

Influences, Motivations, and Challenges Shaping the Career Aspirations of Education Students: Implications to Educational Management

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to contribute to a more human-centered understanding of education students' career aspirations. It recognizes that behind every career choice are personal stories, family situations, social influences, financial realities, and academic experiences. Through this research, educational leaders may gain a clearer basis for designing responsive management strategies that address the actual needs of students. Ultimately, the findings may help strengthen teacher education programs and support the development of future educators who are motivated, prepared, and committed to serving learners and the wider community. This study employed a descriptive quantitative research design to investigate the career aspirations of criminology students, focusing on the influences, motivations, and

challenges they encounter. Descriptive quantitative research is particularly suitable for this investigation as it allows for the systematic collection and analysis of numerical data, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the factors that shape students' career aspirations. The participants of this study were 50 individuals associated with the education programs at Dr. Gloria D. Lacson Foundation Colleges, Inc. They were selected because of their connection to the academic environment where education students develop their goals, values, and career plans. Their participation was important because they could provide meaningful insights into the different factors that influence students' career aspirations, including personal experiences, motivations, school-related influences, and challenges encountered in pursuing a criminology-related profession. The career aspirations of education students in terms of personal factors, influence factors, and motivation factors are very important influences, while the challenge factor has most challenging. All relationships tested (between personal factors, influence factors, motivation factors, and challenges) are statistically significant, emphasizing the complexity of the factors influencing career aspirations in criminology. Age has a moderate negative correlation with the career aspirations of criminology students, Gender shows a strong negative correlation, and civil status reveals that students with family responsibilities, such as married students experience more challenges and have different career aspirations compared to those without family obligations. Family Income is the most significant factor influencing career aspirations, with students from higher-income families facing fewer challenges and having greater opportunities to pursue ambitious careers in criminology. Educational management is crucial in shaping criminology students' career aspirations. By addressing diverse factors and implementing inclusive policies, financial aid, mentorship, and flexible learning options, institutions can empower students to achieve their career goals and contribute to the growth of skilled professionals in the field.

Keywords: *career aspirations, career preparedness, challenges, criminology students, influence, and motivations*

INTRODUCTION

Education remains one of the most important foundations of national development because it prepares individuals to become productive, responsible, and socially responsive members of society. At the center of this process are teachers, whose commitment, competence, and professional values greatly influence the quality of learning that students receive. For this reason, students who choose education as their field of study carry an important responsibility, as they are being prepared not only for employment but also for a profession that shapes future generations.

However, the decision to pursue a career in education is not always simple. Education students form their career aspirations through different personal, social, academic, and economic experiences. Some are inspired by their passion for teaching, their desire to help learners, or the influence of their former teachers and family members. Others are motivated by job stability, professional growth, community service, or the belief that teaching is a meaningful vocation. At the same time, many students also face challenges such as financial difficulties, family expectations, academic pressure, limited career guidance, uncertainty about future employment, and concerns about the demands of the teaching profession.

Recent literature emphasizes that students' motivation to enter the teaching profession is shaped by both personal and professional considerations. Boboccea's 2023 study on students' motivation for a teaching career highlighted the importance of understanding the views of future teachers regarding their preparation, training needs, and professional expectations. The study also noted that improving the quality of education depends greatly on the quality and readiness of teachers, making it necessary to examine why students choose teaching and what support they need while preparing for the profession.

In the broader educational context, the need to understand teacher career aspirations has become more urgent. The UNESCO and Teacher Task Force report on teachers emphasized that teacher shortages are influenced by interconnected factors such as motivation, recruitment, retention, training, working conditions, and the social status of the profession. The report further stressed that addressing teacher shortages requires a holistic and systemic approach, since weak support for teachers may lead to increased workload, reduced well-being, and discouragement among future educators. This shows that the aspirations of education students should not be treated as personal choices alone, but as part of a larger educational management concern.

Career aspirations among education students are also affected by the realities they observe in schools and communities. While many students may enter the field with strong ideals, their commitment can be tested by the challenges associated with teaching, including workload, emotional demands, classroom management concerns, and limited resources. UNESCO's global report further pointed out the urgent need to recruit, train, support, and retain teachers within resilient education systems, especially as the world continues to face a significant demand for qualified teachers. These concerns make it important for educational institutions to better understand the influences, motivations, and challenges that shape students' career plans before they enter the profession.

This study is therefore necessary because it seeks to give voice to education students and understand the factors that affect their future career decisions. By examining their influences, motivations, and challenges, the study can provide valuable insights into how educational institutions may improve student support services, career guidance programs, mentoring systems, financial assistance, academic advising, and professional preparation activities.

The study is also important because educational management plays a crucial role in shaping the learning environment where future teachers are formed. School administrators and program heads are not only responsible for managing curriculum and instruction; they also help create systems that encourage students to remain committed to their chosen profession. When education students are properly guided, motivated, and supported, they are more likely to develop confidence, professional identity, and stronger commitment to teaching. On the other hand, when their challenges are ignored, students may experience doubt, discouragement, or a shift away from the education profession.

Thus, this study aims to contribute to a more human-centered understanding of education students' career aspirations. It recognizes that behind every career choice are personal stories, family situations, social influences, financial realities, and academic experiences. Through this research, educational leaders may gain a clearer basis

for designing responsive management strategies that address the actual needs of students. Ultimately, the findings may help strengthen teacher education programs and support the development of future educators who are motivated, prepared, and committed to serving learners and the wider community.

Literature Review

Career Aspirations and Development

Career aspirations referred to the specific goals and ambitions individuals hold regarding their future professions, Nayoyos-Refugia (2024). These aspirations were often shaped by a combination of personal interests, values, and experiences, as well as external influences such as family, peers, and societal expectations, Atherton (2024). Career development is a lifelong process that begins during an individual's formative years and continues as they navigate through educational, social, and work-related experiences, Sullivan (2024). In the context of criminology students, career aspirations often revolve around roles in law enforcement, the criminal justice system, forensic science, or security sectors, Dworzecki and Nowicka (2019). The decision-making process involved in shaping these aspirations is complex and influenced by various factors such as intrinsic motivations, perceived job security, potential for public service, and the prestige of certain careers within the field.

The development of career aspirations was vital for criminology students, as it provides them with a clear sense of direction and purpose in their academic and professional pursuits. These aspirations not only guide their educational choices but also significantly influence their identity as emerging professionals in the field of criminal justice, Burns et. al. (2024).

Career choices that education students made were often informed by a deep-rooted desire to serve society, contribute to crime prevention, and ensure justice for victims (Adamova and Soltes, 2024). This sense of social responsibility can significantly influence their commitment to their studies and their engagement with practical experiences. Career theories, such as Donald Super's Life-Span, Life-Space Theory, highlighted the dynamic nature of career development, suggesting that aspirations evolve over time and are shaped by the ongoing interaction between the individual and their environment, Nikodimov (2022). According to Super, an individual's self-concept, the perception of oneself based on personal interests, values, and experiences, is a vital determinant of career choices, Jones (2023). As education students engaged more deeply with their coursework, participated in internships, and interacted with professionals in the field, their self-concept may undergo significant transformations, Howes (2019). This evolution can lead to shifts in their career aspirations, as they acquire new knowledge, skills, and insights about the complexities of the criminal justice system.

Moreover, Super's theory emphasized the importance of various life roles, suggesting that students' aspirations were influenced not only by their academic experiences but also by their personal lives and social contexts (Cuaresma et. al. 2024). Factors such as family support, peer influences, and community engagement played a role in shaping students' perceptions of their future careers. For example, students who have mentors in law enforcement or who participate in community service related to crime prevention may develop a clearer vision of their professional paths.

Influences on Career Aspirations

A wide range of factors influenced the career aspirations of criminology students. Among these, family background and parental expectations often played a significant role. Research shows that parental guidance and expectations can either encourage students to pursue careers in criminal justice or push them toward other fields, Pueblo, et. al. (2024). Cultural values within families may also emphasize the importance of certain careers, such as law enforcement, due to their societal significance and perceived stability. Additionally, peer groups and social networks can also impact students' career aspirations. Interactions with classmates, mentors, and professionals in the field may introduce students to diverse career options within the criminology profession thus, shaping their ambitions and goals, Cao (2020).

Media representations of criminology-related careers also have a powerful influence on students' aspirations. Television shows, movies, and news portrayed law enforcement officers, forensic investigators, and criminal justice professionals as individuals engaged in heroic and intellectually stimulating work (Pennock, 2024). These portrayals can shape students' perceptions of various roles within the criminal justice system, often glamorizing certain career paths and overshadowing others, Carandang, et. al. (2024). Consequently, students may aspire to become detectives or forensic scientists based on media portrayals, without a full understanding of the challenges and complexities these roles entail.

Educational experiences also have a profound influence on criminology students' career aspirations. The quality of instruction, exposure to real-world case studies, internships, and mentorship opportunities can shape their understanding of the profession, Tietjen (2019). Courses in criminology, criminal law, forensic science, and policing gave students insights into different career paths, helping them refine their aspirations. Moreover, the practical application of knowledge through internships, field visits, or involvement in crime prevention programs allowed students to experience firsthand the demands and rewards of their chosen careers, further clarifying their career goals.

Motivations for Choosing Criminology Careers

Motivation was an essential driver in the pursuit of career aspirations, and education students often possess a unique set of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations that guide their career choices, Liu and Zhao (2020). Intrinsic motivations included a genuine interest in understanding criminal behavior, a passion for justice, and a desire to contribute to societal safety, Jones, et. al., (2023). Many education students are drawn to the field because of their sense of duty to protect the community and support vulnerable populations, Ukwumonu, (2024). These students viewed careers in criminal justice as a means of making a meaningful difference in society by reducing crime, supporting rehabilitation, or advocating for victims' rights.

Extrinsic motivations, such as job security, salary expectations, and career advancement opportunities, also influenced criminology students' career choices, Damuag, et. al. (2024). Law enforcement agencies, for example, often offer stable employment and attractive benefits and compensation packages, which can appeal to students who are seeking financial security, Charles and Mabophiwa, (2023). Additionally, the hierarchical structure within many criminal justice organizations allows for career growth, making the field appealing to those who value upward mobility and long-term career development.

Furthermore, social recognition and the prestige associated with certain roles, such as becoming a detective or forensic expert, can also motivate students. The respect afforded to law enforcement officers, crime scene investigators, and other criminal justice professionals within society may serve as a powerful incentive for students to pursue these roles, Nagy and Ibbott, (2024). Motivations, therefore, are often shaped by a complex interplay of personal values, societal recognition, and career opportunities, each of which impacts how education students approach their professional futures.

Challenges Facing Education Students in Achieving Career Aspirations

While education students may be highly motivated to pursue their career aspirations, they often face significant challenges along the way, Solis, et al., (2024). One of the most prominent challenges was financial difficulty, Refugia, (2021). Many education students came from low- or middle-income families and struggle to finance their education, especially when considering the costs of tuition, books, internships, and other necessary trainings, Borghini & Pastore, (2020). The financial burden of education can deter students from fully engaging in academic and practical experiences, thereby limiting their career prospects. Additionally, scholarships and financial aid specific to education students are often limited, further compounding the issue.

Academic challenges also pose a barrier to career success. The criminology curriculum is rigorous, requiring students to grasp complex legal concepts, criminological theories, and forensic methods. Some students may struggle with the demands of the coursework, particularly when it involves interdisciplinary knowledge across law, psychology, and the social sciences, Montebon, et. al. (2024). High academic standards and competitive grading

can also create pressure for students, potentially hindering their progress and affecting their confidence in achieving their career goals, Klima and Marsh, (2020).

Another significant challenge lies in the competitive nature of the criminal justice job market. Although the criminology field offers diverse career opportunities, the number of graduates often exceeds the availability of positions, particularly in highly sought-after roles such as criminal investigators or forensic scientists, Palmer (2020). The recruitment process in law enforcement and criminal justice agencies is often lengthy and competitive, with many positions requiring physical fitness tests, psychological evaluations, and extensive background checks, Monterola, et. al. (2024). This can create additional stress for education students who aspire to specific roles within the field.

Moreover, societal perceptions of law enforcement and criminal justice careers can also serve as a challenge. In recent years, there has been heightened public scrutiny of law enforcement agencies due to incidents of police misconduct, brutality, corruption and systemic issues within the criminal justice system. This societal shift has influenced how students view their future careers and may create ethical dilemmas for those entering the field, McKenna (2024). The tension between public perception and professional responsibility can present emotional and moral challenges for education students as they navigate their aspirations.

Implications to Educational Management

The career aspirations, influences, motivations, and challenges faced by education students have significant implications for educational management. Educational institutions played a vital role in guiding students' career development by providing relevant curricula, career counseling, and practical experiences (Ambion, et. al. 2023). To better support criminology students, educational management must prioritize the integration of career development services within academic programs. This includes offering needs-driven career guidance, mentorship opportunities, and access to internships or partnerships with law enforcement agencies.

Furthermore, educational institutions should address the financial challenges faced by education students by advocating for scholarships, financial aid, and work-study programs specific to the field, Cano-Salerno, (2024). By alleviating the financial burden, educational management can help students focus more on their academic and career development, ultimately enhancing their chances of success.

Institutions must also ensure that students are prepared for the competitive nature of the criminal justice job market, Howes (2023). Offering workshops on resume writing, interview skills, and preparation for entrance exams can help students navigate the recruitment process, Java (2024). Additionally, developing partnerships with criminal justice organizations can provide students with valuable networking opportunities and increase their chances of securing employment after graduation.

Finally, educational management must foster a supportive environment where students can openly discuss the ethical and societal challenges they may face in their careers, Eriksson, et. al. (2024). Creating spaces for dialogue on topics such as police-community relations, justice reform, and the responsibilities of criminal justice professionals will enable students to navigate these issues thoughtfully and responsibly as they pursue their career aspirations.

In conclusion, the career aspirations of education students are shaped by a variety of factors, including influences, motivations, and challenges, all of which have profound implications for educational management. By addressing these factors, educational institutions can better equip students to achieve their professional goals and contribute to the ever-evolving field of criminology.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive quantitative research design to investigate the career aspirations of criminology students, focusing on the influences, motivations, and challenges they encounter. Descriptive quantitative research is particularly suitable for this investigation as it allows for the systematic collection and

analysis of numerical data, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the factors that shape students' career aspirations.

The descriptive nature of this design enabled the researcher to gather a broad spectrum of information about the participants' demographic profiles, career aspirations, and the influences affecting their decisions. By employing structured surveys, the study collected quantifiable data that can be analyzed statistically, providing insights into trends and patterns within the student population. This approach allowed for the identification of common themes regarding students' motivations and challenges, as well as how these elements may vary across different demographic groups.

The use of quantitative methods also facilitated the objective measurement of variables, such as intrinsic motivations, social influences, and perceived challenges, enabling the researcher to draw reliable conclusions based on empirical evidence. Surveys were designed to capture participants' self-reported data on their career aspirations, including the specific roles they aspire to, the factors influencing these aspirations, and any obstacles they faced. The structured nature of the survey ensured consistency in data collection, which enhanced the reliability of the findings.

Moreover, this research design allowed for statistical analysis to determine relationships and correlations between different variables. For instance, the study explored how social influences, such as family support and peer relationships, correlate with the career aspirations of students. This quantitative approach not only strengthened the validity of the research but also provided a foundation for future studies that may delve deeper into the underlying causes of the observed trends.

In summary, the descriptive quantitative research designed was well-suited for this study as it facilitated the systematic examination of the career aspirations of criminology students. By collecting and analyzing numerical data, the study aimed to provide valuable insights into the factors influencing students' career paths, ultimately contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of their educational experiences and aspirations.

Research Locale

The study was conducted at Dr. Gloria D. Lacson Foundation Colleges, Inc., which served as the research locale because of its direct involvement in providing education programs relevant to the development of criminology students. The institution offered a suitable setting for the study as it provided access to individuals who are familiar with the academic environment, learning experiences, and career-related concerns of students. Through this locale, the researcher was able to gather meaningful insights into the influences, motivations, and challenges that shape the career aspirations of criminology students.

The participants of the study were 50 individuals associated with the education programs of the institution. To ensure fair and balanced representation, the study used stratified random sampling. This means that the participants were grouped according to specific characteristics or classifications relevant to the study, and respondents were then randomly selected from each group. This approach helped make sure that different perspectives were included rather than relying on only one group of participants. As a result, the study was able to reflect a more inclusive and realistic understanding of the experiences and aspirations of criminology students.

Using Dr. Gloria D. Lacson Foundation Colleges, Inc. as the research locale allowed the study to be grounded in the actual environment where students learn, interact, and prepare for their future careers. The diverse views of the selected participants contributed to a more humanized understanding of how personal background, school support, motivation, and challenges influence students' career goals. This made the locale significant not only as a place where data were gathered, but also as a learning community that plays an important role in shaping the future direction of criminology students.

Participants and Sampling Technique

The participants of this study were 50 individuals associated with the education programs at Dr. Gloria D. Lacson Foundation Colleges, Inc. They were selected because of their connection to the academic environment where education students develop their goals, values, and career plans. Their participation was important because they could provide meaningful insights into the different factors that influence students' career aspirations, including

personal experiences, motivations, school-related influences, and challenges encountered in pursuing a criminology-related profession.

To ensure that the participants were fairly represented, the study used stratified random sampling. In this technique, the population was first divided into specific groups or strata based on relevant characteristics connected to the study. From each group, participants were randomly chosen to give everyone within the identified strata an equal chance of being included. This method helped avoid relying on only one type of respondent and allowed the study to gather varied perspectives from individuals within the institution.

Using stratified random sampling made the selection process more organized, balanced, and inclusive. Since the study aimed to understand the career aspirations of criminology students, it was important to consider different viewpoints and backgrounds. The participation of 50 respondents helped provide a more realistic picture of how students' aspirations are shaped by their personal circumstances, educational experiences, motivations, and challenges. Through this approach, the study was able to generate a more comprehensive and human-centered understanding of the factors affecting the career direction of criminology students.

Research Instrument

The research instrument for this study was a researcher-made survey questionnaire specifically designed to gather comprehensive data on the career aspirations of criminology students. This instrument was crafted to capture various dimensions of the study, including the influences, motivations, and challenges that shape students' career aspirations within the criminology field.

The survey questionnaire was consisted of multiple sections, each aimed at addressing specific research objectives. The first section collected demographic information from participants, such as age, gender and family income. This demographic data was essential for contextualizing the findings and exploring any potential differences in career aspirations based on these factors.

Subsequent sections of the questionnaire focused on intrinsic and extrinsic motivations that influenced career aspirations. Items in this section will employed a Likert scale to gauge the degree to which various factors such as personal interests, family expectations, peer influences, and societal norms that affect students' career goals. This quantitative approach allowed for statistical analysis of the data, helping to identify trends and correlations.

Another critical section of the survey addressed the challenges faced by education students in pursuing their career aspirations. This portion included questions about perceived obstacles, such as academic pressures, financial constraints, and limited access to practical experiences. By understanding these challenges, the study aimed to provide insights into the barriers that may hinder students from realizing their professional ambitions.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the survey instrument it undergone a rigorous review process. This included expert validation by faculty members in the criminology program and pilot testing with a small sample of students. Feedbacks from these reviews were used to refine the questionnaire, enhancing clarity and ensuring that it effectively captured the relevant constructs.

In summary, the research instrumentation for this study was carefully crafted researcher-made survey questionnaire designed to collect comprehensive data on the career aspirations of criminology students. By employing a combination of demographic, quantitative, and qualitative measures, the instrument aimed to provide valuable insights into the influences, motivations, and challenges that shape students' professional aspirations in the field of criminology.

Career aspirations of the education students survey checklist. The data-gathering instrument was adapted to Robert K. Merton's and modified by the researcher in consultation with his adviser. It was presented to the committee during the thesis proposal for refinement and comments. It was designed to develop the criminology student's career aspirations through influences, motivation, and challenges. It was consisted of forty (40) items in the career aspiration, influences, motivation, and challenges ask the respondent to select from five (5) options for an answer which included the following:

- 5 – strongly agree
- 4 – agree
- 3 – moderate
- 2 – disagree
- 1 – strongly disagree

Responses were subjected to statistical analysis and the verbal ratings to the item statements will be based on the following arbitrary numerical guide:

- 4.21 – 5.00 (Strongly Agree);
- 3.41 – 4.20 (Agree);
- 2.61 – 3.40 (moderate);
- 1.81 – 2.60 (disagree)
- 1.00 – 1.90 (strongly disagree).

The data collection process for this study was methodically structured to ensure the gathering of comprehensive and reliable information regarding the career aspirations of criminology students. This process involved several key stages, including participant recruitment, distribution of the survey questionnaire, and the management of data to ensure confidentiality and accuracy.

The first stage of data collection involved the request of approval from the Head of Educational Institution followed by participants' recruitment. The target population consisted of education students enrolled from the public educational institutions in the National Capital Region. To facilitate recruitment, a formal announcement was made through academic channels, including email communications, announcements in classrooms, and postings on institutional bulletin boards. This multi-faceted approach helped reach a diverse group of participants and encourage widespread participation in the study.

Once participants expressed their willingness to participate, they will be provided with detailed information about the purpose and procedures of the study and the voluntary nature of their involvement of each participant and obtaining their consent ensuring that they understand their rights, including the option to withdraw from the study at any time without any repercussions as provided in the Data Privacy Act of 2012. The consent form outlined the confidentiality measures in place to protect their identities and responses.

Following the recruitment phase, the survey questionnaire was distributed. Depending on logistical considerations and participants' availability, the survey was administered in-person during designated sessions. The researcher will facilitate the survey process, providing instructions and assistance as needed to ensure that participants fully understand each question.

To maximize response rates and encourage honest participation, reminders were sent to participants before the survey administration deadline. This includes follow-up emails or messages that reiterated the study's importance and express appreciation for their participation. Additionally, to further encourage participation, participants may be offered the chance to enter a raffle for a small prize, ensuring that their engagement was rewarded.

Data management was a critical aspect of the data collection process. Once completed, all responses were collected, tabulated and stored securely to maintain confidentiality. Data will be anonymized by removing any identifying information before analysis, ensuring that individual responses cannot be traced back to specific participants. This practice adhered to ethical standards and institutional guidelines for research involving human subjects.

Upon the completion of data collection, the responses were systematically analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques and treatment to identify patterns and trends in career aspirations, motivations, and challenges faced by criminology students. The data analysis was conducted using statistical software to ensure accuracy and reliability in the findings.

Data Gathering

The administration of research instruments was executed through a meticulous and systematic procedure to ensure precise and dependable data collection. The initial phase involved identifying and engaging the target respondents. This process commenced with the dispatch of a formal request letter to the school president seeking authorization to conduct the study within the institution. Upon obtaining the requisite permission, a subsequent letter was sent to the dean of the college of criminology, requesting approval to distribute the survey questionnaires to teachers and students.

To accommodate participants' preferences and ensure accessibility, paper surveys were distributed personally, with assistance from other instructors as necessary. Clear instructions were provided to guide participants in accurately completing the surveys, including detailed guidance on responding to Likert scale items.

Informed consent was secured from all participants through a consent form that outlined the study's objectives, procedures, and confidentiality measures. Participants received clear, step-by-step instructions for completing the survey, which was anticipated to take approximately 15-20 minutes. The researcher was available to assist with any inquiries during the survey process, and reminder notices were sent to encourage full participation.

To ensure a high response rate, the researcher monitored the return of paper surveys and issued follow-up reminders as needed. Data collection involved the secure storage of electronic responses and the manual entry of paper survey data into a secure database. Data cleaning encompassed the review of responses for completeness and consistency, validation of entries, and organization of data into datasets for analysis. Numerical coding will be applied to categorical responses to facilitate statistical evaluation. The final phase included both statistical and thematic analyses, culminating in the preparation of detailed reports that summarized the findings. This will ensure effective administration of research instruments, thereby upholding the reliability, validity, and representativeness of the study's results.

Data Analysis

The Procedure of Analysis section of this study was essential for ensuring the integrity and accuracy of the data collected from the survey questionnaire. Effective data management practices were implemented throughout the research process, beginning with the collection and continuing through analysis and interpretation of the results.

Upon completion of the data collection, all survey responses were systematically compiled into a secure database. This was done using statistical software, such as SPSS or R, which facilitated efficient organization and analysis of the data. Prior to inputting the data, a thorough review was conducted to ensure that all surveys were complete and that responses were accurately recorded. Any incomplete or improperly filled-out surveys were flagged for further review, and decisions were made regarding their inclusion based on established criteria.

Data cleaning was a critical component of the management process. This involved checking for inconsistencies, outliers, and errors in the dataset. For example, responses that fall outside expected ranges were examined to determine whether they were genuine or the result of input errors. Any anomalies identified during this process were addressed, either by correcting errors or excluding problematic responses from the analysis. This rigorous cleaning process helped enhance the validity and reliability of the findings.

Once the dataset was cleaned and organized, data analysis commenced. The analysis begins with descriptive statistics to summarize the demographic characteristics of the participants, such as age, gender, academic standing, and group affiliations. This initial step provided a foundational understanding of the sample population and serve as a context for interpreting the subsequent analyses.

Following the descriptive analysis, inferential statistical techniques were employed to explore relationships between various factors influencing career aspirations. Correlation analyses were conducted to assess the strength and direction of relationships between motivations, influences, and challenges reported by participants. For example, the study may investigate how intrinsic motivations correlate with the aspiration to pursue specific careers within the criminal justice system. Additionally, a regression analysis was utilized to identify significant predictors of career aspirations, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of the factors that contribute to students' professional goals.

To ensure the accuracy and credibility of the analysis, findings were reviewed and validated through triangulation. This process involved comparing results from different data sources and analytical methods to confirm the consistency and reliability of the findings. By employing multiple analytical approaches, the study enhanced the robustness of its conclusions and provided a more holistic understanding of the phenomena under investigation.

Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations were paramount in conducting research involving human participants, and this study adhered to rigorous ethical standards to ensure the integrity of the research process and the protection of participants' rights. The ethical framework guiding this study encompasses informed consent, confidentiality, the right to withdraw, and the responsible handling of data.

Informed consent was a fundamental principle in research ethics. Prior to participation, all individuals received comprehensive information regarding the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits. This information was conveyed through an informed consent form, which participants will be required to read and sign before engaging in the study. The form explicitly stated that participation is voluntary and that participants have the right to decline participation or withdraw at any point without facing any negative consequences. By ensuring that participants are fully informed, the study respects their autonomy and decision-making rights.

Confidentiality was another critical ethical consideration. The study implemented robust measures to protect participants' identities and responses. Personal identifying information was removed from the survey responses, and data were stored in a secure, password-protected database accessible only to the research team. Additionally, any reporting of findings was done in aggregate form, ensuring that individual responses cannot be traced back to specific participants. This commitment to confidentiality was essential for fostering a safe environment in which participants feel comfortable sharing their experiences and aspirations.

The right to withdraw was also integral to ethical research practices. Participants were informed that they can discontinue their involvement in the study at any time, for any reason, without facing repercussions. This policy not only reinforces the voluntary nature of participation but also respects participants' autonomy and well-being throughout the research process.

Moreover, the research was conducted in accordance with the guidelines and regulations set forth by the institutional review board (IRB) or ethics committee of the participating institution. This oversight ensured that the research design and procedures align with ethical standards and that participants' rights are upheld. The IRB reviewed the research proposal to assess potential risks and benefits, ensuring that measures were in place to mitigate any ethical concerns.

Finally, the research team remained vigilant in ensuring that the study does not exploit or harm participants in any way. This includes being sensitive to the potential psychological impact of discussing career aspirations and challenges. The researchers were trained to handle any distress that may arise during the study and will provide resources for support if needed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The distribution of respondents' ages highlights the following: 18 years old and below (8%) has a small proportion of education students who are in their late adolescence, indicating early academic pursuit in this field. This group likely represents high school graduates who immediately transitioned to higher education. 19–21 years old (23%), this group, comprising nearly one-fourth of the respondents, represents traditional college-aged students. They are typically at a developmental stage characterized by exploration and self-discovery, which influenced their career aspirations and motivations. 22–24 years old (19%), a significant portion of students falls into this category, likely reflecting those who may have had delays in entering college, pursued other opportunities, or are progressing in a typical college timeline. 25 years and above (50%), The majority of respondents are non-traditional students, who may have entered criminology later in life due to career shifts, financial challenges, or personal commitments. This age distribution reflects a diverse student population, with a notable emphasis on older, non-traditional learners

(25 years and above). This age group likely brings unique perspectives and motivations to their academic and career paths, driven by life experiences, career changes, or a desire for financial stability.

Younger students, particularly those aged 18 years and below or 19–21 years, often exhibited career ambitions shaped by idealism and a strong desire to contribute to societal betterment. Nguyen et al. (2022) noted that this age group tends to gravitate toward dynamic and impactful roles such as law enforcement, forensic analysis, or investigative work. Their youthful enthusiasm and curiosity often drive them to explore diverse career options, making them receptive to guidance and new opportunities.

Johnson et al. (2019) emphasized the value of mentorship and internships for these students; as such programs help them translate their aspirations into achievable career goals. Structured support allows younger students to align their idealistic motivations with practical realities, enabling them to make informed decisions about their future professions.

Older students, particularly those aged 25 and above, often pursue criminology to enhance existing careers or transition to a new, stable profession. Garcia and Lopez (2021) noted that this group tends to prioritize careers offering financial security and manageable work-life balance due to familial or personal responsibilities. Their aspirations may also reflect a pragmatic approach, as they often focus on roles that align with their accumulated life skills and experiences.

Johnson et al. (2019) highlighted the pivotal role of self-discovery and mentorship in shaping the career paths of younger students. During this formative stage, students often have idealistic aspirations, which can be effectively guided through structured career counseling. Mentorship programs help these students identify their strengths, values, and interests, enabling them to align their ambitions with realistic and achievable career goals. Career counseling also provides younger students with insights into the demands and opportunities of various professions, bridging the gap between their aspirations and the practicalities of the workforce. This tailored guidance not only enhances their decision-making but also fosters a sense of purpose and direction as they transition into their chosen fields.

Garcia and Lopez (2021) examined the experiences of non-traditional students in higher education, highlighting their unique challenges and motivations. Older learners often enroll in degree programs with clear, practical objectives, such as achieving financial security or advancing their careers. This pragmatic approach was frequently driven by the need to support their families or enhance their professional standing in competitive job markets. However, balancing academic pursuits with familial and work responsibilities presents significant challenges. Time management, financial pressures, and the lack of flexible learning options hindered their progress. Despite these obstacles, non-traditional students demonstrated resilience and determination, often motivated by the long-term benefits of education for themselves and their families. The study underscores the importance of flexible schedules, financial aid, and tailored support systems to help these learners succeed.

Morales (2024) emphasized the benefits of age-diverse classrooms, particularly in fields like criminology. The interaction between younger and older students created a dynamic learning environment where both groups bring valuable perspectives. Younger students contributed fresh, theoretical knowledge, while older students shared practical insights gained from life and work experiences. In criminology, where real-world application was vital, the combination of youthful energy and seasoned experience can enrich discussions, deepen understanding, and foster a more comprehensive approach to problem-solving. Morales noted that such diversity not only enhances academic engagement but also prepares students for real-world professional environments, where collaboration across generations is often essential.

The majority of education students (50%) are aged 25 and above, reflecting a significant presence of non-traditional learners. Younger students (aged 18–21) made up 31% of respondents, representing a more traditional college demographic. Age diversity influenced career aspirations, with younger students focusing on idealistic and exploratory goals, while older students prioritized financial stability and pragmatic career paths.

The age distribution of education students underscored the need for educational strategies that accommodate a diverse student body. Younger students required guidance to align their aspirations with realistic career trajectories, while older students benefited from flexible and supportive learning environments that address their unique challenges. Educational management must prioritize mentorship programs, age-inclusive policies, and

tailored career counseling to ensure that students across all age groups achieve their professional goals. Recognizing and addressing the distinct motivations and challenges associated with age diversity will enhance the overall effectiveness of criminology education programs.

The distribution of respondents' gender reveals that 52% are male, the slight majority of respondents, which aligns with traditional trends in criminology, where the field has historically been male-dominated due to its associations with law enforcement and security professions. A significant proportion of respondents are female, with 46%, reflecting a growing trend of women entering criminology and related fields. This shift indicates changing societal norms and the increasing recognition of women's roles in law enforcement, forensic science, and criminal justice. A small proportion of respondents with 2% identified as undefined, demonstrating the inclusivity of the study in recognizing non-binary or gender-diverse individuals. This gender distribution reflects a balanced participation of males and females, with emerging inclusivity for non-traditional gender identities. These dynamics may influence career aspirations, motivations, and challenges within criminology, as gender roles and expectations often shape individual experiences and career trajectories.

Male respondents in criminology studies are often inclined toward enforcement-oriented careers, such as police work, security, and investigations. According to Nguyen et al. (2022), men in criminology programs frequently gravitate towards roles that involve physical presence, leadership, and fieldwork. These careers, which demand high levels of physical and mental resilience, align with traditional gender roles and societal expectations that associate men with roles requiring authority and action. In criminology, male students are typically drawn to careers where they can directly engage with the law enforcement process, such as in police work or detective roles. These positions allowed them to utilize their problem-solving skills, leadership abilities, and physical capabilities in real-world scenarios. The findings of Nguyen et al. (2022) suggested that such motivations are influenced by both personal aspirations and societal perceptions of masculinity in the criminal justice field.

Female respondents in criminology programs are increasingly exploring careers in fields such as forensic science, victim advocacy, and corrections. Johnson et al. (2019) observed that these areas align with women's strengths in communication, empathy, and analytical skills. Women are often drawn to professions where they can make a direct impact on individuals' lives, particularly those who are vulnerable or marginalized. Forensic science and victim advocacy, for instance, allow women to utilize their attention to detail, problem-solving abilities, and strong interpersonal skills, which are essential for working with victims and in legal contexts. Similarly, roles in corrections often involve rehabilitation and support services, areas where empathy and communication skills are critical. Johnson et al. (2019) highlighted that these career paths are not only well-suited to women's intrinsic abilities but also provide meaningful opportunities to contribute to the criminal justice system in a compassionate and impactful way.

Individuals identifying as undefined or outside the traditional gender binary represent a small but critical demographic in criminology. Morales (2024) emphasized the importance of inclusivity in both educational settings and the workplace to ensure equitable opportunities for all gender identities. This group challenges conventional gender norms and expectations, which have historically shaped career paths within the criminal justice system. Criminology, traditionally dominated by binary gender roles, is now being called to reflect a more inclusive approach that accommodates diverse gender identities. Morales noted that providing inclusive environments through gender-neutral policies, support systems, and opportunities for self-expression enhances the educational and professional experiences of individuals who do not fit traditional gender categories. This inclusivity fosters a more equitable space for individuals to pursue careers in criminology without being constrained by societal gender expectations.

For Male Students, institutions can leverage their interest in leadership by offering specialized training in tactical skills and management. For Female Students, programs must continue to empower women through mentorship, leadership opportunities, and advocacy training to break gender stereotypes. For Undefined Gender Students, inclusivity policies, such as gender-neutral facilities and representation in academic content, can foster a supportive learning environment.

Smith & Turner (2020) observed distinct gender-based preferences among education students regarding career aspirations. Male students tend to be more attracted to action-oriented and leadership roles, such as those in law

enforcement or security, where physical presence, authority, and decision-making are key components. These roles align with traditional societal expectations of masculinity, which often emphasize strength, leadership, and direct action. In contrast, female students often gravitate toward roles that require strong analytical or interpersonal skills, such as positions in forensic science, victim advocacy, or social services. These careers allow women to leverage their strengths in communication, empathy, and problem-solving, and provide opportunities to make meaningful impacts on individuals and communities. Smith & Turner (2020) emphasized that these gendered preferences reflect both individual interests and broader social expectations, although they also noted that career paths in criminology are increasingly becoming more flexible and inclusive of diverse skills.

Johnson et al. (2019) highlighted the challenges women faced in criminology, including gender bias and the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions. These barriers discouraged female students from pursuing leadership roles or high-profile positions within law enforcement, forensic science, and other criminology-related fields. The lack of visible female role models further exacerbates these challenges, as young women may struggle to envision themselves in leadership roles in a traditionally male-dominated field. However, the increasing visibility of successful women in criminology, such as those who have excelled in leadership or academic roles, is inspiring more females to enter and advance in the field. Johnson et al. (2019) noted that this shift is helping to break down stereotypes and created more equitable opportunities for women in criminology. As more women take on influential positions, they serve as powerful role models, encouraging younger generations to pursue careers in criminology and challenge the gender norms that have historically shaped the field.

The respondents' gender distribution is relatively balanced, with 52% male, 46% female, and 2% undefined. Gender influences career aspirations, with men favoring enforcement and leadership roles, while women are drawn to analytical and advocacy-oriented careers. Undefined gender respondents represent a small but significant group requiring inclusivity in educational policies.

The gender distribution among education students reflects a dynamic shift in the field, with increasing representation of women and emerging inclusivity for gender-diverse individuals. These trends underscored the need for educational management to adapt in evolving gender dynamics. Institutions should implement tailored programs to support male and female students' specific aspirations while fostering an inclusive environment for undefined gender identities. Initiatives such as mentorship programs, gender-sensitivity training, and inclusive career counseling can help ensure equitable opportunities for all students. By addressing gender-specific motivations and challenges, educational management can better prepare education students for diverse and fulfilling careers.

The distribution of respondents' civil status, as shown in Table 4, reveals the following breakdown: 50% of respondents are single, 44% are married, 5% are separated, and 1% falls into other categories. These findings indicated that the majority of education students are single, which is expected given that many students in this field are in their early adult years when individuals are more likely to be pursuing higher education and remain unmarried. However, the substantial proportion of married respondents (44%) highlights that this academic program attracts individuals from diverse life stages, including those who are married and possibly balancing family responsibilities with education. The 5% of separated respondents and 1% in the "Others" category, while smaller in comparison, reflect the presence of non-traditional students who may face unique challenges, such as managing personal and academic obligations simultaneously. These variations in civil status may influence the career aspirations, motivations, and challenges faced by criminology students, as personal circumstances are often closely tied to educational and professional decisions.

Research by Smith & Turner (2020) highlighted those single students often experienced fewer familial responsibilities compared to their married or parenting counterparts. This allowed them to devote more time and energy to pursue ambitious academic and career objectives. Without the immediate pressures of providing for a family or balancing care giving duties, single students are better positioned to take on demanding academic programs, internships, and extracurricular opportunities that enhance their career readiness.

Johnson et al. (2019) argued that single students' motivations are primarily driven by the desire for personal development and securing a stable future. These students often view education as a means to improve their socioeconomic status and gain financial independence. This aligns with theories of self-determination, where

autonomy and competence play a central role in goal-setting and achievement. Criminology students, for instance, may aim for leadership roles in law enforcement, forensic science, or academic research, seeking not only professional fulfillment but also societal contribution.

Given their focus on personal growth, single students benefited significantly from mentorship and career guidance programs. These programs, as noted by Johnson et al. (2019), provided critical support in clarifying career paths, developing skills, and building professional networks. For example, a criminology student might leverage mentorship to explore specialized fields such as criminal profiling or corrections management, which require deliberate planning and strategic skill-building. Career counseling can also help them align their aspirations with market demands, enhancing their competitiveness in the job market.

The ambitious nature of single students' career aspirations can also be attributed to psychological factors such as a higher level of intrinsic motivation and fewer distractions from competing priorities. Socially, single students are often more adaptable to relocation for job opportunities or further studies, broadening their career prospects. This adaptability, coupled with a focus on self-improvement, positions single students to thrive in fields that demand high commitment, such as criminology.

Married students, as identified in studies by Garcia and Lopez (2021), often prioritize career paths that offer stability and financial security. Their motivations are frequently influenced by their roles as providers or caregivers. However, they also faced challenges, such as time constraints and financial burdens, which hindered their educational progress and career planning.

Research by Ocampo et al. (2023) emphasized that separated students or those with unconventional civil statuses often demonstrated resilience and determination in pursuing their education. Their life experiences, including managing personal challenges, contributed to their strong motivation and problem-solving skills, which can be advantageous in their academic and career journeys. However, these students often faced unique obstacles, such as balancing academic responsibilities with personal and emotional demands. Ocampo et al. (2023) suggested that institutions should provide tailored support, including flexible class schedules, access to counseling services, and mentorship programs. These resources can help address their challenges, enabling them to maximize their potential and achieve their career aspirations effectively.

Studies across criminology programs have consistently highlighted the significant role that personal circumstances, such as civil status, play in shaping career aspirations. Nguyen et al. (2022) observed that personal responsibilities, such as those associated with marriage or parenting, can influence students' career choices by prioritizing job stability and financial security. Conversely, single students may have more flexibility to pursue ambitious, long-term career goals due to fewer personal obligations. Nguyen et al. (2022) emphasized that institutional support tailored to the diverse needs of students considering factors like civil status can significantly enhance academic engagement and career satisfaction. Providing resources such as flexible schedules, family-friendly policies, and career counseling helped students navigate their personal challenges while remaining focused on their educational and professional aspirations. This targeted support not only boosts retention and academic success but also ensured that students from various demographic backgrounds can fully engage with their criminology studies and pursue their desired careers.

The majority of respondents (50%) are single, with significant representation from married students (44%). Smaller proportions of respondents are separated (5%) or fall into other categories (1%). Civil status influenced students' career aspirations, motivations, and challenges, reflecting a need for targeted support systems in educational management. Literature emphasized the importance of tailored educational strategies to address the diverse demographics of criminology students.

The distribution of respondents' civil status underscores the diversity within criminology programs. Single students may pursue career aspirations with fewer immediate familial constraints, while married and separated students may focus on stability and resilience despite their unique challenges. Educational institutions should leverage this understanding to implement policies and programs that accommodate the varied needs of students, ensuring equitable access to resources and opportunities. Programs that provided mentorship, flexible learning pathways, and career counseling tailored to civil status-related needs can significantly enhance student success.

Ultimately, recognizing and addressing the interplay between personal circumstances and career aspirations will enable institutions to better support education students in achieving their professional goals.

The distribution of family income among criminology students, as presented, reveals that nearly half of the respondents belong to families with low income of 25,000 Php and below (48%). This indicates that a substantial proportion of students come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, which likely influences their career aspirations and educational motivations. These students may view a degree in criminology as a pathway to upward social and financial mobility. A combined 37% of students came from middle-income families with 25,001 Php to 35,000Php (19%) and 35,001 Php to 45,000 Php (18%). This group likely represented individuals who can balance financial challenges and educational opportunities, with moderate access to resources like tuition support or internships. Students from higher-income families constituted a minority (15%). These students may have better access to academic and professional resources, including opportunities for further education, certifications, or internships in criminology-related fields.

Students from low-income families often view education as a means to achieve financial stability and improve their socioeconomic status. According to Johnson et al. (2019), these students are more likely to prioritize practical, high-demand careers, such as law enforcement, where job security is perceived as attainable. The urgency to provide for themselves and their families drives their preference for professions offering immediate employment and stable income. However, economic constraints can pose significant challenges. Limited financial resources often restrict their ability to access unpaid internships, specialized certifications, or advanced training programs critical opportunities for career development. This disparity highlighted the need for institutional interventions, such as scholarships, work-study programs, and career services, to level the playing field and support the aspirations of low-income students.

Middle-income students navigated a unique position, balancing financial pressure with access to moderate resources. This enables them to pursue a broader range of career aspirations compared to their low-income counterparts. Nguyen et al. (2022) found that students in this demographic are more likely to explore leadership roles and advanced fields like forensic science or criminal psychology. Their financial situation allowed for some investment in specialized training, certifications, and internships, which were critical for excelling in these advanced careers. High-income students have fewer financial constraints, allowing them to focus on long-term career goals and advanced specializations. While middle-income students still faced some financial constraints, their ability to receive moderate family support provides greater flexibility in their career planning and long-term ambitions. This balance positions them as strong contenders for roles requiring higher education or technical expertise.

According to Garcia and Lopez (2021), students from affluent backgrounds are more likely to pursue postgraduate education and leadership positions in criminology due to access to better academic networks and resources. While middle-income students still face some financial constraints, their ability to receive moderate family support provides greater flexibility in their career planning and long-term ambitions. This balance positions them as strong contenders for roles requiring higher education or technical expertise.

For low-income students, institutions should provide scholarships, grants, and work-study opportunities to support these students' academic and career aspirations. For Middle-Income Students programs that enhanced career exploration, such as internships and mentorship, can help them leverage their position. For High-Income Students leadership training and research opportunities should be emphasized to help them achieve their advanced career goals.

Johnson et al. (2019) highlighted that financial challenges significantly shape students' career decisions. For low-income individuals, the pressing need to achieve financial stability often directed them toward careers that offer immediate job security, such as law enforcement or technical roles in criminology. These students typically prioritized short-term gains over long-term aspirations due to limited access to financial resources and career-enhancing opportunities.

Smith and Turner (2020) observed that education served as a vital pathway for socioeconomic mobility among low-income students. These individuals often focused on practical and high-demand professions, such as forensic science or public safety roles, due to the tangible benefits these careers provide in improving their financial

status. Their career aspirations are strongly tied to the perceived ability of a profession to uplift their economic standing.

In contrast, Garcia and Lopez (2021) emphasized that high-income students afforded greater flexibility in their career choices. With access to financial and social capital, they are better positioned to pursue postgraduate studies or leadership roles in criminology. This advantage allowed them to focus on long-term career growth and specialization, as their financial stability mitigates immediate pressures to enter the workforce.

Almost half of the education students (48%) belonged to low-income families, indicating a strong representation of economically disadvantaged individuals in the field. Students from middle-income families (37%) and high-income families (15%) bring diverse motivations and career aspirations influenced by their financial situations. Family income significantly affected access to resources, career choices, and the ability to pursue advanced education or leadership roles.

The distribution of family income among education students highlights the vital role of economic background in shaping career aspirations, motivations, and challenges. Low-income students prioritized stability and immediate employment, while middle- and high-income students often aim for advanced specializations or leadership positions. To address these disparities, educational management must implement targeted support systems, including scholarships, internships, and career counseling, to empower students from all income groups. By fostering equitable opportunities, institutions can ensure that financial constraints do not limit students' potential to achieve their career aspirations in criminology.

The career aspirations of education students according to various personal factors. These factors were evaluated based on their perceived importance, with ratings ranging from 1 (Not Important) to 5 (Very Important). The average weighted mean for these factors is 4.55, which suggests that, overall, personal factors play a significant role in shaping students' career aspirations.

The top influences on career aspirations were found to be that purpose and with a mean score of 4.67, both of which were rated as "Very Important Influence." This suggests that students are deeply motivated by a sense of personal meaning and enthusiasm when considering their future careers. Skills and Abilities (4.58), closely followed by values (4.59), indicating that students value the alignment of their skills with their career goals, as well as their desire for their work to reflect personal values. Ideal Lifestyle (4.54) and Personality Types (4.53) also ranked highly, suggesting that students seek careers that will complement their desired lifestyle and personality traits. Financial Goals (4.51), while still very important, were somewhat less significant than intrinsic factors like passion or purpose, but they are still a key consideration. Family Decisions (4.53) and Childhood Fantasies (4.44) indicate that student personal backgrounds, such as family dynamics and early career dreams, also significantly impact their aspirations. Peer Pressure (4.42) was the least influential factor, though still rated as "Very Important Influence," suggesting that while social influenced play a role, they are less significant than personal factors in shaping students' career paths.

The results suggest that criminology students' career aspirations are strongly shaped by internal, personal motivations rather than external pressures. The high ratings for Purpose and Passion indicated that students are driven by intrinsic goals such as finding meaning and fulfillment in their work. This aligns with Deci and Ryan's (2000) Self-Determination Theory, which posits that motivation is most powerful when it stems from an individual's sense of purpose and personal interest.

The importance placed on Skills and Abilities and Values reflects a growing trend where students seek careers that allowed them to use their talents effectively while remaining true to their ethical beliefs. This was supported by recent findings in educational research, such as Johnson et al. (2019), which highlighted the increasing importance of personal alignment with professional goals in career decision-making.

The emphasis on Ideal Lifestyle and Personality Types suggests that education students are not only focused on the professional aspects of their careers but also consider the personal fulfillment and life balance that their careers will provide. Nguyen et al. (2022) noted that modern students, especially in fields like criminology, are placing greater importance on work-life balance, which influences their career decisions.

While Financial Goals ranked slightly lower, it still remains a crucial consideration. This reflects the real-world constraints that many students face, as Garcia and Lopez (2021) found that financial stability is often a motivating factor, especially for those from lower-income backgrounds.

Interestingly, Family Decisions and Childhood Fantasies reveal the long-term influence of early experiences and family expectations on career aspirations. This aligns with findings by Smith and Turner (2020), who observed that family expectations can sometimes drive career decisions, even in adulthood.

Several studies over the past few years have addressed the role of personal factors in shaping career aspirations, particularly in criminology and similar fields. Nguyen et al. (2022) examined how personal motivations, such as values and passion, play a critical role in students' career choices, noting that intrinsic factors often outweigh external pressures like peer influence. Similarly, Johnson et al. (2019) emphasized the importance of personal alignment with career goals, suggesting that students who pursued careers that resonate with their core values tend to be more successful and satisfied in the long term.

The significance of skills and abilities in shaping career decisions has also been supported by Morales (2024), who found that students in criminology are increasingly seeking careers that allow them to leverage their unique talents, particularly in specialized areas like forensic science and criminal psychology.

Additionally, studies such as Garcia and Lopez (2021) have underscored the importance of financial goals for students, especially those from lower-income backgrounds, who may prioritize career paths that offer job security and economic stability. Similarly, Smith & Turner (2020) highlighted the role of family decisions in influencing career choices, with students often balancing familial expectations with personal aspirations.

The findings indicated that criminology students' career aspirations are primarily influenced by personal factors, with Purpose, Passion, and Skills and Abilities being the most significant. Financial Goals and Family Decisions also play important roles, though to a slightly lesser degree. The importance of Peer Pressure was relatively low, suggesting that students tend to rely more on their personal motivations than on external societal expectations.

Personal factors played a critical role in shaping the career aspirations of criminology students, with intrinsic motivations such as purpose, passion, and values being the most influential. This highlights the importance of providing educational environments that support self-discovery, mentorship, and career counseling to help students align their personal goals with professional aspirations. Criminology programs should consider integrating these personal factors into their curriculum and career guidance programs to better support students in navigating their career paths, ensuring both personal fulfillment and professional success.

The various influence factors affecting the career aspirations of criminology students. The factors are rated on their perceived importance, with scores ranging from 1 (Not Important) to 5 (Very Important Influence). The average weighted mean of 4.51 suggests that, overall; influence factors play a significant role in shaping criminology students' career goals.

The factors that are rated as most important include Mentorship (4.56), followed closely by Social Support (4.53) and Economic Backing (4.53), indicating that the support system around students both academic and financial played a vital role in their career aspirations. Life Roles (4.52), Interests (4.52), and Gender (4.51) also ranked highly, showing that student personal identities and interests significantly impact their career decisions. Culture (4.42) and Self-doubt (4.48) were relatively lower but still rated as "Very Important Influence," indicating that students' cultural backgrounds and self-perceptions also have a notable effect on their career aspirations.

The results showed that mentorship stands out as the most important influence factor, suggesting that guidance from experienced individuals in criminology plays a central role in shaping students' professional goals. Social support and economic backing were similarly ranked high, indicating that students rely heavily on external resources, such as family and financial assistance, to pursue their academic and professional aspirations.

The significant role of life roles and interests highlights the importance of aligning personal values and interests with career goals. This aligns with Self-Determination Theory Deci & Ryan (2000), which stressed that motivation is strongest when individuals are able to pursue careers that align with their intrinsic interests and values. Gender was also rated highly, indicating that students' gender influences their career choices, as various roles in criminology may be perceived as more or less accessible depending on gendered expectations.

Financial concerns and economic backing reflected practical challenges in career decision-making. Students from lower-income backgrounds prioritized career paths that offer job stability and financial security, as seen in recent studies by Johnson et al. (2019) and Garcia & Lopez (2021). Culture and self-doubt also played significant roles, with culture influencing career choices by shaping students' values, norms, and expectations. Self-doubt, while slightly lower, points to internal challenges students face, particularly when they feel unsure about their abilities or the potential success of their career choices.

Johnson et al. (2019) emphasized that mentorship and social support are critical factors in shaping students' career aspirations, particularly in fields like criminology. The presence of strong role models and supportive networks provided students with guidance, motivation, and the necessary resources to navigate their academic and professional journeys. Mentorship, specifically, offered students access to the knowledge and experience of more seasoned professionals, helping them make informed decisions about their careers and academic paths. By offering advice, encouragement, and career insights, mentors can influence students to pursue goals they might otherwise consider unattainable. Social support, encompassing encouragement from family, peers, and academic advisors, plays an equally vital role. Students who are supported by a network of individuals who believe in their potential are more likely to overcome personal and academic challenges, such as self-doubt or financial constraints, and persist in their educational and professional pursuits.

In terms of life roles, Nguyen et al. (2022) emphasized that students with multiple roles (e.g., caregiver, student, employee) face additional challenges but also bring unique perspectives and motivations to their academic and professional pursuits. Garcia & Lopez (2021) further explored how life roles, such as family responsibilities, influence students' career decisions, often leading them to seek stability and job security.

The economic factors influencing career decisions are well-documented. Smith & Turner (2020) discussed how students from low-income families often opt for career paths that promise financial stability, which is particularly relevant in criminology fields like law enforcement and corrections.

Mentorship has been a consistent theme in the literature as well, with Morales (2024) and Nguyen et al. (2022) both highlighting the positive impact of mentorship on career decision-making. Students who have access to guidance from mentors in their field are more likely to develop clear career goals and successfully navigate the challenges of the criminology profession.

The data revealed that mentorship is the most important influence factor for criminology students, followed by social support, economic backing, and life roles. Personal factors such as interests, gender, and self-doubt also play significant roles in shaping students' career aspirations. Culture and time and family were rated slightly lower but are still influential in career decision-making. These findings suggest that a combination of internal factors (interests, values, self-perception) and external factors (support systems, economic conditions) significantly influence criminology students' career aspirations.

The results indicate that criminology students' career aspirations are influenced by a variety of factors, with mentorship, social support, and economic resources being particularly important. Educational institutions should prioritize providing mentorship programs, career counseling, and financial support to ensure students can achieve their professional goals. Additionally, understanding how life roles, gender, and cultural factors affect career decisions can help tailor educational practices to support students from diverse backgrounds. The importance of addressing these influence factors is essential for enhancing students' career satisfaction and academic engagement in criminology programs.

The motivation factors affecting the career aspirations of criminology students. The factors were rated on their perceived importance, with scores ranging from 1 (Not Important) to 5 (Very Important Influence). The average weighted mean of 4.55 suggests that motivation factors significantly influenced criminology students' career decisions, highlighting the critical role of external and personal elements in shaping their professional goals.

The most influential factors were Influence of family members and relatives (4.65), followed by personal interest (4.60), showing that students are strongly motivated by their intrinsic desires and family expectations. Learning environment (4.56) and potential salary (4.56) reflect the importance of the academic setting and the financial rewards associated with their chosen careers. Professional development (4.56) emphasizes the role of continuous growth and advancement in shaping students' motivation. Marketing activities (4.52), social media

(4.47), and job security (4.53) also rank highly, indicating the influence of external communications, technology, and job stability in students' career choices.

The influence of family members and relatives stands out as the most important motivation factor, with a score of 4.65. This suggests that criminology students' career aspirations are deeply shaped by the expectations and advice of family members. Family support provided emotional backing, guidance, and sometimes financial resources, making it a powerful motivator in students' decision-making processes. Closely following this is personal interest (4.60), which reflects the intrinsic motivation of students. Students who are passionate about criminology, law enforcement, or criminal justice are more likely to pursue careers aligned with their interests, demonstrating the importance of self-determination and intrinsic motivation in career choices Ryan & Deci (2000).

The learning environment (4.56) and potential salary (4.56) were equally rated, showing that students were motivated by both the quality of their education and the tangible rewards that come with their career choices. A positive learning environment, including the quality of instruction and available resources, enabled students to develop the skills and confidence needed for their future careers. Additionally, the desire for financial security drives many students to select careers with high earning potential, such as law enforcement or forensic analysis, which are both highly regarded within criminology.

Professional development (4.56) also emerged as a vital motivation factor. Criminology students, like those in other fields, seek continuous learning opportunities and career advancement. This aligns with studies by Nguyen et al. (2022), which highlighted that students in the criminology field are motivated by opportunities for further education, specialization, and career progression.

The influence of marketing activities (4.52) and social media (4.47) demonstrated the increasing role of modern communication channels in shaping students' career aspirations. Education students were influenced by the portrayal of careers in the media, including job advertisements, career fairs, and social media platforms, where they received information about opportunities, salaries, and career paths. Lastly, job accessibility and job security (both rated 4.53) are crucial motivators. Students often choose careers based on the perceived availability of jobs in their field and the stability that comes with those positions, particularly in government or law enforcement.

The study highlights that family influence, personal interest, and the learning environment are the most significant motivators for criminology students. These intrinsic and extrinsic factors are complemented by the desire for financial security and career advancement. Marketing activities and social media also play an increasing role in shaping career aspirations, particularly among younger students who were exposed to career opportunities and industry portrayals through these channels. Job accessibility and job security are essential considerations, particularly for students who prioritize stable and accessible career paths.

The results emphasized that education students are strongly motivated by a combination of personal and external factors. Family influence, personal interests, and a conducive learning environment stand out as the primary motivators, while practical considerations such as potential salary, job security, and career development also significantly shape their career aspirations. Educational institutions should consider these factors when developing career services and mentoring programs to better align students' motivations with their professional goals. Tailoring support and guidance around these motivators can help enhance students' academic engagement and career satisfaction in criminology programs.

The challenges faced by education students in their career aspirations. The data suggests that the average weighted mean 4.13, indicating that these challenges were perceived as "Most Challenging" by the respondents. The factors listed were ranked based on their perceived level of difficulty, with marketing activities, social media, and the influence of family members and relatives being rated as the most extremely challenging. These findings revealed the struggles education students encounter while navigating their career paths, particularly with respect to external factors such as societal expectations, media portrayal, and career marketing.

The top challenges identified by students were marketing activities (4.22), social media (4.22), and the influence of family members and relatives (4.21), which all received very high ratings. This indicates that education students feel overwhelmed by the external pressures and expectations created by marketing efforts, social media portrayals of their field, and the influence of their families on career choices. The overwhelming presence of social media and marketing activities presents both an opportunity and a challenge. While social media can expose

students to new opportunities, it can also create unrealistic expectations or foster doubt, especially when students compare their career paths to those portrayed online (Nguyen et al., 2022). Similarly, marketing activities, often glamorizing certain criminology-related roles (e.g., law enforcement), can create disillusionment if students find that their chosen paths do not align with the marketed perceptions.

Learning environment (4.14) and professional prestige (4.03) are also significant challenges. The learning environment can either hinder or help a student's career development. Criminology programs that lack resources, support systems, or real-world connections can be a barrier to student success. Professional prestige refers to the perceived status of criminology-related professions, which can be disheartening if students feel that their field is undervalued in society.

Job accessibility, job security, and potential salary (all rated around 4.09–4.12) reflect the challenges related to the availability of criminology-related jobs, the perceived job stability, and the financial rewards associated with the field. Students may struggle with concerns about finding stable, well-paying jobs upon graduation, especially in a competitive job market or during economic downturns.

Personal interest and professional development (4.04 and 4.18) represent internal challenges that are related to balancing passion with practical concerns such as career advancement and skill acquisition. Students often face the challenge of aligning their personal interests with viable career paths while also striving for professional growth in a competitive field.

Johnson et al. (2019) found that learning environments in criminology programs are often a source of frustration for students, especially those in under-resourced schools. A lack of access to hands-on experiences, such as internships, or the absence of effective mentorship programs hindered students' ability to develop the necessary skills and networks for successful careers. Similarly, Garcia and Lopez (2021) emphasized that students' aspirations are also limited by the job accessibility of criminology-related positions, particularly in areas where law enforcement and criminal justice jobs are scarce or highly competitive.

The findings of this study indicated that marketing activities, social media, and family influence were the primary challenges that education students face when pursuing their career aspirations. These challenges, combined with issues related to learning environments, job accessibility, salary potential, and professional prestige, highlight the external pressures and obstacles education students encounter. Although some internal challenges like personal interest and professional development also played a role, it is the external, societal factors that pose the most significant hurdles to students' career success. These challenges underscored the need for more targeted interventions, such as better career guidance, realistic career portrayal, and robust support systems in criminology programs.

The data reveal that education students face substantial challenges in their career journey, with external factors such as marketing activities, social media, and family influence being the most significant obstacles. To address these challenges, educational institutions need to provide clearer, more realistic career guidance that aligns students' expectations with the realities of the criminology field. Programs should focus on improving the learning environment, providing professional development opportunities, and ensuring that students have access to internships and hands-on experience. Support services, such as career counseling and mentorship programs, should be enhanced to help students navigate these challenges effectively. By addressing these issues, educational management can help students achieve their career aspirations in criminology.

The Pearson correlation coefficients between the four key dimensions of career aspirations among criminology students: Personal Factors, Influence Factors, Motivation Factors, and Challenges. The high significant of the relationships was indicated by the Pearson correlation values and the p-values (Sig.), with all of the relationships being statistically significant at the 0.01 level ($p < 0.01$). This suggests strong and positive relationships between the various factors.

The Pearson correlation between Personal Factors and Influence Factors is 0.980 ($p = 0.000$), showing an extremely strong and positive relationship. This suggests that the personal factors that influence students' career aspirations are closely aligned with the external factors affecting their career choices. The relationship between Personal Factors and Motivation Factors was also very strong, with a Pearson correlation of 0.950 ($p = 0.000$). This indicates that the personal traits and characteristics that students bring to their academic and career pursuits are

closely tied to the motivations that drive their aspirations. The Personal Factors and Challenges correlation of 0.893 ($p = 0.000$) suggests a moderately strong connection. Personal factors significantly impact the challenges students face as they pursue their career aspirations. The Influence Factors and Motivation Factors also show a very strong relationship with a Pearson correlation of 0.973 ($p = 0.000$), indicating that the external influences on students' career paths are deeply tied to their motivations.

Similarly, Influence Factors and Challenges have a strong correlation of 0.880 ($p = 0.000$), demonstrating that the external factors influencing students are also linked to the challenges they face in their career journeys. The correlation between Motivation Factors and Challenges is 0.932 ($p = 0.000$), suggesting that the internal motivations for pursuing criminology are strongly related to obstacles students face in achieving their career aspirations.

The results indicated that personal factors, such as individual values, interests, and abilities, play a significant role in shaping students' career aspirations, which are influenced by external influence factors, such as societal norms, family support, and gender expectations. These personal and external factors combine to inform the motivational factors the internal drives and ambitions students feel to succeed in their chosen careers. At the same time, these factors are tightly interwoven with challenges students face, such as job accessibility, salary concerns, and the competitive nature of the field.

The strongest correlation (0.980) between Personal Factors and Influence Factors suggests that students' personal characteristics are highly aligned with the external forces shaping their career aspirations. For example, a student's personal drive for financial security and career stability may be influenced by the family expectations and societal pressures they experience. Furthermore, the relationship between Personal Factors and Motivation Factors (0.950) supports the idea that the internal motivations of students such as a desire for personal development or financial independence are strongly shaped by their personal circumstances and experiences.

The relationship between Motivation Factors and Challenges (0.932) highlights the role that motivational factors played in driving students to overcome the challenges they face, such as financial limitations or lack of mentorship opportunities. Students are motivated by a desire for professional prestige or job security may be more resilient in navigating these barriers.

The relationships revealed by the data align with existing research in educational psychology and criminology. Johnson et al. (2019) emphasized the importance of aligning personal factors with motivational and influence factors in shaping students' career paths. They argued that personal values and abilities served as foundational elements that drive motivation, while external factors such as family support, mentorship, and societal expectations can either hinder or enhance this motivation.

The correlation between influence factors and motivation resonates with Nguyen et al. (2022), who found that external factors such as cultural background and financial support were key drivers of students' career aspirations in criminology. Their research showed that students with strong family and social support systems were more likely to be motivated toward leadership roles and challenging careers, even when facing significant challenges.

Morales (2024) and Smith & Turner (2020) also observed that challenges, such as the barriers in entering the job market or obtaining internships, are strongly influenced by a combination of personal ambition and external factors. They found that students with clear, internal motivations to pursue higher education and career success were more resilient to challenges, such as limited job accessibility or societal biases.

Personal factors (e.g., values, skills, interests) are highly correlated with both influence factors (e.g., family support, societal expectations) and motivation factors (e.g., personal goals, financial aspirations), indicating that students' internal attributes significantly shape their career aspirations in criminology. Influence factors like cultural background, financial support, and mentorship were crucial in driving students' motivations and the challenges they face. The motivation to succeed in criminology was deeply intertwined with external challenges such as job market access, salary concerns, and job security, demonstrating the need for greater institutional support. All relationships tested (between personal factors, influence factors, motivation factors, and challenges) are statistically significant, emphasizing the complexity of the factors influencing career aspirations in criminology.

The data confirmed that career aspirations of education students were influenced by a dynamic interplay of personal factors, influence factors, motivation factors, and challenges. These dimensions were highly correlated,

indicating that students' career paths were shaped by both internal characteristics (like personal values and skills) and external influences (such as family support and societal expectations). The strong relationships between personal and influence factors, as well as between motivation and challenges, suggest that criminology programs should focus on holistic student support, addressing both the internal and external factors that affect career aspirations. Educational management should focus on mentorship, career counseling, and social support networks to help students navigate challenges and align their motivations with realistic career goals. By doing so, institutions can foster a more supportive environment that enables education students to thrive and achieve their career aspirations.

The Pearson correlation coefficients between the career aspirations of education students and various demographic factors (age, gender, civil status, and family income). The table reports the Pearson correlation values for four factors: Personal Factors, Influence Factors, Motivation Factors, and Challenges. All the correlation values are negative, and the significance (Sig. 92-tailed) for each is 0.000, indicating that these relationships are statistically significant at the 0.01 level. The negative correlations suggest an inverse relationship between the demographic factors and the career aspirations of criminology students.

The Personal Factors show a negative correlation with Age (-0.620), Gender (-0.833), Civil Status (-0.891), and Income of the Family (-0.913). This indicates that as the demographic factors (especially income and civil status) change, personal factors influencing career aspirations may vary inversely. The Influence Factors also showed negative correlations with these demographic variables, with Income of the Family having the highest negative correlation (-0.913). This means that students with higher family income were likely to have stronger influence factors shaping their career aspirations. The Motivation Factors show a similar pattern of negative correlation, with Income of the Family again showing the strongest correlation (-0.953), suggesting that family income has the most significant impact on students' motivations regarding their career aspirations. Challenges display the most consistent and strong negative correlations, with Income of the Family having the most prominent negative correlation (-0.969). This indicates that students with higher family incomes may face fewer challenges in pursuing their career aspirations.

The results from Table 10 suggest that demographic variables such as age, gender, civil status, and family income played a vital role in shaping criminology students' career aspirations, albeit in an inverse relationship. The negative correlations imply that students with certain demographic profiles experienced different levels of influence, motivation, and challenges, which affected their career aspirations in criminology. For instance, age appears to have an inverse relationship with career aspirations in criminology, as evidenced by the correlation of -0.620. This suggests that younger students may have more idealistic career goals or may be more motivated by factors such as personal interests or learning environments compared to older students. Older students, who may be more focused on financial stability or career advancement due to life responsibilities, might experience more challenges or have different motivations. Gender, as shown by the correlation of -0.833, also played a significant role in shaping career aspirations. Traditionally, criminology students, particularly male students, may lean toward enforcement-based careers, while female students may show interest in fields such as forensic science, victim advocacy, or criminal psychology. The challenges faced by male and female students might differ, with females often encountering barriers such as gender bias or limited representation in leadership roles. The relationship between civil status and career aspirations was also important, with a correlation of -0.891. This indicates that student with family obligations, such as married students or those with dependents, have more practical or security-driven career aspirations, and they were likely to face more challenges in pursuing their chosen profession. Finally, family income emerged as the most influential demographic factor, with correlations of -0.913 for personal factors, -0.953 for motivation factors, and -0.969 for challenges. This suggests that students from higher-income families were likely to have greater access to resources, opportunities, and support, making it easier for them to navigate challenges and pursue their career aspirations. Conversely, students from low-income families may face significant barriers in terms of access to education, internships, mentorship, and other career-enhancing opportunities.

The findings in Table 10 were consistent with the literature on career aspirations, particularly in criminology and related fields. According to Nguyen et al. (2022), family income played a critical role in shaping students'

motivations, with wealthier students often having better access to educational opportunities, career resources, and social networks. These factors contributed to their ability to pursue and achieve ambitious career goals.

Research by Johnson et al. (2019) and Morales (2024) also aligns with the negative correlations observed in this study. They found that students from lower-income backgrounds tend to face more challenges in achieving their career aspirations, including limited access to internships, professional networks, and other career development opportunities.

The role of gender and civil status in shaping career aspirations has also been explored in the literature. Smith & Turner (2020) observed that gender influences career paths in criminology, with men more likely to pursue law enforcement roles and women more likely to pursue careers in forensic science or victim advocacy. This was consistent with the negative correlation found between gender and the career aspirations of education students in this study.

Ocampo et al. (2023) highlighted that civil status can be a significant factor in career aspirations, with non-traditional students (e.g., married or with children) facing additional challenges due to their family responsibilities. These students may prioritize financial stability over other career goal, which aligns with the findings in this study.

Age has a moderate negative correlation with the career aspirations of criminology students, suggesting younger students may have more idealistic career goals. Gender shows a strong negative correlation, with male students typically pursuing more enforcement-oriented careers and female students leaning towards analytical and interpersonal roles. Civil Status reveals that students with family responsibilities, such as married students, may experience more challenges and have different career aspirations compared to those without family obligations. Family Income was the most significant factor influencing career aspirations, with students from higher-income families facing fewer challenges and having greater opportunities to pursue ambitious careers in criminology.

The study reveals that demographic factors such as age, gender, civil status, and family income significantly influence the career aspirations of criminology students. The negative correlations suggest that students from lower-income families, older students, and those with family obligations face more challenges in achieving their career goals. Educational management and criminology programs must take these factors into account when designing support systems for students. By offering targeted interventions, such as financial aid, mentorship, flexible schedules for non-traditional students, and career counseling, educational institutions can help students overcome challenges and align their aspirations with achievable career paths.

The study highlights that factors such as personal interests, professional development, and job accessibility significantly influenced career aspirations. Educational management should design curricula that incorporate practical training, internships, and case studies aligned with criminology careers like forensic science, law enforcement, and victim advocacy. Recognizing the challenges faced by non-traditional students (e.g., older students or those with family responsibilities), educational institutions should offer flexible class schedules or online learning options to accommodate diverse needs.

The strong correlation between mentorship and career aspirations underscored the need for mentorship programs. These should connect students with professionals in criminology to provide guidance and role modeling. Establish dedicated career counseling services to help students align their motivations (e.g., potential salary, job security) with realistic career paths. This is particularly important for students from low-income backgrounds or those experiencing self-doubt.

Female students faced challenges such as limited leadership representation. Educational management must promote equity by highlighting female role models in criminology and offering leadership development programs for women. Tailored support services, such as childcare facilities and counseling for students with family obligations, can alleviate challenges related to civil status. Inclusivity policies and training should ensure equitable treatment for students identifying as undefined or non-binary, fostering a supportive learning environment.

Given the significant influences of family income on career aspirations, educational management should expand scholarships, grants, and work-study programs for students from low-income families. Provide funding for unpaid internships, specialized training, and extracurricular activities to level the playing field for students who face financial constraints.

Foster collaboration between students of different demographics (age, gender, civil status) to enrich learning experiences and broaden perspectives. Age-diverse classrooms, as highlighted by Morales (2024), deepened discussions in criminology education. Recognizing the role of social media and marketing activities in shaping career motivations, institutions can use these platforms to promote criminology programs and highlight success stories of graduates.

Since challenges such as self-doubt and financial concerns were significant barriers, educational programs should integrate training on emotional resilience, stress management, and financial literacy. Assist students in navigating transitions from education to employment by establishing partnerships with law enforcement agencies, forensic labs, and correctional institutions.

Educational institutions should conduct periodic assessments of student needs, challenges, and aspirations to ensure that programs and policies remain relevant. Provide opportunities for students to give feedback on curriculum effectiveness, mentorship experiences, and institutional support, allowing for data-driven improvements.

Educational management plays a pivotal role in shaping the career aspirations of criminology students. By addressing the diverse influences, motivations, and challenges identified in the study, institutions can create an environment that fosters personal and professional growth. The implementation of inclusive policies, financial aid programs, mentorship opportunities, and flexible learning options will not only support students in achieving their career goals but also contribute to the development of skilled professionals in the criminology field.

CONCLUSION

The findings revealed that the majority of the respondents are 25 years old and above, indicating a diverse student population with a notable presence of older and non-traditional learners. The respondents were slightly dominated by males, most of whom were single, while nearly half came from low-income families earning ₱25,000 and below. In terms of the career aspirations of criminology students, personal factors, influence factors, and motivation factors were considered very important influences, while challenges were identified as the most difficult factor affecting their career goals. Moreover, all relationships tested among personal factors, influence factors, motivation factors, and challenges were found to be statistically significant, highlighting the complexity of the factors that shape the career aspirations of criminology students. Age showed a moderate negative correlation with career aspirations, while gender showed a strong negative correlation. Civil status also played an important role, as students with family responsibilities, particularly married students, experienced more challenges and had different career aspirations compared to those without family obligations. Among all the variables, family income emerged as the most significant factor influencing career aspirations, as students from higher-income families faced fewer challenges and had greater opportunities to pursue ambitious careers in criminology. These findings imply that educational management plays a crucial role in shaping and supporting the career aspirations of criminology students. By addressing the diverse needs of learners and implementing inclusive policies, financial assistance, mentorship programs, and flexible learning options, educational institutions can empower students to achieve their career goals and contribute to the development of skilled professionals in the field of criminology.

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