

Retention Policies and Academic Support Services in Relation to Board Examination Readiness among Criminology Students

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ABSTRACT

Retention policies in the Philippines serve as a mechanism to uphold academic excellence and ensure that students meet the necessary standards in their respective programs. This study explored the implementation of retention policies and academic support services in Criminology programs and their relationship to board examination readiness. This study employed descriptive-correlational design. The respondents were the 100 students selected through stratified random sampling. Data was collected using modified questionnaires. The statistical tools used were Mean, Standard Deviation, Pearson Product correlation, Coefficient and Regression Analysis. Findings revealed that the level of effectiveness of retention policies in terms of grade requirements, and probational policies rated very high however dismissal policies have high level of effectiveness. Students view retention policies—particularly grade requirements and probation policies—as highly effective in promoting academic success, though they perceive dismissal policies as slightly less supportive. The institution may strengthen its existing retention policies by emphasizing the supportive aspects of grade requirements and probation policies, rather than solely focusing on the punitive nature of dismissal policies. This could involve framing these policies as opportunities for students to receive targeted assistance and improve their academic standing, fostering a more positive and proactive approach to academic success.

Keywords: Academic Performance; Academic Readiness; Board Examination; Criminology; Preparedness; Retention Policy; Retention Strategies; Success Factor; Support Services; Tutoring.

1. Introduction

Retention policies and academic support services are vital mechanisms in criminology education that aim to uphold academic excellence and ensure students' readiness for the Criminologist Licensure Examination (CLE) (Navarro et al., 2023; Johnson & Seifert, 2021). Retention policies enforce academic standards through performance criteria, while support services—such as tutoring, counseling, and review programs—address academic gaps and promote student success. Together, these strategies contribute to improved exam readiness, self-efficacy, and reduced attrition (Baker & Pomerantz, 2023; Abdullah et al., 2019). However, there is limited research examining their combined effect on board exam performance. The study primarily addresses a knowledge gap by exploring the combined effects of retention policies and academic support services on board examination readiness among criminology students—an area that has been under-researched. While existing literature has examined retention policies and academic support separately, there is limited understanding of how these two institutional strategies interact and contribute holistically to students' licensure preparedness (Garcia & Mendoza, 2022). This study will have emphasis the connection between retention policies, academic support services, and board examination readiness, highlighting the institutional mechanisms that contribute to the academic success of criminology students.

1.1. Study Objectives

The following are the objectives of this study: (i) Determine the level of effectiveness of retention policies in terms of grade requirements, probation policies and dismissal policies as perceived by the respondents, (ii) Determine the level of effectiveness of academic support services in terms of tutoring, mentorship and review program, (iii)

Determine the respondents' level of board examination readiness in terms of mastery of the subject, psychological readiness and skill-based readiness, (iv) Determine if there is significant relationship between the effectiveness of retention policies and their level of board examination readiness, (v) Determine if there is significant relationship between the effectiveness of academic support and their level of board examination readiness, and (vi) Identify the predictors in the board examination readiness among criminology students.

2. Methods

This quantitative research study employed the descriptive-correlational research design. The researcher measures variables, retention policies and academic support services in relation to board examination readiness among the respondents. This research design is the most appropriate method to investigate the possible relationships between the variables without attempting to influence or manipulate those (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

This study was conducted at a Higher Education Institution in Lanao del Norte, offering a Bachelor of Science in Criminology Program. The respondents of the study were 100 criminology students enrolled from S.Y 2023-2024 to S.Y 2024-2025 in Criminology program. They were selected through stratified sampling based on the following criteria: (1) officially enrolled in the criminology program, (2) willing to participate in the study.

3. Results and Discussions

3.1. Level of Effectiveness of Retention Policies

Table 1 presents the perceived level of effectiveness of institutional retention policies in terms of grade requirements, probational policies and dismissal policies. Grade requirements receive a very high rating (VH = 4.38, SD = 0.44). Followed by Probation Policies still yielded with a very high score (VH = 4.27, SD = 0.48). Dismissal Policies had a high score (M = 4.16, SD = 0.53). The respondents rated the overall effectiveness of retention policy as very high (VH = 4.27, SD = 0.11).

Table 1. Level of Effectiveness of Retention Policies

Retention Policies	Mean	St. Dev.	I
Grade Requirements	4.38	0.4454	VH
Probation Policies	4.27	0.4863	VH
Dismissal Policies	4.16	0.5391	H
Overall Weighted Mean	4.27	0.1100	VH

Legend: 4.21-5.00 – Very High (VH); 1.81-2.60 – Low (L); 3.41-4.20 – High (H); 1.00-1.80 – Very Low (VL); 2.61-3.40 – Average (A).

3.2. Level of Effectiveness of Academic Support Services

Table 2 presents the level of effectiveness of academic support services as perceived by the respondents. The overall weighted mean for academic support services is (M = 4.26, SD = 0.1595), indicating a Very High (VH) level of effectiveness. Among the three components, Review Program received the highest rating (M = 4.44, SD =

0.5162), classified as Very High. This is followed by Tutoring ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 0.7252$) and Mentorship ($M = 4.15$, $SD = 0.6838$), both of which fall under the High (H) category.

Table 2. Level of Effectiveness of Academic Support Services

Retention Policies	Mean	St. Dev.	I
Tutoring	4.18	0.7252	H
Mentorship	4.15	0.6838	H
Review Program	4.44	0.5162	VH
Overall Weighted Mean	4.26	0.1595	VH

Legend: 4.21-5.00 – Very High (VH); 1.81-2.60 – Low (L); 3.41-4.20 – High (H); 1.00-1.80 – Very Low (VL); 2.61-3.40 – Average (A).

3.3. Level of Board Examination Readiness

Table 3 provides insights into the level of board examination readiness, mastery of the subject, psychological readiness and skill-based readiness. Mastery of the subject has the high rating ($M = 4.19$, $SD = 0.56$) and psychological readiness with a high rating ($M = 4.17$, $SD = 0.65$). Additionally, skill-based readiness with very high ratings ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 0.55$). The overall weighted mean of 4.22 with a standard deviation of 0.057 indicates very high level of board examination readiness.

Table 3. Level of Board Examination Readiness

Retention Policies	Mean	St. Dev.	I
Mastery of the Subject	4.19	0.5606	H
Psychological Readiness	4.17	0.6555	H
Skill-Based Readiness	4.31	0.5506	VH
Overall Weighted Mean	4.22	0.0757	VH

Legend: 4.21-5.00 – Very High (VH); 1.81-2.60 – Low (L); 3.41-4.20 – High (H); 1.00-1.80 – Very Low (VL); 2.61-3.40 – Average (A).

3.4. Significant Relationship between the Effectiveness of Retention Policies and their Level of Board Examination Readiness

Table 4 presents the significant relationship between the effectiveness of retention policies and the level of board examination readiness among criminology students. The overall results show significant positive correlations across all variables. Among the retention policies, the strongest correlation was found between Probation Policies and Psychological Readiness ($r = 0.636$, $p = 0.00$), followed closely by Grade Requirements and Mastery of the Subject ($r = 0.600$, $p = 0.00$), and Dismissal Policies and Skill-Based Readiness ($r = 0.604$, $p = 0.00$). All the p-values were less than 0.01, indicating highly significant relationships between each of the retention policy variables and the aspects of board examination readiness. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0), which stated that there is no significant relationship between these variables, was rejected in all instances.

Research shows that retention policies significantly affect students' readiness, though their impact depends on the specific policies and available support systems (Velasquez, 2024). To enhance preparedness and performance, institutions should focus on combining clear academic policies with supportive strategies such as review programs and mentorship initiatives.

Table 4. Significant Relationship between the Effectiveness of Retention Policies and their Level of Board Examination Readiness

Retention Policies	Mastery of the Subject	Psychological Readiness	Skill-Based Readiness
Grade Requirements	r= 0.600 p= 0.00** Reject Ho	r= 0.517 p= 0.00** Reject Ho	r= 0.609 p=n0.00** Reject Ho
Probation Policies	r= 0.574 p=b0.00** Reject Ho	r= 0.636 p= 0.00** Reject Ho	r= 0.602 p= 0.00** Reject Ho
Dismissal Policies	r= 0.571 p= 0.00** Reject Ho	r= 0.523 p= 0.00** Reject Ho	r= 0.604 p= 0.00** Reject Ho

Ho: There is no significant relationship between the effectiveness of retention policies and their level of board examination readiness

*Legend: 0.00-0.01**Highly Significant, 0.02-0.05*Significant, above 0.05 Not Significant.*

3.5. Significant Relationship between the Effectiveness of Academic Support and their Level of Board Examination Readiness

Table 5 reveals the significant relationship between the effectiveness of academic support services and the level of board examination readiness among criminology students. The results show that all indicators yielded statistically significant positive relationships ($p = 0.00$) across the various dimensions of readiness. The overall highest correlation was observed between Mentorship and Mastery of the Subject ($r = 0.642$, $p = 0.00$), followed by the correlation between Review Program and Skill-Based Readiness ($r = 0.604$, $p = 0.00$), and Tutoring and Psychological Readiness ($r = 0.574$, $p = 0.00$). The lowest significant correlation was found between Tutoring and Mastery of the Subject ($r = 0.522$, $p = 0.00$). All findings led to the rejection of the null hypothesis, indicating that there is a significant relationship between academic support and board examination readiness.

The analysis shows a strong link between students' use of academic support services and their readiness for the board exam. Those who participate in tutoring, mentorship, and review sessions demonstrate greater subject mastery, psychological preparedness, and practical skills. Among these, review programs have the most

significant impact, enhancing both content knowledge and exam confidence through structured sessions and mock exams (Espartero, 2022; Alcoran et al., 2024).

Table 5. Significant Relationship between the Effectiveness of Academic Support and their Level of Board Examination Readiness

Retention Policies	Mastery of the Subject	Psychological Readiness	Skill-Based Readiness
Tutoring	r= 0.522 p= 0.00** Reject Ho	r= 0.642 p= 0.00** Reject Ho	r= 0.593 p= 0.00** Reject Ho
Mentorship	r= 0.574 p= 0.00** Reject Ho	r= 0.636 p= 0.00** Reject Ho	r= 0.602 p= 0.00** Reject Ho
Review Program	r= 0.571 p= 0.00** Reject Ho	r= 0.523 p= 0.00** Reject Ho	r= 0.604 p= 0.00** Reject Ho

Ho: There is no significant relationship between the effectiveness of academic support and their level of board examination readiness

Legend: 0.00-0.01**Highly Significant, 0.02-0.05*Significant, above 0.05 Not Significant.

3.6. Predictors of Board Examination Readiness

Table 6 presents a multiple regression analysis identifying significant predictors of board examination readiness among criminology students. The independent variables examined include grade requirement, dismissal policies, tutoring, mentorship, and participation in a review program. The model yields an R-squared value of 62.14%, indicating that these variables collectively explain a substantial portion of the variance in board examination readiness.

The results highlight that structured review programs play a crucial role in boosting licensure exam performance by offering thorough content coverage, practice tests, and test-taking strategies, as supported by Espartero (2022) and Alcoran et al. (2024). Dismissal policies also influence student motivation and discipline, with Barreda (2022) emphasizing the importance of maintaining high academic standards for exam success. Mentorship positively impacts exam readiness by providing guidance and support, as noted by Albina et al. (2022). These findings align with Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which stresses the role of self-efficacy and social learning in student achievement. Overall, integrating structured review programs, mentorship, and clear academic policies can enhance student preparedness, improve board exam pass rates, and develop competent criminology professionals.

Table 6. Predictors of Board Examination Readiness

Term	Coef	SE Coef	T-Value	P-Value
Constant	0.124	0.374	0.33	0.740
Grade Requirement	0.193	0.112	1.72	0.08
Dismissal Policies	0.2043	0.0896	2.28	0.02
Tutoring	0.1154	0.0678	1.70	0.09
Mentorship	0.1621	0.0776	2.09	0.3
Review Program	0.3011	0.0906	3.32	0.00

Regression Equation

Skill-based = 0.124 + 0.193 Grade + 0.2043 Dismissal + 0.1154 tutoring + 0.1621 mentor + 0.3011 review

Model Summary

S	R-sq	R-sq(adj)	R-sq(pred)
0.347697	62.14%	60.13%	55.87%

Ho: There are no predictors of board examination readiness among criminology students.

4. Conclusions

This study concludes that students perceive retention policies—especially grade requirements and probation—as supportive of academic success, though dismissal policies are seen as less beneficial. Academic support services like tutoring, mentorship, and review programs are widely used, reflecting students’ proactive approach to exam preparation. While students generally feel emotionally and mentally prepared for the board exams and show sufficient subject knowledge, there is still a need to deepen their content mastery. Stricter measures such as dismissal policies, along with structured support like review programs and mentorship, are more strongly associated with board exam readiness than grade requirements or tutoring alone. Overall, students who are engaged in review sessions, understand the implications of dismissal, and benefit from mentorship demonstrate higher levels of preparedness for licensure exams. In line with this, the following could be suggested:

- 1) Strengthen Subject-Centered Review Initiatives. Implement targeted review sessions tailored to specific subjects to enhance students’ mastery of key concepts and increase their chances of success in board examinations.
- 2) Improve Clarity and Implementation of Academic Policies. Ensure that dismissal and probation policies are clearly explained and applied in a way that encourages student improvement without adding unnecessary psychological pressure.
- 3) Broaden Access to Mentorship Programs. Establish structured mentorship by involving faculty members and successful board passers to provide academic, emotional, and professional support, thereby boosting both competence and self-confidence among students.

4) Introduce Proactive Academic Support Measures. Utilize tools like early diagnostic assessments and customized tutoring for students at academic risk, allowing timely identification and resolution of learning challenges.

5) Continuously Evaluate and Enhance Support Services. Regularly review and update academic support systems—such as tutoring, review classes, and counselling—to ensure they remain responsive to students' needs and aligned with licensure exam requirements.

5. Recommendations

Higher education institutions may continue to implement and strengthen retention policies, particularly those related to grade requirements and probation, while carefully reviewing the effectiveness and fairness of dismissal policies to avoid adverse effects on student morale. Institutions may also enhance academic support services by expanding access to mentorship and structured review programs, as these have shown the most significant impact on board examination readiness. Although tutoring plays a role in emotional preparedness, it may be improved to better support students' academic and skill development. Furthermore, integrating subject mastery-focused interventions within review programs can help address content gaps and boost students' confidence and competence. Lastly, institutions must regularly evaluate and tailor these strategies to ensure they meet the evolving needs of criminology students preparing for licensure.

Declarations

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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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