career preparation.

Examination stress among college students has been a topic of interest for many years. College students experience high stress for various reasons such as inadequate preparation, poor study habits, and insufficient information. When stress is perceived negatively or becomes excessive, it leads to anxiety before and during examinations and ultimately affects their academic achievement. (Kumari, A. 2014)

### THEME 3: Financial Constraints and Their Impact on Career Readiness

Many students face financial problems while preparing for their board exams, which can make it harder to get ready for their careers. Paying for review centers, study materials, and other expenses can be a big challenge. These money worries can cause stress and limit opportunities, affecting how confident and prepared students feel as they enter their professional lives. Several participants, including Participants 6, 8, and 10, identified financial limitations as barriers to enrolling in review centers or acquiring study materials. Even those who received scholarships or free reviews still faced concerns about other related expenses, highlighting ongoing financial stress. Some graduates sought family support, while others invested in additional review centers to improve their chances despite costs. This shows that financial hardship not only restricts opportunities but also adds to the emotional strain during serious preparation periods. Financial problems can lead students to seek out many review centers, increasing their costs and stress. This can lower their focus and study quality for the board exam. Having little money to pay for review classes may limit how much they can prepare. This often causes more stress and less study time, making it harder to pass the exam and feel confident about success. Managing money is important for good preparation.

Financial problems are a vital issue for everyone, especially students. Most students have to struggle to make ends meet because they come from underprivileged families. Thus, students have to make difficult decisions about whether to spend money on food or other essential needs, while others face health issues that take a toll on their finances (Perman, 2019).

Table 2 Proposed Measures to Enhance Career Readiness of Criminology Graduates in University of Eastern

#### Pangasinan

These proposed measures shows and specified that Criminology students at the University of Eastern Pangasinan must recognize and utilize insufficient resources and develop poor scheduling habits, as well as overcome financial barriers and stress related issues associated with mental health, through Training sessions, Financial Aid Programs, In-house Review Sessions, and Well-Being Programs. These interventions will improve the ability to create and follow effective plans for professional success by developing emotional resilience through successful completion of licensure examinations and eventual employment.

Key Areas	Objectives	Strategies	Office/Person Involved	Expected Output
Time Management Challenges	To help criminology students and graduates manage their time effectively while preparing for their board exam and future career.	Conduct seminars and workshops on proper time management and prioritization.  Encourage students to create a personal study schedule for board exam review preparation.	Dean's Office of Criminology  Guidance and Counseling Office	Student and graduates are able to balance their time between studies, responsibilities, and personal life.

		Integrate time management skills into student development programs.			
Financial Constraints	To provide support and assistance for review expenses and other financial needs related to career preparation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish scholarship and assistance program for board review expenses.</li> <li>• Partner with the Alumni Association for fundraising and sponsorship opportunities.</li> <li>• Conduct free or low – cost in- house review sessions for graduates.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office of the University President</li> <li>• Alumni Office</li> <li>• Dean’s Office of Criminology</li> </ul>	Reduced financial struggles and improved access to review programs and necessary career preparation resources.	
Emotional and Mental Struggles	To help students and graduates build emotional stability and maintain a positive mindset during board exam preparation and career transition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide stress management and self-care seminars.</li> <li>• Organize peer support group and wellness programs.</li> <li>• Encourage participation in motivational or supportive activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidance and Counseling Office</li> <li>• Student Affairs Office</li> </ul>	Graduates are mentally and emotionally prepared to face career and examination challenges.	

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the conclusion, and recommendation based on the results of the analysis from the previous chapter.

### Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were drawn: First, the level of Career Readiness of Criminology Graduates at the University of Eastern

Pangasinan in terms of Self -information, Career information, Decision-making, and Career planning was Very High. Second, the challenges that hinder career readiness encountered by criminology graduates were mostly time management as a core challenge in career preparation, emotional and mental struggles during board exam preparation, and financial constraints and their impact on career readiness.

### Recommendations

To further enhance career readiness, criminology graduates should seek mentorship and access career guidance to clear and improve their career awareness and make better decisions for their future path. They should be more active in gathering information related to their career and avoid limiting their information seeking to a specific field or job. By taking the initiative to approach educators and professionals they can gain confidence and better

To improve the career readiness of criminology graduates, the university should enhance students’ knowledge and capabilities and focus on gaining practical experience through internships and hands-on training, developing their ability to manage their time and prepare for core challenges. Furthermore, criminology graduates need to create a schedule to manage their time and avoid mental and emotional struggles in their preparation, and manage their money so it does not cause difficulties or affect their preparation for the upcoming board exam.

This study will be used by other researchers for future reference.

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