

The State of the Criminology Program in a Higher Education Institution in Surigao del Sur: Compliance and Challenges

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Abstract

This study examined the state of the Criminology Program in a higher education institution in Surigao del Sur in terms of its compliance with the trifocal functions of higher education: instructional quality, research and publications, and extension and linkages. An explanatory sequential mixed-methods design was employed, involving administrative officials, faculty members, non-teaching personnel, and criminology students in the quantitative phase, followed by qualitative inquiry into the challenges encountered in implementing the trifocal functions. Quantitative data were analyzed using median scores, tests of normality, and the Kruskal–Wallis H test, while qualitative responses were analyzed thematically. The findings showed that the Criminology Program demonstrated High Compliance across all three dimensions, with extension and linkages obtaining the highest median score (Md = 3.30), followed by instructional quality (Md = 3.25) and research and publications (Md = 3.25). The Kruskal–Wallis test indicated no statistically significant difference in the perceptions of the respondent groups regarding program compliance ($p = 0.801$). The qualitative findings revealed recurring challenges involving instructional resource and facility limitations, time and workload pressures, research- and extension-related difficulties, faculty development and capacity-building needs, and the need to strengthen partnerships and institutional support. Taken together, the findings indicate that while the Criminology Program demonstrates a generally high level of compliance with the trifocal functions of higher education, institutional and operational challenges remain areas for continued improvement. The findings provide a basis for strengthening resource allocation, faculty development, research support, instructional facilities, and institutional and community partnerships.

Keywords: Criminology Program, trifocal functions of higher education, instructional quality, research and publications, extension and linkages, compliance, mixed-methods research

Introduction

Criminology is an interdisciplinary field concerned with crime, criminal behavior, and the agencies and processes involved in the administration of justice. As the criminal justice sector becomes increasingly complex, criminology education is expected to prepare graduates with not only theoretical knowledge but also practical competencies, ethical judgment, research capability, and the ability to respond to emerging justice-related concerns. Consequently, contemporary criminology education has increasingly emphasized

competency-based and outcomes-based approaches that connect academic preparation with the competencies required in professional practice (Archer & Gough, 2021; Harden, 2022).

In the Philippines, the quality and delivery of Bachelor of Science in Criminology programs are guided by the policies, standards, and guidelines established by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). CHED Memorandum Order No. 05, series of 2018 provides the Policies, Standards and Guidelines for the Bachelor of Science in Criminology program and adopts an outcomes-based quality assurance orientation. The policy identifies minimum program outcomes and provides HEIs with latitude to develop curricula appropriate to their institutional contexts and missions, provided that the required learning outcomes are attained. It also applies to state universities and colleges offering the program. Commission on Higher Education.

The outcomes-based orientation of criminology education places emphasis on the alignment of curriculum, teaching and learning processes, assessment, faculty qualifications, learning resources, and institutional support with intended program outcomes. Such an approach requires HEIs not merely to offer a prescribed curriculum but also to continuously evaluate whether program implementation contributes to the development of the competencies expected of criminology graduates. The literature reviewed in the present study likewise identifies outcomes-based education as an important component of contemporary higher education reform and program quality assurance (Alwazir & Anderson, 2021; Delos Santos & Gonzales, 2022).

Within this context, the quality of a criminology program may be examined through the interconnected functions performed by higher education institutions. The present study focuses on three major dimensions: instructional quality, research and publications, and extension and linkages. Instructional quality encompasses the qualifications and competence of faculty members, teaching strategies, curriculum and course alignment, learning resources, and facilities. Research and publications concern the production and dissemination of knowledge through scholarly activities. Extension and linkages encompass community-oriented activities, institutional partnerships, and collaboration with government agencies, law enforcement organizations, and other stakeholders. These dimensions provide a broader basis for understanding program implementation beyond classroom instruction alone.

The importance of maintaining quality in criminology education is further reinforced by the professional expectations placed upon graduates. CHED's prescribed outcomes for BS Criminology include the ability to conduct criminological research, demonstrate competence in law enforcement administration and public safety, investigate and detect crime, enforce laws and regulations, and contribute to the protection of lives and property. Commission on Higher Education These outcomes indicate that criminology programs must provide an educational environment capable of developing academic, professional, research, and community-oriented competencies.

International developments similarly demonstrate the movement toward competency-based and outcomes-oriented criminology education. The thesis literature notes that criminology programs in different educational contexts have increasingly incorporated applied training, community-based learning, critical thinking, and competencies relevant to contemporary justice systems (Archer & Gough, 2021; Garcia & Ramos, 2022). Outcomes-based education more broadly emphasizes the alignment of educational processes with clearly defined learning outcomes and the systematic assessment of whether these outcomes are achieved (Harden, 2022). However, the literature also indicates that the implementation of outcomes-based reforms may involve challenges related to institutional capacity,

curriculum implementation, research utilization, and professional development (Delos Santos & Gonzales, 2022; Khoza, 2023).

In the Philippine setting, these concerns are particularly relevant because criminology programs operate within national regulatory and professional frameworks. The Philippine Criminology Profession Act of 2018, or Republic Act No. 11131, establishes the professional framework for criminologists and provides for the licensure and regulation of the profession. The law also recognizes the importance of criminological research and professional competencies in the field. LawPhil Thus, the preparation of future criminologists involves not only compliance with academic requirements but also the development of competencies relevant to professional practice.

Despite the existence of national standards and quality-assurance mechanisms, the extent to which these requirements are consistently implemented at the institutional and local levels requires empirical examination. The thesis identified a limited body of empirical evidence concerning the implementation of criminology programs in the Caraga Administrative Region, particularly with respect to compliance with standards, instructional quality, research productivity, and extension activities. This regional gap is significant because institutional contexts differ in terms of available resources, faculty capacity, facilities, research support, and community partnerships.

Previous research has demonstrated the value of examining criminology programs through institutional and graduate outcomes. For example, program evaluation and tracer studies have examined curriculum relevance, graduate employment, professional preparation, and institutional performance in criminology education (Aydinan, 2019; Damandaman et al., 2018; Patalinghug et al., 2023). However, the present study addresses a more specific institutional concern by examining the three interrelated functions of instruction, research and publications, and extension and linkages, while also considering the challenges experienced by stakeholders in implementing these functions.

This concern is particularly relevant to the Criminology Program of North Eastern Mindanao State University (NEMSU) in Surigao del Sur. The program operates within the regulatory expectations established for Philippine criminology education while simultaneously responding to its own institutional and regional context. The thesis identified the need for a systematic assessment that could provide evidence regarding the program's compliance and the challenges encountered by its major stakeholders. The study consequently involved administrative officials, faculty members, non-teaching personnel, and criminology students to obtain multiple perspectives on program implementation.

Importantly, assessing compliance alone may not fully explain the conditions underlying program implementation. A program may demonstrate compliance with established standards while still experiencing challenges related to instructional resources, facilities, workload, research support, faculty development, and institutional partnerships. For this reason, the present study incorporated a qualitative component to identify the challenges encountered by stakeholders in carrying out the trifocal functions of higher education. The study's conceptual framework explicitly connected the assessment of compliance with the identification of factors and challenges that may affect program implementation.

Accordingly, this study examined The State of the Criminology Program in a Higher Education Institution in Surigao del Sur: Compliance and Challenges. It specifically determined the level of compliance of the Criminology Program in terms of instructional quality, research and publications, and extension and linkages; examined whether significant differences existed among the assessed compliance dimensions; and explored the challenges encountered by stakeholders in implementing the trifocal functions of higher education. The study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, allowing quantitative

assessment of program compliance to be followed by qualitative exploration of implementation challenges.

By integrating quantitative evidence and qualitative perspectives, the study seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the current state of the Criminology Program. The findings are intended to provide an empirical basis for institutional initiatives concerning instructional resources, faculty development, research support, extension activities, and institutional and community partnerships. Ultimately, the study contributes to the continuing evaluation and enhancement of criminology education in a regional higher education context.

Theoretical Foundation

The study is anchored on Adaptive Curriculum Theory, Total Quality Management (TQM) in Education, and the Technological, Pedagogical, and Content Knowledge (TPACK) Framework, which collectively provide a multidimensional basis for examining the implementation and quality of the Criminology Program in a higher education institution in Surigao del Sur. The thesis identifies Adaptive Curriculum Theory as the primary theoretical foundation, emphasizing the need for academic curricula to remain dynamic, flexible, and responsive to changes in society, professional practice, and the evolving needs of learners. In criminology education, this perspective is relevant to the integration of emerging concerns in criminal justice and to the alignment of program content with contemporary professional and local needs. TQM in Education provides the institutional quality perspective of the study. It emphasizes stakeholder participation, accountability, evidence-based decision-making, and continuous quality improvement rather than mere compliance with regulatory requirements. Applied to the Criminology Program, this perspective supports the assessment of instructional quality, faculty qualifications, research productivity, extension services, institutional linkages, and quality-assurance practices.

The TPACK Framework complements these perspectives by focusing on the integration of content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and technology in teaching and learning. In the context of criminology education, it provides a lens for considering faculty preparedness, instructional innovation, and the use of technology-enhanced approaches in developing students' theoretical and practical competencies.

Taken together, the three theoretical perspectives provide a framework for examining the instructional quality, research and publications, and extension and linkages of the Criminology Program, as well as the challenges encountered in implementing these functions. They also provide a theoretical basis for identifying areas for improvement and for developing evidence-based recommendations for strengthening program implementation.

Methodology

Research Design

The study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design. The quantitative phase was conducted first to determine the perceived level of compliance of the Criminology Program with the trifocal functions of higher education—instructional quality, research and publications, and extension and linkages. The quantitative findings subsequently informed the qualitative phase, which was undertaken to explain and provide deeper contextual understanding of the issues, factors, and challenges associated with program implementation. This sequential integration enabled the qualitative findings to enrich the interpretation of the quantitative results.

Participants and Setting

The study was conducted in the Criminology Program of North Eastern Mindanao State University (NEMSU) in Surigao del Sur. The quantitative phase involved four stakeholder groups: administrative officials, faculty members, non-teaching personnel, and criminology students. The qualitative phase involved key informants who provided contextual information regarding the factors and challenges encountered in implementing the trifocal functions of higher education. The thesis notes that participation in the quantitative survey was voluntary; consequently, the findings represent the perceptions of the respondents who participated during the data-collection period and should not be generalized to all Philippine higher education institutions offering criminology programs.

Research Instrument

The study utilized both quantitative and qualitative research instruments developed and adapted by the researcher to address the objectives of the study. For the quantitative phase, a structured survey questionnaire was adapted from Cruz et al. (2024) on the implementation of criminology programs and further refined based on relevant literature and policy documents. The questionnaire measured the perceived level of compliance of the Criminology Program in three areas: instructional quality, research and publications, and extension and linkages. It employed a four-point Likert scale, with 4 interpreted as Very High Compliance (3.25–4.00), 3 as High Compliance (2.50–3.24), 2 as Low Compliance (1.75–2.49), and 1 as Very Low Compliance (1.00–1.74). The instrument underwent validation and pilot testing before its administration. Its overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.891, indicating satisfactory internal consistency, while the reliability coefficients for the three dimensions were 0.976 for Instructional Quality, 0.896 for Research and Publications, and 0.881 for Extension and Linkages. For the qualitative phase, a Key Informant Interview (KII) guide was used to obtain deeper information regarding the factors and challenges encountered in implementing the trifocal functions of higher education.

Data Collection Procedure

Prior to data collection, the researcher secured the necessary institutional approvals and permissions and provided prospective participants with an information sheet and informed consent form explaining the purpose and procedures of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality of responses, and participants' rights. The quantitative survey was administered to the identified stakeholder groups through printed questionnaires or Google Forms, depending on respondents' accessibility and preference. Although total enumeration was initially intended, only 80 respondents completed the survey, consisting of 20 administrative officials, 20 faculty members, 20 non-teaching personnel, and 20 criminology students. Respondents were given one week to complete the questionnaire, with follow-up reminders provided during the data-collection period.

Following the quantitative phase, 16 key informants were purposively selected, comprising four administrative officials, four faculty members, four non-teaching personnel, and four criminology students. The interviews were conducted approximately one week after completion of the quantitative survey through face-to-face sessions or online platforms such as Google Meet, depending on participants' availability and preference. With informed consent and permission to record, the researcher conducted semi-structured Key Informant Interviews focusing on instructional quality, research and publications, extension and linkages, and the challenges encountered in program implementation.

After data collection, the quantitative responses were reviewed for completeness, encoded, cleaned, and

prepared for statistical analysis, while the qualitative interviews were transcribed and prepared for thematic analysis. The sequential procedure enabled the qualitative findings to provide contextual explanations for the quantitative results.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were organized, encoded, tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted according to the research questions. Because the data did not satisfy the assumption of normality, non-parametric statistical procedures were employed.

The median was used to determine the level of compliance of the Criminology Program across the three dimensions. The Kruskal–Wallis H test was used to examine differences in the perceptions of the independent stakeholder groups at the 0.05 level of significance.

For the qualitative data, thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke (2006) was employed. The analysis involved familiarization with the transcripts, generation of initial codes, identification of potential themes, review and refinement of themes, definition and naming of themes, and preparation of the final narrative supported by representative responses.

Ethical Considerations

The study observed ethical safeguards concerning voluntary participation, privacy, confidentiality, and responsible handling of research data. Personal identifiers were not collected in the survey, while identification codes were used for qualitative participants. Digital data were stored in password-protected storage accessible only to authorized research personnel. Interview transcripts and recordings were anonymized before analysis and reporting, and quotations were reviewed to prevent participant identification. The study also emphasized respect for participant autonomy, minimization of potential risks, and honest and objective reporting of findings.

Results

This section presents the findings of the study on the state of the Criminology Program in terms of its compliance with the trifocal functions of higher education: instructional quality, research and publications, and extension and linkages. The quantitative results are presented first to establish the perceived level of program compliance, followed by the qualitative findings that provide contextual explanations of the challenges encountered in implementing these functions. This presentation follows the explanatory sequential mixed-methods design of the study, in which the qualitative findings are used to provide deeper understanding of the quantitative results.

Table 1. Level of Compliance with the Trifocal Functions of Higher Education

Trifocal Function	Median	Interpretation
Instructional Quality	3.25	High Compliance
Research and Publications	3.25	High Compliance
Extension and Linkages	3.30	High Compliance

The findings indicate that the Criminology Program demonstrated a generally consistent level of compliance across its three core functions. Extension and Linkages registered the highest median score,

suggesting a relatively favorable assessment of the program's community engagement and institutional partnerships. Meanwhile, Instructional Quality and Research and Publications both obtained a median of 3.25, placing them within the High Compliance category.

At the indicator level, the thesis results further showed that the instructional quality indicators were generally rated High Compliance, with the indicators receiving median scores of 3.00. These included faculty qualifications and competence, mastery of criminology concepts and practices, teaching strategies, alignment of course outcomes with program objectives, learning resources, laboratory facilities, assessment methods, updating of instructional materials, integration of current developments in criminology education, and academic policies and procedures.

The overall findings therefore indicate that the program was perceived to be implementing its instructional, research, and extension functions at a high level of compliance, although the scores remained below the Very High Compliance category.

Difference in the Level of Compliance

The findings showed that there was no statistically significant difference in the perceived level of compliance among the four respondent groups—administrative officials, faculty members, non-teaching personnel, and criminology students—across the three dimensions of the Criminology Program. The Kruskal–Wallis H test yielded a significance value of $p = .984$ for Instructional Quality, $p = .529$ for Research and Publications, and $p = .335$ for Extension and Linkages. Since all computed p-values were greater than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was not rejected. These results indicate that the four stakeholder groups had generally consistent perceptions regarding the program's compliance with the trifocal functions of higher education.

The consistency of perceptions is also reflected in the respondent-group median scores. For Instructional Quality, the median scores ranged from 3.15 to 3.30; for Research and Publications, from 3.10 to 3.30; and for Extension and Linkages, from 3.00 to 3.50. Although some variations were observed among the groups, these differences were not statistically significant. Thus, the quantitative findings suggest a generally shared assessment of the Criminology Program's implementation of its instructional, research, and extension functions across the different stakeholder groups.

Qualitative Results: Challenges Encountered in Implementing the Trifocal Functions

The qualitative phase provided deeper insight into the challenges underlying the quantitative findings. Analysis of the responses from the 16 key informants generated five interrelated themes: (1) Instructional Resource and Facility Limitations, (2) Time and Workload Pressures, (3) Research- and Extension-Related Difficulties, (4) Faculty Development and Capacity Building, and (5) Strengthening Partnerships and Institutional Support. These themes indicate that the implementation of the Criminology Program's trifocal functions is influenced not only by the commitment of its stakeholders but also by the availability of resources, workload conditions, professional development opportunities, and institutional and external support.

Theme 1. Instructional Resource and Facility Limitations

A recurring challenge identified by the informants was the limited availability of instructional resources, laboratory equipment, and training facilities. Informants described inadequate laboratory and classroom facilities, outdated equipment, limited learning resources, and overcrowded classes as factors that may

constrain the delivery of effective instruction. Some respondents also identified shortages of qualified faculty and limitations in instructional materials as concerns affecting instructional quality.

The responses further indicated that resource limitations extend beyond classroom instruction. Limited facilities and equipment may also restrict opportunities for practical learning and research-related activities. Thus, while the quantitative findings showed High Compliance in instructional quality, the qualitative responses point to operational resource gaps that may affect the program's capacity to sustain and further improve its implementation.

Theme 2. Time and Workload Pressures

Time constraints and competing responsibilities emerged as another recurring challenge. Informants described difficulties in balancing teaching responsibilities with research, extension, and administrative tasks. Heavy teaching loads and administrative responsibilities were reported to reduce the time available for lesson preparation, professional development, and research activities. Scheduling changes and other curricular or institutional functions were also identified as sources of time pressure.

The same concern was evident in research and extension activities. Informants reported that teaching and administrative responsibilities sometimes take priority over research, making it difficult to conduct studies and prepare scholarly publications consistently. Extension activities were likewise affected by scheduling conflicts involving faculty, students, beneficiaries, and partner agencies.

Theme 3. Research- and Extension-Related Difficulties

The third theme concerns challenges directly associated with research production and extension implementation. In research, informants identified limited funding, insufficient access to research materials and databases, limited research training, lack of time, and difficulties associated with publication. Some respondents also noted the need to strengthen research skills and provide greater guidance and support for research activities.

For extension activities, respondents reported difficulties related to scheduling, budget availability, manpower, transportation, logistics, community participation, and coordination with partner agencies. One informant specifically noted that differences in the availability of faculty members, students, and community partners could result in delays or rescheduling. Others identified weak community linkages and limited institutional support as additional concerns.

These responses suggest that the High Compliance rating for Research and Publications and Extension and Linkages should be interpreted alongside the operational challenges identified by the informants. The qualitative evidence does not negate the quantitative result; rather, it provides context for understanding the conditions under which the program performs these functions.

Theme 4. Faculty Development and Capacity Building

The findings also highlighted the need for continuous faculty development, mentoring, and capacity building. Informants identified insufficient professional development opportunities, limited research knowledge, and the need for continuous training to keep faculty members updated with emerging developments and practices in criminology education. Some responses also pointed to the need to improve motivation through appropriate recognition or incentives.

The concern is particularly relevant to the simultaneous demands of instruction, research, and extension. Faculty members are expected to maintain instructional quality while participating in research, extension,

and administrative activities. The qualitative responses therefore point to the importance of sustained professional development and institutional mechanisms that enable faculty members to develop competencies needed across the program's trifocal functions.

Theme 5. Strengthening Partnerships and Institutional Support

The final theme emphasizes the importance of institutional support and sustained partnerships. Informants identified insufficient funding, limited manpower, transportation and logistical constraints, weak community linkages, and limited coordination with partner organizations as challenges affecting extension activities. Similar concerns were reported for research and instruction, particularly in relation to funding, resources, facilities, and training.

The findings indicate that program compliance depends on institutional conditions that extend beyond the immediate work of faculty and students. Adequate resource allocation, responsive administrative support, professional development, and stronger relationships with government agencies, communities, and other partner organizations can provide an enabling environment for the sustained implementation of the program's instructional, research, and extension functions. The thesis similarly emphasizes that these challenges are interconnected and collectively influence the effective delivery of the three functions.

Synthesis of the Qualitative Findings

The qualitative findings reveal that the Criminology Program's High Compliance across the three trifocal functions is accompanied by several operational and institutional challenges. The five themes demonstrate that compliance is shaped by the interaction of resources and facilities, workload and time, research and extension mechanisms, faculty capacity, and institutional and external partnerships. These findings provide an important contextual explanation for the quantitative results and identify specific areas that may be addressed to strengthen the program's continuing implementation and quality improvement.

Discussion

The findings indicate that the Criminology Program demonstrated a generally favorable level of compliance with the three trifocal functions of higher education, while the qualitative results revealed operational and institutional challenges that may affect the sustainability and further improvement of program implementation. The quantitative and qualitative findings, when considered together, suggest that compliance should be understood not only in terms of meeting established standards but also in terms of the institutional capacity to continuously improve instruction, research, and extension. This interpretation is consistent with the study's theoretical foundation, which integrates Adaptive Curriculum Theory, Total Quality Management (TQM) in Education, and the TPACK Framework.

Compliance with the Trifocal Functions

The Criminology Program obtained a High Compliance rating across all three dimensions, with median scores of 3.25 for Instructional Quality, 3.25 for Research and Publications, and 3.30 for Extension and Linkages. The relatively close scores suggest that the program's three major functions were perceived to be implemented at generally comparable levels. Extension and Linkages obtained the highest median, indicating a particularly favorable assessment of the program's community-oriented activities and institutional partnerships.

This finding is consistent with the study's application of Total Quality Management in Education, which

views quality as a continuing institutional process involving stakeholder participation, accountability, evidence-based decision-making, and continuous improvement. Within this perspective, the High Compliance rating indicates that the program has established practices supporting its instructional, research, and extension responsibilities. However, the qualitative findings demonstrate that maintaining these practices

The finding also relates to Adaptive Curriculum Theory, which emphasizes the need for educational programs to remain responsive to changes in society, professional practice, and learner needs. The informants' concerns regarding updating teaching methods and course content, instructional resources, laboratory facilities, and emerging developments in criminology suggest that compliance is an ongoing process. A program may meet current requirements while still needing to adapt continuously to developments in criminology, technology, professional practice, and the changing needs of students and communities.

Consistency of Stakeholder Perceptions

The absence of statistically significant differences among administrative officials, faculty members, non-teaching personnel, and students indicates generally consistent perceptions of the program's compliance. The respondent-group analyses yielded p-values greater than .05 across Instructional Quality, Research and Publications, and Extension and Linkages. This consistency suggests that the different stakeholder groups generally shared a similar assessment of the program's implementation.

The finding is relevant to the TQM perspective, which emphasizes stakeholder involvement in institutional quality assurance. A relatively consistent assessment across stakeholder groups may indicate that the implementation of the program's core functions is visible across different sectors of the institution. Nevertheless, the qualitative findings demonstrate that shared perceptions of compliance do not eliminate the operational challenges experienced by stakeholders. Rather, the qualitative evidence helps explain the conditions under which the reported level of compliance is being achieved.

Challenges Affecting Program Implementation

Despite the High Compliance ratings, the qualitative findings identified limitations in instructional resources and facilities, time and workload pressures, research and extension difficulties, faculty development needs, and institutional and partnership support. These findings indicate that compliance and challenges can exist simultaneously. The program may satisfy established requirements while encountering constraints that make implementation more demanding or limit opportunities for further improvement.

The reported limitations in laboratory facilities, equipment, learning resources, and qualified faculty are particularly relevant to instructional quality. The thesis emphasizes that adequate infrastructure, learning resources, and institutional capacity are important to effective teaching, research, and community engagement. These findings are also consistent with the TPACK Framework, which highlights the importance of integrating content knowledge, pedagogy, and technology in effective teaching. In criminology education, limitations in equipment and technology may constrain opportunities for technology-enhanced and practice-oriented learning.

Time and workload pressures likewise have implications across all three functions. The informants described the difficulty of balancing teaching, research, extension, and administrative responsibilities. Such competing demands may limit the time available for lesson preparation, research production,

publication, professional development, and extension activities. Thus, strengthening compliance requires attention not only to program standards but also to the organizational conditions that enable faculty and other stakeholders to fulfill their responsibilities effectively.

Implications for Research, Extension, and Institutional Support

The challenges related to research and extension indicate the need for institutional mechanisms that support these functions alongside regular teaching responsibilities. Limited research funding, access to research resources, training opportunities, publication support, transportation, manpower, and coordination with external partners were identified in the qualitative findings.

These findings reinforce the TQM principle that quality improvement requires institutional systems rather than relying solely on individual effort. The thesis framework specifically identifies research productivity, extension services, institutional linkages, stakeholder participation, and continuous improvement as components of institutional quality. Stronger institutional support may therefore help create conditions in which faculty members and students can participate more consistently in research and extension activities. The findings also support the need for stronger partnerships with government agencies, communities, and other organizations. Extension activities were affected by scheduling conflicts, transportation and logistical limitations, community participation, and coordination with partner agencies. Strengthening these relationships may improve the continuity and sustainability of community-oriented activities while providing students with opportunities for experiential learning.

Taken together, the findings suggest that the Criminology Program has established a generally high level of compliance with its trifocal functions, but its continuing development depends on addressing the operational conditions identified by the informants. The quantitative results establish the overall level of compliance, while the qualitative findings explain the institutional and human factors that shape program implementation.

From the perspective of Adaptive Curriculum Theory, continuing improvement requires the program to remain responsive to emerging professional, technological, and community needs. From the perspective of TQM in Education, sustained quality requires stakeholder participation, adequate resources, systematic monitoring, and continuous improvement. Finally, the TPACK Framework highlights the importance of faculty capacity and appropriate technological and instructional resources in supporting effective criminology education.

Thus, the findings do not indicate a contradiction between High Compliance and the reported challenges. Rather, the mixed-method results suggest that the program is functioning within the established compliance level while simultaneously facing conditions that warrant institutional attention. Addressing these conditions may provide a basis for strengthening the program's instructional quality, research productivity, extension activities, faculty development, and institutional partnerships.

Conclusion

The study concludes that the Criminology Program in the higher education institution in Surigao del Sur demonstrated a High Compliance with the three trifocal functions of higher education—Instructional Quality, Research and Publications, and Extension and Linkages. Among the three dimensions, Extension and Linkages obtained the highest median score, while Instructional Quality and Research and Publications obtained comparable median scores. The findings indicate that the program has established practices supporting its core instructional, research, and community-engagement responsibilities.

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The findings further show that there were no statistically significant differences in the perceptions of the stakeholder groups regarding the program's compliance across the three dimensions. This suggests generally consistent perceptions among administrative officials, faculty members, non-teaching personnel, and criminology students concerning the implementation of the program's trifocal functions.

However, the qualitative findings demonstrate that maintaining and strengthening this level of compliance remains subject to several challenges. These include limitations in instructional resources and facilities, competing workloads and time constraints, difficulties in research and extension activities, faculty development needs, and the need for stronger institutional and external partnerships. INTANO - FINAL PAPER

Overall, the study concludes that the state of the Criminology Program may be characterized by generally high compliance accompanied by continuing operational and institutional challenges. The findings underscore the importance of sustained resource provision, faculty capacity building, research and extension support, appropriate workload management, and strengthened partnerships to support continuous improvement of the program's trifocal functions. This conclusion is consistent with the study's theoretical foundation, which emphasizes curriculum responsiveness, institutional quality management, and effective integration of pedagogical and technological resources.

Conclusion

Drawing from the findings and their broader implications, this study advances a set of strategic recommendations aimed at strengthening cybercrime policing in Northeastern Mindanao while contributing to wider institutional and policy reforms.

First, there is a pressing need to enhance intelligence-driven policing capacities within the Philippine National Police, particularly at the regional level. While awareness of Intelligence-Led Policing (ILP) is evident, its operationalization remains uneven. Investment in advanced digital infrastructure, data analytics tools, and real-time information systems is essential to enable proactive identification of cyber threats. This should be complemented by the development of standardized intelligence protocols that ensure consistency in data collection, analysis, and dissemination across units.

Second, the study underscores the importance of strengthening inter-agency coordination through formalized network governance mechanisms. Existing collaborations with institutions such as the CICC, DICT, financial institutions, and telecommunications providers should be institutionalized through clear protocols, shared databases, and defined accountability structures. Establishing regional cybercrime task forces or coordination hubs may further streamline communication and reduce delays in investigation and response.

Third, there is a critical need to institutionalize continuous, practice-based training programs for law enforcement personnel. Given the reliance on experiential learning identified in the findings, training frameworks should move beyond one-time seminars toward ongoing, scenario-based, and technology-oriented capacity-building initiatives. Mentorship programs, cross-unit knowledge sharing, and partnerships with academic and technical institutions can further enhance officers' competencies in handling complex cybercrime cases.

Fourth, to address the observed imbalance between reactive and proactive policing, the PNP and relevant agencies should prioritize preventive strategies and community engagement. This includes expanding cybercrime awareness campaigns, digital literacy programs, and accessible reporting platforms,

particularly in underserved and rural areas. Strengthening public trust and awareness is crucial for improving reporting rates and fostering collaborative crime prevention.

Fifth, policy reforms should focus on bridging the gap between legal frameworks and operational realities. While RA 10175 provides a strong legal foundation, its implementation requires alignment with adequate funding, technological support, and human resource development. Policymakers should consider periodic reviews of cybercrime laws to ensure responsiveness to emerging threats and technological advancements. Finally, future initiatives should adopt a more holistic and inclusive approach to cybercrime governance, recognizing the role of victims, communities, and private sector actors as active stakeholders. Integrating victim support mechanisms, feedback systems, and participatory approaches can enhance both the effectiveness and legitimacy of cybercrime policing.

Collectively, these recommendations emphasize that improving cybercrime policing is not solely a matter of increasing enforcement capacity, but of reconfiguring institutional practices, strengthening collaborative networks, and fostering adaptive learning systems. Such reforms are essential not only for addressing current challenges in Northeastern Mindanao but also for positioning Philippine cybercrime policing within evolving global standards of digital governance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed to sustain the Criminology Program's current level of compliance and address the challenges identified in the implementation of its trifocal functions:

Instructional Quality. Program administrators and faculty members may sustain the current High Compliance by continuously updating instructional materials, enhancing teaching strategies, and upgrading laboratory and training facilities to support contemporary criminology education.

Research and Publications. The institution may strengthen research productivity by providing increased research funding, publication incentives, mentoring, access to research resources, and relevant training, particularly for faculty members who need additional research capacity building.

Extension and Linkages. The program may further strengthen partnerships with government agencies, law enforcement organizations, communities, and other stakeholders while regularly evaluating extension activities to ensure their responsiveness to community needs.

Resource Allocation and Facilities. The institution may adopt a strategic and equitable budget allocation system that provides adequate support for instructional materials, research, training, publication, and extension activities. The upgrading of facilities and acquisition of modern laboratory equipment may likewise be prioritized.

Strengthening Trifocal Compliance Program (STCP). The institution may consider adopting and implementing the proposed Strengthening Trifocal Compliance Program (STCP) as a three-year institutional intervention addressing the major constraints identified in the study. The proposed program consists of four interrelated components: Financial and Resource Mobilization; Infrastructure and Facilities Development; Workload Rationalization and Time Management; and Faculty Motivation, Mentoring, and Development.

Monitoring and Future Research. Continuous feedback from administrators, faculty members, non-teaching personnel, and students may be incorporated into program monitoring to assess its responsiveness and effectiveness. Future researchers may also examine the longer-term effects of implementing the

proposed intervention and investigate other variables that may influence compliance with the trifocal functions of higher education.

Declaration on the Use of Artificial Intelligence

Generative AI tools were used solely to assist with language editing, grammar, organization, and refinement of the manuscript. The authors independently conducted the research and retained full responsibility for the research design, data, analysis, interpretation, conclusions, and recommendations. AI was not used to generate, fabricate, or manipulate research data or findings. All AI-assisted content was reviewed and verified by the authors for accuracy and consistency with the original research materials.

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