

Examining the Relationship Between Ethical Climate, Workplace Bullying, Organizational Justice, and Academic Job Satisfaction Among Criminology Instructors

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Abstract. This study explored the relationship between ethical climate, workplace bullying, organizational justice, and academic job satisfaction among criminology instructors in CARAGA and Northern Mindanao, Philippines. Employing a non-experimental quantitative research design, data were gathered from 400 randomly selected full-time criminology instructors using a validated and modified survey instrument. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was utilized to examine the predictive relationships among variables. Results revealed a very high level of ethical climate, workplace bullying, and academic job satisfaction, along with a high level of organizational justice. The findings demonstrated statistically significant relationships among all variables, with ethical climate, workplace bullying, and organizational justice exerting positive and significant effects on academic job satisfaction. These findings offer critical implications for higher education institutions and policymakers. Strengthening the ethical climate and ensuring organizational justice can serve as strategic interventions to enhance instructor satisfaction and retention in criminology programs. Furthermore, the study emphasizes the importance of institutional policies that proactively prevent and address workplace bullying. The results contribute to the growing body of knowledge on organizational behavior in the academic setting. They may inform CHED and school administrators about the development of faculty-centered policies and a more supportive work environment.

Keywords: Criminal justice; Criminology instructors; Ethical climate; Workplace bullying; Organizational justice; Academic job satisfaction.

1.0 Introduction

Criminology instructors, as educators in a highly specialized and sensitive academic field, face unique challenges that affect their professional satisfaction and overall well-being. The demands of teaching complex criminal justice topics, maintaining academic rigor, and responding to institutional expectations can create a stressful work environment. Within this context, ethical climate, workplace bullying, and perceptions of organizational justice have become increasingly relevant in understanding academic job satisfaction. Job satisfaction, a key factor in faculty retention and performance, may be undermined by the absence of ethical guidance, the presence of negative interpersonal dynamics, and a lack of fairness in institutional policies and decisions (Kebenei, 2023).

The ethical climate of an institution refers to the shared perception of what constitutes appropriate behavior, guided by the organization's policies, leadership, and cultural norms. Simon (2024) emphasized that a strong ethical climate fosters a sense of purpose and professional identity, which are essential for instructor motivation. In contrast, a weak ethical climate can result in confusion, diminished morale, and increased dissatisfaction. In

academic settings, where integrity and fairness are crucial, the perceived absence of ethical support can significantly impact job satisfaction (Tennor, 2024). While several studies have shown a positive correlation between ethical climate and job satisfaction, most of these investigations have focused on general education settings, leaving a gap in discipline-specific contexts such as criminology.

Workplace bullying, characterized by repeated and persistent negative actions towards an individual, is another factor that significantly affects the psychological health and job satisfaction of educators. Research by Khan, Ali, and Nisar (2021) indicates that bullying within academic institutions contributes to emotional exhaustion, absenteeism, and withdrawal. Unlike other stressors, bullying often creates a hostile work environment where targeted individuals feel isolated and unsupported. Criminology instructors, who often operate in high-stress environments due to the nature of their subject matter, may be particularly vulnerable to such experiences. However, the prevalence and impact of bullying in this specific academic field remain largely underexplored (Halliday et al, 2021).

Organizational justice, which encompasses perceptions of fairness in decision-making processes (procedural), the distribution of outcomes (distributive), and interpersonal treatment (interactional), also plays a crucial role in shaping faculty satisfaction. Purwanto (2020) found that organizational justice has a positive impact on employee attitudes, commitment, and performance. While studies in various professional sectors confirm the influence of organizational justice on job satisfaction, limited attention has been paid to how these justice dimensions operate in criminology departments. Existing literature tends to examine these variables separately, without considering their interrelated effects on academic job satisfaction, particularly in environments marked by ethical tension and interpersonal conflict (Luzipho et al., 2023).

This study seeks to examine the relationship between ethical climate, workplace bullying, organizational justice, and academic job satisfaction among criminology instructors. By integrating these variables in a single investigation, the research aims to address existing gaps in the literature, particularly within the context of criminology education. The significance of this study lies in its potential to inform higher education institutions about the working conditions of their faculty members, especially those in high-stress academic programs. The findings can contribute to the development of policies and interventions that promote ethical practices, prevent bullying, ensure fairness, and ultimately enhance job satisfaction among criminology educators.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design, which is appropriate for examining the relationships between variables without manipulating them (Creswell, 2021). This design was selected to explore the association between ethical climate, workplace bullying, organizational justice, and academic job satisfaction among criminology instructors in Northern Mindanao and the CARAGA Region. Descriptive research enables a systematic and accurate representation of the participants' experiences and perceptions within their academic institutions (Kim et al., 2017). The correlational aspect of the design allows the identification of significant relationships among the variables, supporting the analysis of potential patterns and dynamics (Zakhidov, 2024). Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed to assess the fit of the hypothesized model and examine the interrelationships between constructs based on theoretical foundations (Mueller et al., 2018). All research procedures were conducted with ethical rigor, ensuring accurate data collection, proper citation of scholarly sources, and adherence to the principles of research integrity.

2.2 Research Participants

This study targeted all criminology instructors employed in higher education institutions (HEIs) offering criminology programs across Northern Mindanao and the CARAGA Region, with a total anticipated sample size of 400 respondents. Using the Raosoft sample size calculator with a 5% margin of error, a 95% confidence level, and a 50% response rate, the required number of participants was determined. Stratified random sampling was employed to ensure representation across different provinces and institutions, grouping respondents by shared characteristics such as location and institutional affiliation. Inclusion criteria specified full-time criminology instructors with at least two years of teaching experience, as they are presumed to possess sufficient exposure and insight into ethical climate, workplace bullying, organizational justice, and academic job satisfaction. Instructors with less than two years of service were excluded because their experience was limited and not relevant to the study's variables. Ethical considerations were upheld by ensuring voluntary participation, allowing respondents

to withdraw at any time, and maintaining confidentiality through secure data handling and anonymity, thereby safeguarding participants' rights and minimizing any potential conflict with their professional duties.

2.3 Research Instrument

The study modified and adapted existing survey questionnaires from various scholarly sources to assess Ethical Climate, Workplace Bullying, Organizational Justice, and Academic Job Satisfaction among criminology instructors. The Ethical Climate scale was adapted from Al Halbusi et al. (2021), the Workplace Bullying scale from Quine (2020), the Organizational Justice scale from Flint, Haley, and McNally (2012), and the Academic Job Satisfaction scale from Wosornu et al. (2018). Each instrument was revised to fit the research context and underwent expert validation by professionals in the field to ensure content relevance and clarity. The finalized questionnaire consisted of four sections corresponding to the study's variables and was measured using a five-point Likert scale: 5 (strongly agree – always manifested/observed), 4 (agree – frequently manifested), 3 (fairly agree – occasionally manifested), 2 (disagree – rarely manifested), and 1 (strongly disagree – not manifested). Pilot testing was conducted to evaluate the internal consistency and reliability of the items using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient prior to full deployment.

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to participation, each school will be provided with a written consent form from the Commission on Higher Education Regional Office (CHED), including the goals of the research, the voluntary nature of their participation, the right to withdraw at any time without penalty, and the confidentiality measures in place to protect their identity and personal data. Risks: No risky situations are involved in the study that the population may experience in terms of physical, psychological, or socio-economic concerns, as this study only involved a survey and did not require participants to undergo activities that exposed them to any dangers. The researcher declares that they have no conflict of interest in this study. Lastly, the benefits: Participants in this study may receive direct benefits in the form of small tokens of appreciation. These may include the giving of a certificate to each school. While these token is not intended as payment, they serve to acknowledge the value of each respondent's contribution. The findings from this study may also contribute to broader social, academic, or policy improvements, which could potentially benefit participants and others in the long term.

2.5 Data Analysis

Various statistical tools were employed in this study to ensure a comprehensive and precise analysis of the research questions. After administering the research instruments, the questionnaires are obtained, collected, tabulated, and subjected to statistical analysis and interpretation. The study utilized the Mean, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation, Mediation Test Technique, regression, and Medgraph employing the SEM. The levels of ethical climate, workplace bullying, organizational justice, and academic job satisfaction of criminology instructors in Northern Mindanao and CARAGA Region are measured using the mean. The relationships between Ethical Climate and Academic Job Satisfaction, Workplace Bullying and Academic Job Satisfaction, and Organizational Justice and Academic Job Satisfaction are examined using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

The researcher strictly adheres to the ethical standards in conducting this study. This follows the UMERC Protocol No. 2023-019 of the university's research ethics committee. The researcher adheres to the following norms: Voluntary participation, where respondents were given the free will to participate without any form of consequence, penalty, or loss of benefits. The researcher properly informs the respondents of the time they spend answering the questionnaire, which requires their honesty. This was achieved by introducing the purpose and benefits of the study to the participating colleges/universities offering criminology programs in Northern Mindanao and the CARAGA Region. Informed consent: will begin with a thorough explanation of the study's purpose, procedures, and objectives to ensure participants fully understand the nature of their involvement.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Perceived Ethical Climate of Criminology Instructors

Table 1 presents the data regarding the Ethical Climate of Criminology Instructors. The analysis of Table 1 indicates a generally strong positive agreement across all indicators, with the highest mean scores observed in Instrumental (4.43), Rules (4.42), and Law and Code (4.38), all of which are interpreted as "Strongly Agree." Independence also reflects a strong consensus with a mean of 4.20, while Caring, though slightly lower at 4.17, still falls under "Agree." The overall mean of 4.32 and standard deviation of 0.45 suggest a consistent and favorable

perception among respondents regarding these factors. This aligns with findings from Kumar (2024), who emphasized that adherence to moral principles such as care, autonomy, and respect for rules plays a crucial role in ethical decision-making and behavior, reinforcing the importance of these indicators in shaping attitudes and actions within organizational or social contexts.

Table 1. *Level of Ethical Climate of Criminology Instructors*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Caring	4.17	0.58	Agree
Independence	4.20	0.55	Strongly Agree
Law and Code	4.38	0.59	Strongly Agree
Rules	4.42	0.61	Strongly Agree
Instrumental	4.43	0.57	Strongly Agree
Overall	4.32	0.45	Strongly Agree

3.2 Perceived Workplace Bullying of Criminology Instructors

Table 2 illustrates the motivation level of workplace bullying among criminology instructors.

Table 2. *Level of Workplace Bullying of Criminology Instructors*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Work Bullying	4.18	0.51	Agree
Personal Bullying	4.25	0.48	Strongly Agree
Physical Intimidating Bullying	4.16	0.67	Agree
Overall	4.20	0.47	Strongly Agree

Table 2 presents that criminology instructors experience a high level of workplace bullying, with Personal Bullying receiving the highest mean score of 4.25, categorized as "Strongly Agree." Work Bullying and Physical Intimidating Bullying also register high means of 4.18 and 4.16, respectively, both interpreted as "Agree." The overall mean of 4.20 and low standard deviation of 0.47 suggest a strong and consistent perception of bullying behaviors among respondents. These results align with Suggala, Thomas, and Kureshi (2021), who emphasized that workplace bullying—including personal and physical intimidation—detrimentally impacts employee mental health and organizational productivity. Moreover, Al Muharraq, Baker, and Alallah (2022) found that bullying in professional environments frequently leads to increased stress, job dissatisfaction, and turnover intentions. Fauzan & Sulaeman (2024) also noted that academic institutions are not immune to bullying, which can undermine collegial relationships and hinder effective teaching and learning. Together, these studies underscore the importance of recognizing and addressing bullying to foster a healthier work environment for educators.

3.3 Organizational Justice of Criminology Instructors

Table 3 illustrates the Organizational Justice of Criminology Instructors

Table 3. *Level of Organizational Justice of Criminology Instructors*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Distributive Justice	4.29	0.62	Strongly Agree
Procedural Justice	4.02	0.69	Agree
Interpersonal Justice	4.06	0.68	Agree
Informational Justice	3.92	0.75	Agree
Overall	4.07	0.60	Agree

Table 3 indicates that criminology instructors generally perceive a positive level of organizational justice, with Distributive Justice scoring the highest mean of 4.29, interpreted as "Strongly Agree." Procedural Justice, Interpersonal Justice, and Informational Justice also show favorable perceptions with means ranging from 3.92 to 4.06, all interpreted as "Agree." The overall mean of 4.07 and standard deviation of 0.60 reflect a consistent and positive acknowledgment of fairness within the organization. This finding aligns with the research of Lambert et al. (2020), who emphasized that perceptions of distributive and procedural justice significantly contribute to employee satisfaction and organizational commitment. Additionally, Le & Nguyen (2023) noted that interpersonal and informational justice are critical in shaping trust and cooperation among employees, which ultimately enhances organizational effectiveness. These studies emphasize the importance of maintaining fairness across all dimensions of justice to foster a supportive and productive academic work environment.

3.4 Academic Job Satisfaction of Criminology Instructors

Table 4 illustrates the Academic Job Satisfaction of Criminology Instructors.

Table 4. *Level of Academic Job Satisfaction*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Authority	4.26	0.49	Strongly Agree
Supervision	4.19	0.56	Agree
Policies and Facilities	4.25	0.51	Strongly Agree
My Work Itself	4.21	0.54	Strongly Agree
Interpersonal Relationships	4.27	0.51	Strongly Agree
Commitment	4.29	0.62	Strongly Agree
Salary	3.96	0.77	Agree
Workload	4.33	0.48	Strongly Agree
Overall	4.22	0.46	Strongly Agree

Table 4 presents that criminology instructors generally express a high level of academic job satisfaction, with most indicators such as Authority (4.26), Policies and Facilities (4.25), Interpersonal Relationships (4.27), Commitment (4.29), and Workload (4.33) rated as "Strongly Agree." Supervision (4.19) and Salary (3.96) received slightly lower but still positive evaluations, both interpreted as "Agree." The overall mean of 4.22, with a low standard deviation of 0.46, indicates strong and consistent satisfaction among instructors regarding their job. These results are consistent with studies by Khoshnaw & Alavi (2020), who argued that job satisfaction is closely linked to factors like autonomy, work environment, and interpersonal relations. Similarly, Nyamugoro, Odiemo, and Wango (2023) found that positive perceptions of workload, supervision, and commitment contribute significantly to higher job satisfaction in academic settings. Additionally, research by Quader (2024) emphasizes the significance of policies and facilities in influencing employees' motivation and satisfaction, which further supports the findings presented in this study.

3.5 The extent of Influence of Predictor Variables on Academic Job Satisfaction

Table 5 illustrates the extent of Influence of Predictor Variables on Academic Job Satisfaction.

Table 5. *The extent of Influence of Predictor Variables on Academic Job Satisfaction*

	B	SE	B	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.302	0.097		3.106	0.00
Ethical Climate	0.239	0.03	0.23	7.91	0.00
Workplace Bullying	0.419	0.039	0.424	10.651	0.00
Organizational Justice	0.277	0.026	0.36	10.723	0.00

$r^2=0.831$
 Adj $r^2=0.83$
 F-value=650.832
 p-value=0.00

Table 5 presents the extent to which predictor variables influence academic job satisfaction among criminology instructors. All three predictors—Ethical Climate ($B = 0.239$, $p = 0.00$), Workplace Bullying ($B = 0.419$, $p = 0.00$), and Organizational Justice ($B = 0.277$, $p = 0.00$)—have a statistically significant positive effect on academic job satisfaction. Notably, Workplace Bullying has the most decisive influence ($B = 0.419$), followed by Organizational Justice ($B = 0.277$) and Ethical Climate ($B = 0.239$). The model explains a substantial 83.1% of the variance in academic job satisfaction ($r^2 = 0.831$, Adjusted $r^2 = 0.83$), with a highly significant overall fit ($F = 650.832$, $p < 0.001$). These results are consistent with previous studies, such as those by Liang & Yeh (2020), which found that workplace bullying negatively affects job satisfaction; however, addressing it effectively can improve satisfaction. Furthermore, Jang, Lee, and Kwon (2021) emphasize that organizational justice significantly enhances employee attitudes and satisfaction, while Pradesa et al (2023) highlight the positive role of ethical climate in fostering a supportive work environment. Together, these findings underscore the significant interplay among ethical climate, bullying, and justice in shaping job satisfaction in academic settings.

3.6 The Covariance Best Fit Model

Table 6 illustrates the Covariance Best Fit Model. Table 6 presents the covariance best-fit model, assessing the strength of the relationships between the predictor variables—Workplace Bullying (WB), Ethical Climate (EC), and Organizational Justice (OJ)—and academic job satisfaction. All three variables show statistically significant

relationships, as indicated by their high critical ratio (C.R.) values and p-values (***), which denote significance at $p < 0.001$. Workplace Bullying (Estimate = 0.464, C.R. = 11.498) shows the most decisive influence on academic job satisfaction, followed by Ethical Climate (Estimate = 0.243, C.R. = 7.017), and Organizational Justice (Estimate = 0.21, C.R. = 8.477). The findings suggest that managing workplace bullying and fostering a positive, ethical, and just environment are key to improving faculty satisfaction. These results are consistent with the structural model findings of Rahman & Karim (2022), which highlighted the mediating role of organizational justice in the relationship between work environment factors and job attitudes. Similarly, studies by Hayat & Afshari (2021) confirm that bullying has a powerful impact on work-related outcomes, while ethical work climates promote job engagement and satisfaction, as supported by the work of Jia et al (2022). This highlights the importance of addressing both interpersonal and systemic factors within academic institutions.

Table 6. *Covariance Best Fit Model*

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
WB	0.464	0.04	11.498	***
EC	0.243	0.035	7.017	***
OJ	0.21	0.025	8.477	***

4.0 Conclusion

The study highlights the significant influence of ethical climate, workplace bullying, and organizational justice on academic job satisfaction among criminology instructors in Northern Mindanao and the CARAGA Region. The findings suggest that a strong ethical climate contributes positively to faculty morale and should be consistently upheld through the promotion of integrity, fairness, and care in institutional practices. However, the persistent presence of workplace bullying—particularly personal forms—signals an urgent need for intervention. Educational institutions must adopt comprehensive anti-bullying policies, establish support systems, and foster a culture of mutual respect to protect faculty well-being and productivity. Furthermore, although perceptions of organizational justice are generally favorable, efforts must be directed toward improving transparency and communication, particularly in areas related to informational justice, to strengthen organizational trust and fairness.

From a policy perspective, these results offer valuable insights for the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and school leadership to formulate responsive policies that enhance faculty satisfaction and performance. Addressing concerns such as salary competitiveness, fair workload distribution, and quality of supervision can further reinforce job satisfaction and retention. In the field of education, the study highlights the importance of creating supportive and empowering work environments, which are crucial for maintaining high-quality instruction and academic excellence.

Theoretically, the study validates the applicability of Festinger's Cognitive Dissonance Theory, Weiss and Cropanzano's Affective Events Theory, and the Theory of Reasoned Action by Fishbein and Ajzen in the context of academic institutions, showing how organizational experiences shape faculty attitudes and behaviors. For future research, longitudinal and qualitative approaches are recommended to gain deeper insights into the evolving dynamics of faculty satisfaction. Additionally, comparative studies involving other regions or academic disciplines could expand the generalizability of the findings and help formulate broader, evidence-based strategies to improve working conditions in Philippine higher education. Overall, prioritizing a fair, ethical, and respectful academic environment is essential not only for the well-being of criminology instructors but also for the long-term success of educational institutions.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

Both authors contributed equally to this study. Their responsibilities encompassed writing, editing, data analysis, and questionnaire preparation. Both authors played a key role in refining the study framework. Author 1 initially drafted the manuscript, while Author 2 focused on revisions and editing. Together, they collaboratively finalized and approved the manuscript for publication.

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7.0 Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflicts of interest, financial or non-financial, that could have influenced the conduct or outcomes of this research.

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