

Shared Values of Criminology Program in Relation to Civic Engagement: The Role of Moral Identity and Social Concern

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ABSTRACT

Shared values, unique to criminology students, alongside with distinct moral identities and social concern levels are critical in the cultivation of civic-minded individuals. The study examined the influence of shared values of Criminology program, moral identity and social concern towards civic engagement among criminology students at a Higher Education Institution (HEI) in Iligan City during the S.Y. 2024-2025. This study employed descriptive-correlational design. The respondents were the 126 students selected through stratified random sampling. Data was collected using modified questionnaires. The statistical tools used were Mean, Standard Deviation, Pearson Product Moment Correlation, and Regression Analysis. Findings revealed a very high level of shared values such as courtesy, discipline, and integrity and tact among criminology students; a moderately high level of moral identity; and a very high level of social concern but revealed a low level of civic engagement behavior. Relationships were established among students' shared values and civic engagement, moral self, and social concern. Moreover, moral integrity showed a negative relationship with social concern. Ultimately, criminology students' shared values and moral identity were discovered to predict civic engagement behaviors. Cultivation of criminology shared values while shaping moral identity deliberately motivate students to get involved and contribute to societal betterment. The study recommended further reinforcement of criminology shared values through departmental initiatives while providing activities that guides students towards a much stronger moral identity.

Keywords: Civic Engagement; Character Development; Community Involvement; Criminology Program; Engagement Behavior; Shared Values; Ethics in Criminology; Higher Education; Moral Identity; Social Concern; Social Responsibility; Student Values.

1. Introduction

In criminology education, the shared values and traditions between faculty and students play a vital role in shaping professional ethics, civic responsibility, and societal engagement (Nunes & Moura, 2024; Ngumuta et al., 2024). Cultural influences foster inclusivity, discipline, and leadership, preparing students for roles in law enforcement and public service (Zembylas, 2023; Amarasinghe, 2024). Criminology programs, deeply rooted in militaristic principles, instill discipline, patriotism, and professionalism, in line with national standards (CHED, 2018; The Philippine Criminology Profession Act, 2018). Career trends reinforce this culture, as criminology graduates gain employment advantages in law enforcement (Stringer & Murphy, 2020; DILG Act, 1990). However, civic engagement—essential for fostering community involvement and leadership—remains underexplored in relation to criminology education (Landig & Landig, 2024). Civic engagement involves both political and non-political actions aimed at community betterment (Dee, 2020; Chittum et al., 2022).

Moral identity and social concern are crucial mediators, promoting justice, empathy, and ethical action (Shehzad & Toor, 2024; Kim & Koo, 2020). Students with strong moral identities and social empathy are more likely to engage in civic activities, addressing societal inequalities (Cakal et al., 2021; Martini et al., 2023). While research has linked organizational culture to civic engagement (Mishra & Sharma, 2021; Watson, 2023), little is known about how criminology programs' shared values influence civic behavior through moral identity and social concern. This study addresses this knowledge gap, aiming to enhance criminology education by promoting socially responsible and ethically grounded graduates.

1.1. Study Objectives

This study aimed to examine the influence of Criminology program shared values towards the students' civic engagement behaviors by establishing relationships among the variables. Specifically, this study answered the following: (1) What are the Criminology students' shared values? (2) What is the students' level of civic engagement? (3) What is the students' level of moral identity? (4) What is the students' level of social concern? (5) Is there a significant relationship between Criminology student's shared values and civic engagement? (6) Is there a significant relationship between Criminology student's shared values and moral identity? (7) Is there a significant relationship between Criminology student's shared values and social concern? (8) Is there a significant relationship between students' moral identity and social concern? (9) Is there a significant relationship between students' moral identity and civic engagement? (10) Is there a significant relationship between students' social concern and civic engagement? (11) What are the predictors for Criminology students' civic engagement?

2. Methods

The researcher used a quantitative approach using a descriptive-correlational research design. A descriptive-correlational design is a quantitative research method used to describe phenomena and examine relationships between variables without manipulating those (Thomas & Zubkov, 2023). This design was useful in understanding how the variables influence the other and provide valuable insights into complex interconnections among them. Using this design, this study determined the influence of Criminology program shared values towards the student's civic engagement behaviors and considering the roles of moral identity and social concern of the criminology students in promoting civic engagement motivations.

3. Results and Discussions

3.1. Criminology Students' Shared Values

Table 1 shows that criminology students exhibit very high levels of shared values, particularly in courtesy (M=4.61, SD=0.31), followed by integrity and tact (M=4.36, SD=0.43), and discipline (M=4.31, SD=0.47). Overall, shared values recorded a very high mean (M=4.43, SD=0.40), reflecting strong enculturation of criminology program traditions. Students demonstrate courteous behavior, disciplined adherence to rules, and integrity, essential for academic and professional development (Rosenberg, 2024; Haslip, 2020; Miles et al., 2022). Such values foster respectful communication, ethical behavior, and lifelong learning skills necessary for their future careers (Gedi et al., 2022; Guerrero-Dib et al., 2020).

Table 1. Level of Criminology Students' Shared Values

Constructs	Mean	SD	Remarks
Courtesy	4.61	0.31	Very High
Discipline	4.31	0.47	Very High
Integrity and Tact	4.36	0.43	Very High
Overall Shared Values	4.43	0.40	Very High

Scale: 4.20-5.0 (Very High); 3.40-4.19 (Moderately High); 2.60-3.39 (High); 1.80-2.59 (Low); 1.0-1.79 (Very Low).

3.2. Students' Civic Engagement

Table 2 indicates a low level of civic engagement among criminology students, with political engagement ($M=2.29$, $SD=0.74$) being lower than volunteerism and charity ($M=2.62$, $SD=0.75$). Overall civic engagement remains low ($M=2.46$, $SD=0.75$), suggesting minimal involvement in political and social activities despite the criminology program's focus on law and social order. Limited political knowledge, lack of civic education, and time constraints hinder their participation (Booth, 2023; Noguiera, 2024; Hayat et al., 2024). While volunteering can develop vital skills for future employment (Evans & Yusof, 2022; Mori, 2025), academic workload and financial concerns limit students' civic involvement (Hamid & Halim, 2023).

Table 2. Level of Students' Civic Engagement

Constructs	Mean	SD	Remarks
Political Engagement	2.29	0.74	Low
Volunteerism and Charity	2.62	0.75	Low
Overall Civic Engagement	2.46	0.75	Low

Scale: 4.20-5.0 (Very High); 3.40-4.19 (Moderately High); 2.60-3.39 (High); 1.80-2.59 (Low); 1.0-1.79 (Very Low).

3.3. Students' Moral Identity

Table 3 shows that criminology students have a very high moral self ($M=4.35$, $SD=0.39$) and a moderately high moral integrity ($M=3.63$, $SD=0.80$), resulting in an overall moderately high moral identity ($M=3.99$, $SD=0.60$). This suggests students highly value moral principles and view themselves as morally responsible individuals. Strong moral identity is linked to better psychological well-being, self-esteem, and civic responsibility (Tian & Tang, 2025; Hudson & Brandenberger, 2022). Mentoring and community engagement further develop moral identity (Rodriguez, 2025; Glanzer & Schnitker, 2024). A strong moral foundation also builds resilience and leadership, helping criminology students manage academic and professional challenges ethically (Hardy et al., 2021; Zarrett et al., 2020).

Table 3. Level of Students' Moral Identity

Constructs	Mean	SD	Remarks
Moral Self	4.35	0.39	Very High
Moral Integrity	3.63	0.80	Moderately High
Overall Moral Identity	3.99	0.60	Moderately High

Scale: 4.20-5.0 (Very High); 3.40-4.19 (Moderately High); 2.60-3.39 (High); 1.80-2.59 (Low); 1.0-1.79 (Very Low).

3.4. Students' Social Concern

Table 4 reveals very high levels of affective empathy ($M=4.29$, $SD=0.46$) and cognitive empathy ($M=4.20$, $SD=0.53$), with an overall very high social concern ($M=4.25$, $SD=0.50$). This indicates strong compassion and understanding towards others' hardships. Empathy fosters collaboration, inclusion, and prosocial behaviors such as volunteerism (Abramson, 2021; Bommel, 2021; Reid, 2022). In academics, empathy promotes peer support and

reduces dropout rates (Berardi, 2024; Gokhale, 2024). Criminology programs must nurture empathy to produce graduates who value teamwork and adapt well to complex societal challenges.

Table 4. Level of Students' Social Concern

Constructs	Mean	SD	Remarks
Affective Empathy	4.29	0.46	Very High
Cognitive Empathy	4.20	0.53	Very High
Overall Social Concern	4.25	0.50	Very High

Scale: 4.20-5.0 (Very High); 3.40-4.19 (Moderately High); 2.60-3.39 (High); 1.80-2.59 (Low); 1.0-1.79 (Very Low).

3.5. Relationship between Criminology Students' Shared Values and Civic Engagement

Table 5 shows that courtesy and discipline have highly significant positive relationships with both political engagement and volunteerism and charity ($r = 0.23-0.33$, $p < .01$ and $p < .001$), while integrity and tact are only significantly correlated with volunteerism and charity ($r = 0.215$, $p < .05$). This indicates that courtesy and discipline strongly influence students' civic participation, while integrity and tact primarily enhance volunteerism. This supports the Model of Organizational Culture and the Theory of Planned Behavior, suggesting that departmental culture and perceived norms shape student engagement. Courtesy builds trust and collaboration essential for civic action (Dang et al., 2021; Verlinden & Bailey, 2020), while discipline strengthens self-efficacy and consistent civic behaviors (Dauer et al., 2021; Bird et al., 2020). Integrity motivates challenging unethical practices (Clark, 2022). Thus, instilling courtesy, discipline, and integrity in criminology students fosters civic-minded graduates ready to contribute to society.

Table 5. Significant Relationship between Criminology Student's Shared Values and Civic Engagement

Variables		Political Engagement	Volunteerism and Charity
Courtesy	r	0.23**	0.33***
	p	0.01	< .001
Discipline	r	0.23**	0.32***
	p	0.01	< .001
Integrity and Tact	r	0.13	0.215*
	p	0.16	0.02

Notes: Ho: There is no significant relationship between the student's shared values and civic engagement.

*Probability Value Scale: *** $p < .001$ (Highly Significant); ** $p < 0.01$ (Highly Significant); * $p < 0.05$ (Significant); $p > 0.05$ (Not significant).*

3.6. Relationship between Criminology Students' Shared Values and Moral Identity

Table 6 reveals that courtesy, discipline, and integrity and tact have highly significant positive relationships with students' moral self ($r = 0.41-0.54$, $p < .001$), but no significant link with moral integrity. This means that while shared values enhance students' self-perception as moral individuals, they do not automatically ensure moral behavior. This finding supports the Model of Organizational Culture, emphasizing the role of departmental culture

in shaping moral identity. Courtesy promotes moral sensitivity and civility (Li et al., 2025; Gurchiek, 2024), discipline aids moral decision-making through self-control (Tian & Tang, 2025; Hidayah, 2021), and integrity fosters ethical behavior (Walia, 2022). Embedding these values within criminology programs develops students with strong moral reasoning and ethical decision-making abilities.

Table 6. Significant Relationship between Criminology Student's Shared Values and Moral Identity

Variables		Moral Self	Moral Integrity
Courtesy	r	0.41***	0.12
	p	< .001	0.19
Discipline	r	0.42***	0.03
	p	< .001	0.71
Integrity and Tact	r	0.54***	0.17
	p	< .001	0.06

Notes: Ho: There is no significant relationship between the student's shared values and civic engagement.

*Probability Value Scale: *** $p < .001$ (Highly Significant); ** $p < 0.01$ (Highly Significant); * $p < 0.05$ (Significant); $p > 0.05$ (Not significant).*

3.7. Relationship between Criminology Students' Shared Values and Social Concern

Table 7 shows a significant positive correlation between courtesy, discipline, integrity and tact, and students' social concern. Courtesy ($r = 0.32$; $p < .001$), discipline ($r = 0.27$; $p < .01$), and integrity and tact ($r = 0.31$; $p < .001$) are significantly related to affective empathy. Similarly, these values also correlate with cognitive empathy. This suggests that students who practice these values are more empathetic toward others, aligning with the Model of Organizational Culture, which highlights how institutional practices shape behavior. Courtesy fosters social understanding (Santos, 2023; Jiang et al., 2021), discipline promotes emotional control (Tekin, 2024; Peng et al., 2024), and integrity builds trust, encouraging emotional openness (Sayers, 2021; Ampofo et al., 2025). Developing these values through daily interactions strengthens students' empathy and social concern, enhancing community engagement.

Table 7. Significant Relationship between Criminology Student's Shared Values and Social Concern

Variables		Affective Empathy	Cognitive Empathy
Courtesy	r	0.32***	0.27**
	p	< .001	0.002
Discipline	r	0.27**	0.25**
	p	0.002	0.005
Integrity and Tact	r	0.31***	0.43***
	p	< .001	< .001

Notes: Ho: There is no significant relationship between the student's shared values and social concern.

*Probability Value Scale: *** $p < .001$ (Highly Significant); ** $p < 0.01$ (Highly Significant); * $p < 0.05$ (Significant); $p > 0.05$ (Not significant).*

3.8. Relationship between Criminology Students' Moral Identity and Social Concern

Table 8 shows that moral self strongly correlates with affective ($r = 0.46$; $p < .001$) and cognitive empathy ($r = 0.45$; $p < .001$), while moral integrity shows no significant relationship. Students who see themselves as moral are more empathetic, supporting the Theory of Planned Behavior that intrinsic attitudes drive social concern. Studies show that strong moral identity enhances empathy and social responsibility (Tian & Tang, 2025; Wang et al., 2023). Morality fosters emotional resilience, encouraging students to understand and support others (Dawson et al., 2021; Boggio et al., 2024). For criminology students, empathy and moral identity are essential for ethical and effective community engagement.

Table 8. Significant Relationship between Criminology Student's Moral Identity and Social Concern

Variables		Affective Empathy	Cognitive Empathy
Moral Self	r	0.46***	0.45**
	p	< .001	< .001
Moral Integrity	r	0.15	0.17
	p	0.9	0.06

Notes: H_0 : There is no significant relationship between the student's shared values and social concern.

Probability Value Scale: *** $p < .001$ (Highly Significant); ** $p < 0.01$ (Highly Significant); * $p < 0.05$ (Significant); $p > 0.05$ (Not significant).

3.9. Relationship between Criminology Students' Moral Identity and Civic Engagement

Table 9 reveals a positive relationship between moral self and civic engagement (political engagement $r = 0.31$, volunteerism $r = 0.32$; $p < .001$). Conversely, moral integrity shows a negative relationship (political engagement $r = -0.26$; volunteerism $r = -0.23$; $p < .01$). This means students who view themselves as moral are more likely to engage in civic activities, while those focused strictly on moral behavior may disengage. Moral identity influences political and volunteer involvement (Kivikangas et al., 2021; Yirka, 2020). However, due to dissatisfaction with political corruption (Borja et al., 2024; Gayman, 2024), morally strict students may avoid politics. They may also refrain from volunteering if opportunities conflict with their values (Grant et al., 2024; Mayor & Estalayo, 2024). Nurturing moral principles can guide students toward responsible civic action.

Table 9. Significant Relationship between Criminology Student's Moral Identity and Civic Engagement

Variables		Political Engagement	Volunteerism and Charity
Moral Self	r	0.31***	0.32***
	p	< .001	< .001
Moral Integrity	r	- 0.26**	- 0.23**
	p	0.003	0.01

Notes: H_0 : There is no significant relationship between the student's moral self and civic engagement.

Probability Value Scale: *** $p < .001$ (Highly Significant); ** $p < 0.01$ (Highly Significant); * $p < 0.05$ (Significant); $p > 0.05$ (Not significant).

3.10. Relationship between Criminology Student's Social Concern and Civic Engagement

Table 10 shows no significant correlation between criminology students' affective and cognitive empathy with political engagement and volunteerism, as all p-values are above 0.05. This suggests that social concern does not directly influence civic engagement. According to Casey et al. (2023) and Muradova (2025), while empathy shapes political attitudes, factors like moral judgment, online behavior, and personal circumstances (e.g., time and self-doubt) have a stronger effect on political participation. Jamal et al. (2025) and Chung et al. (2021) also noted that the lack of supportive environments can hinder volunteerism among empathic individuals. Thus, despite their social concern, criminology students face barriers like heavy academic load, financial constraints, and limited campus initiatives, reducing their civic involvement.

Table 10. Significant Relationship between Criminology Student's Social Concern and Civic Engagement

Variables		Political Engagement	Volunteerism and Charity
Affective Empathy	r	0.10	0.16
	p	0.29	0.07
Cognitive Empathy	r	0.11	0.12
	p	0.23	0.18

Notes: Ho: There is no significant relationship between the student's moral self and civic engagement.

Probability Value Scale: $p > 0.05$ (Not significant).

3.11. Predictors of the Civic Engagement of Criminology Students

Table 11 shows that 17% ($R^2 = 0.17$) of criminology students' civic engagement is predicted by shared values and moral identity ($p < .001$). Civic engagement increases with higher shared values ($\beta = 0.48$) and moral identity ($\beta = 0.21$), suggesting that exposure to strong values and moral education fosters civic behavior. Courtesy, discipline, integrity, and tact also positively influence civic engagement by promoting respect, self-regulation, and alignment with altruistic values (Kin & Chow, 2023; Alam et al., 2023; Tzankova et al., 2021). Moral identity strengthens service-oriented and political civic activities (Haduong et al., 2024; Wray-Lake & Ballard, 2023). Thus, cultivating core values and moral education within criminology programs is crucial to enhance students' civic participation and social contribution.

Table 11. Regression Analysis of the Predictors of the Civic Engagement of Criminology Students

Predictor	Estimate (β)	SE	95% Confidence Interval		t	p	Stand. Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower	Upper				Lower	Upper
(Constant)	0.66	0.56	0.45	1.77	1.17	0.24			
Shared Values	0.48	0.12	0.25	0.70	4.15	< .001	0.34	0.18	0.51
Moral Identity	0.21	0.09	0.03	0.39	2.34	0.021	0.19	0.03	0.36
R^2	0.17								
Adjusted r^2	0.16								
F value	12.70								
p-value	< .001								
Civic Engagement	$= 0.66 + 0.48 * \text{shared values} + 0.21 * \text{moral identity}$								

4. Conclusions

The study concludes that criminology students possess strong shared values like courtesy, discipline, integrity, and tact, which shape their moral identity and empathy. However, civic engagement remains low, showing limited involvement in political and volunteer activities. Shared values and moral identity are significant predictors of civic engagement, but empathy alone does not directly lead to civic actions. Strengthening moral development and value formation within criminology programs is essential for enhancing civic participation among students.

4.1. Future Suggestions

1. Integrate civic engagement activities into criminology curricula to provide students with hands-on opportunities that connect academic learning with community service.
2. Conduct longitudinal research to track how students' shared values, moral identity, and civic engagement develop over time, from entry to graduation.
3. Examine institutional and cultural influences such as faculty mentorship, peer networks, and university policies that may impact students' civic behavior.
4. Include a more diverse range of institutions and students in future studies to compare value formation and civic participation across different demographic and geographic contexts.
5. Develop targeted programs and interventions that translate students' empathy into concrete civic actions, such as volunteering, advocacy, or political participation.

5. Recommendations

Higher education institutions should reinforce the criminology culture and values of courtesy, discipline, integrity, and tact while promoting moral education to enhance students' civic engagement. Structured programs, such as community immersion, outreach activities, and political forums, should be implemented to connect moral identity with real-world civic actions. Future research should explore additional factors influencing civic participation among criminology students to design more effective interventions.

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Competing Interests Statement

The authors have not declared any conflict of interest.

Consent for publication

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

Authors' contributions

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

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