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A Positive Social Impact of Socio-Civic Organization among Criminology Graduates: An Appreciative Inquiry

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ABSTRACT: Civic organizations play a pivotal role in fostering community engagement, social cohesion, and positive societal change. In this study, the researchers delved into the positive social impact of socio-civic organizations among Criminology graduates in Misamis Occidental, Philippines, utilizing an appreciative inquiry approach within a qualitative research design. The participants consisted of ten individuals actively serving in both private and public sectors, all members of recognized socio-civic organizations. Through in-depth interviews, four overarching themes emerged: discovering positive qualities, unveiling dreams, designing strategies for leveraging strengths, and contributing to personal and professional destinies. The research underscored that Criminology graduates possessed unique attributes encompassing diverse skills, knowledge, and perspectives, endowing them with the ability to make a meaningful difference in their communities. Notably, the study accentuated the mutual relationship between socio-civic organizations and Criminology graduates, showcasing the substantial opportunities for personal and professional growth that these organizations provided. Based on the study's insights, several recommendations were proposed to further amplify the positive impact of socio-civic organizations on Criminology graduates. This encompassed heightening awareness of the graduates' strengths, offering specialized training and skill development programs, facilitating effective communication and collaboration platforms, and advocating for policies conducive to their endeavors. Additionally, the study suggested implementing mentorship programs, comprehensive training, and leadership development initiatives, all intended to bolster the empowerment of Criminology graduates in catalyzing positive social change, advancing community development, and fostering a culture of societal transformation.

KEYWORDS: civic organizations, criminology graduates, social impact, strengths, strategies

INTRODUCTION

A socio-civic organization, also known as a socio-civic group or a civic organization, is a group or association of individuals who come together voluntarily (Aldea, 2021) to promote social, cultural, or civic interests and work toward the betterment of communities or society as a whole. These organizations are typically formed by individuals who share common goals or interests and engage in various activities to advance their mission (Nwangwu & Ezeibe, 2019).

Socio-civic organizations can take many different forms and can have diverse focuses, ranging from local communitybased organizations to national or international organizations (Awan, 2020). They can have a wide range of purposes, such as promoting social justice advocating for human rights (Buyse, 2018), advancing environmental conservation, providing social services (Egholm et al., 2020), supporting education, promoting health and wellness and fostering cultural or artistic activities (Awan, 2020), among others.

Socio-civic organizations often rely on voluntary participation and engagement from their members (Kusters et al, 2020), independent from the government, and they may engage in activities such as organizing events, conducting campaigns, advocating for policy changes, fundraising, providing services or programs, and promoting community engagement. Their activities lean toward citizen initiatives, a kind of self-organization in which individuals utilize their resources and efforts to develop and carry out projects targeted at meeting the needs of the community (Rosilawati et al, 2018)

Criminology graduates, with their knowledge of crime, criminal behavior, and the criminal justice system, may find value in participating in socio-civic organizations (Iqbal et al., 2018) that focus on crime prevention, criminal justice reform, advocacy for victims of crime, or other related issues (DeKeseredy, 2021). By applying their criminological knowledge and skills, criminology graduates may be able to contribute to the goals and activities of socio-civic organizations in meaningful ways (Awan, 2020).

However, it is important to note that the relationship between criminology graduates' participation in socio-civic organizations and their professional outcomes or impacts is complex and may not always be straightforward (Jacobsson & Korolczuk, 2020). The effectiveness and impacts of socio-civic organizations can vary depending on many factors, including the organization's mission, goals, strategies, and the broader social and political context in which they operate (Kusters et al.,2020).



Thus, comprehensive research would be needed to fully understand the relationship between criminology graduates and their participation in such organizations.

MATERIAL, METHODOLOGY, AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Material of the Study

A guide question was used for the interview to obtain information from the participants. The questions were translated into the local language to facilitate greater comprehension and intercommunication among all participants. The interview consisted of an introduction as well as a set of opening, core, and closing questions. Open-ended questions and narrative response formats were used to elicit more detailed narratives from the participants during the in-depth interview. A focus group discussion took place and the discussion guide was followed, encouraging participants to share their thoughts and ideas. The researcher took notes throughout the discussion and observed and recorded participant behavior in their journal. A voice recorder was used to enable the researcher to listen back to the focus group events. The discussion typically lasted for approximately 1 hour, depending on the flow of the conversation.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a qualitative research design, specifically appreciative inquiry (AI). Qualitative research design is an approach that aims to explore and understand the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to social or human problems (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Appreciative Inquiry is a problem-solving approach that emphasizes exploring and amplifying an organization's strengths and positive attributes to drive change and improvement (Morgan et al., 2022; Clarke, 2021; Davis, 2019). It is based on the understanding that the questions we ask shape the stories we tell and the actions we take. Therefore, Appreciative Inquiry seeks to ask questions that lead to positive stories and actions. It follows a 4-D cycle of Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny (Cooperrider &Srivastva, 2013). This approach can be applied to various organizational contexts, including strategic planning, team building, and leadership development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Discovering the Criminology graduates' positive qualities bring a wealth of positive contribution to socio-civic organizations (Renzaho, et.al., 2020), enabling them to make a significant social impact. One such quality is their in-depth understanding of criminal behavior (Anderson, 2019). Through their specialized education and training, criminology graduates possess knowledge about the underlying causes and dynamics of crime (Tietjen, 2019). This expertise allows them to develop targeted interventions and preventive measures that address the root causes of criminal behavior. By applying this understanding within socio-civic organizations, criminology graduates can contribute to the development of effective programs (Blaustein, et.al., 2018) that promote crime prevention, rehabilitation, and community safety.

Criminology graduates, driven by their desire for social justice, envision a society free from crime and injustice. They dream of creating safer communities, promoting rehabilitation rather than punishment (Moss,et.al., 2019), and addressing the underlying factors that contribute to criminal behavior (Thornberry, 2018). By joining socio-civic organizations, criminology graduates can actively work towards these dreams. Their knowledge and expertise in understanding criminal behavior, coupled with their commitment to social justice, enable them to advocate for policy reforms, develop community-based programs, and engage in outreach efforts that foster positive change.

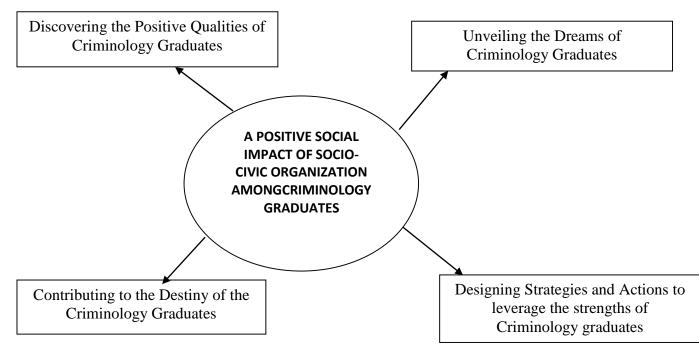
Unveiling the dreams of criminology graduates in the context of a positive social impact of socio-civic organizations offers an exciting opportunity to explore the aspirations and goals of these individuals. Criminology graduates often possess a deep passion for justice (Dealey, 2020), community well-being, and societal change (Matsukawa& Tatsuki,2018). Let's discuss how unveiling their dreams can contribute to a positive social impact through their involvement in socio-civic organizations.

Designing strategies and actions to leverage the strengths of criminology graduates within socio-civic organizations (Elisha & Ronel, 2023) is a vital step towards achieving a positive social impact. By conducting a thorough assessment of their skills and strengths, organizations can identify areas where criminology graduates excel, such as understanding criminal behavior, conflict resolution, and community engagement. This assessment allows for strategic alignment, ensuring that graduates are placed in roles that capitalize on their expertise ((Halibas, et.al., 2020). By maximizing their strengths, organizations can empower criminology graduates to make a significant difference in addressing social issues and promoting positive change.

Contributing to the destiny of criminology graduates in the context of a positive social impact through socio-civic organizations is an inspiring endeavor that can shape their professional trajectories. These graduates have dedicated their studies to understanding crime, criminal behavior, and the factors that contribute to social inequality (Lanier, et.al., 2018). By actively engaging with socio-civic organizations, criminology graduates can apply their knowledge and skills in practical ways, aligning their career paths with their passion for social justice and community well-being (Bachman, et.al., 2021). This alignment allows them to forge a fulfilling and purpose-driven professional journey that makes a tangible difference in society (DeKeseredy, 2021).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study revealed that graduates of criminology who are actively involved in socio-civic organizations have a beneficial societal influence on numerous levels. Participants, whose employment spanned 10 to 15 years, worked in a variety of fields, including law enforcement, academia, and private businesses. The graduates' participation helped them identify their own favorable traits (Trebilcock & Griffiths, 2022), including leadership abilities and empathy, which encouraged personal development and self-awareness. Their interaction revealed hopes and aspirations, creating a strong desire to confront societal issues and make significant contributions to their communities (Nixon, 2020). The participants' destiny was significantly shaped by socio-civic groups, which provided a sense of fulfillment and purpose in their jobs. Through the specific training and skill-development opportunities offered by these organizations, the graduates strategically exploited their talents, producing projects that were efficient and significant (Denhardt et al., 2018). Overall, the study shows the mutually beneficial link between socio-civic groups and criminology graduates, highlighting the significance of their active participation in fostering social change and community growth. The results highlight how critical it is to support graduates of criminology in their roles as proactive agents of positive society development by creating goals, maximizing strengths, and giving support (Mantri, 2021).



Discovering the Positive Qualities of Criminology Graduates

The concept of discovering the positive qualities of Criminology graduates provides valuable insights into their potential contributions within socio-civic organizations. This discussion is based on several studies that have identified key themes related to the positive qualities of Criminology graduates. Firstly, Criminology graduates exhibit strong leadership qualities and decision-making skills (Tutor et al., 2021), which are essential for the success of socio-civic initiatives. Secondly, their expertise in research, data analysis, and policy development (Nixon, 2020; McGee & Eriksson, 2020; Kraska et al., 2020) has a significant impact on the activities and outcomes of these organizations. They bring valuable insights and contribute to informed decision-making processes. Additionally, Criminology graduates possess important personal traits such as empathy, cultural sensitivity, and ethical decision-making (Cecchetto et al., 2018), enabling them to effectively address complex social issues. By recognizing and leveraging the strengths of Criminology graduates, socio-civic organizations can enhance their effectiveness in promoting positive change and improving communities (Buyse, 2018). This theme highlight the diverse skill set and attributes that Criminology graduates bring to these organizations.

Thus, the statements of some of the participants said that:

"As a Criminology graduate, I have been entrusted with leadership roles where I have effectively made critical decisions to ensure the safety and well-being of individuals and communities."

"The comprehensive education I received in Criminology equips me with strong research and data analysis skills."

"As a Criminology graduate, I have been extensively trained in risk assessment and management, allowing me to identify potential threats, analyze their implications, and develop proactive strategies to mitigate them effectively"

Leadership plays a pivotal role in guiding socio-civic organizations towards their goals and objectives (Tutor et al., 2021). A strong leader provides vision, direction, and motivation to the team, inspiring them to work collaboratively towards a common

purpose (Chiniara, &Bentein,2018). Within the context of socio-civic organizations, leaders must possess a deep understanding of the social issues at hand, as well as the ability to communicate and mobilize stakeholders effectively (Hall, 2020). They should also demonstrate qualities such as empathy, integrity, and inclusivity to build trust and inspire confidence in the organization's mission (Cecchetto et al., 2018). Effective leadership ensures that the organization remains focused, adaptable, and responsive to the needs of the community it serves. Moreover, Criminology graduates' familiarity with legal frameworks and ethical considerations enables them to make informed choices that align with the organization's mission while upholding principles of fairness and justice (Barnes, et.al., 2020).

The participants' responses also highlight the multifaceted skills and knowledge gained through a Criminology education (Lynch,2018), enabling them to make a positive social impact. They emphasized their strong research and data analysis skills acquired during his comprehensive education. These skills equip him to understand complex crime patterns, analyze data, and develop evidence-based strategies for prevention and intervention (Matsukawa& Tatsuki,2018). Additionally, their expertise in policy analysis and development according to them allows them to critically assess existing criminal justice policies, advocate for reforms that prioritize rehabilitation and fairness, and work towards a more equitable justice system.

Unveiling the Dreams of Criminology Graduates

Criminology graduates have a strong desire to nurture and assist upcoming leaders, providing them with opportunities to develop their leadership abilities and actively engage in addressing social issues (Todak etal., 2021). They recognize the potential of data and technology in enhancing the effectiveness of socio-civic organizations, working towards utilizing these resources to develop evidence-based plans and evaluate outcomes (Solymosi & Bowers, 2018). Moreover, graduates envision social enterprises and community-based initiatives working collaboratively to establish comprehensive strategies for social transformation (Varady, et.al., 2020). The focus on ongoing evaluation ensures that their efforts remain adaptable and effective in responding to evolving community needs. These aspirations reflect the commitment of criminology graduates to making a lasting and significant social impact, leveraging their unique perspectives and skill sets (Aresti & Darke, 2018). By embracing youth leadership, technology, community integration, and continuous evaluation, these graduates strive to create positive and sustainable change within socio-civic organizations and society.

Thus, the statements of some of the participants said that:

"Being a Criminology graduate equips me with the knowledge and skills necessary to take on leadership roles within the socio-civic organization. I can advocate for policy changes, lead initiatives, and engage in community mobilization efforts. This helps create a positive social impact and drive meaningful change within the organization and the broader community."

"By harnessing the power of data analytics and predictive modeling, we can identify crime hotspots, anticipate emerging trends, and tailor our interventions accordingly. Utilizing data-driven insights, we can prioritize resources, implement targeted prevention strategies, and optimize our impact on crime reduction and community safety."

"Data-driven approaches offer us unprecedented insights into complex social issues like crime. By collecting and analyzing data on crime patterns, social demographics, and community dynamics, we can identify systemic factors that contribute to criminal behavior. This knowledge enables us to design evidence-based interventions, allocate resources effectively, and engage in targeted prevention efforts."

As Criminology graduates, they possess the knowledge and skills necessary to assume leadership positions within socio-civic organizations (Todak etal., 2021). Their education equips them with a deep understanding of social issues, policy frameworks, and community dynamics, enabling them to advocate for policy changes, lead initiatives, and engage in community mobilization efforts. Harnessing the power of data analytics and predictive modeling allows for the identification of crime hotspots, anticipation of emerging trends, and tailored interventions. The utilization of data-driven insights facilitates the prioritization of resources, implementation of targeted prevention strategies, and optimization of impact on crime reduction and community safety. Data-driven approaches provide unprecedented insights into complex social issues like crime, enabling the collection and analysis of data on crime patterns, social demographics, and community dynamics. Through this process, systemic factors contributing to criminal behavior can be identified, leading to the design of evidence-based interventions and effective resource allocation.

Designing Strategies and Actions to leverage the strengths of Criminology graduates

There are three key aspects encompassed by the concept of developing action plans and strategies to leverage the strengths of criminology graduates and maximize their positive social impact within socio-civic organizations. Firstly, it is crucial to recognize and capitalize on the unique skills possessed by criminology graduates (Ruiz et al., 2020). Their expertise in areas such as criminal justice, research, analysis, and problem-solving can be harnessed to optimize their contributions and effectiveness within the organization. Secondly, aligning their activities with moral standards and the shared mission and values of both the graduates and the organizations is essential (Hamdani, 2018). By ensuring that their tactics are in harmony with these principles, the potential for substantial and enduring social effects is enhanced. This alignment promotes a cohesive and purpose-driven approach, maximizing the collective impact of criminology graduates and the organizations they serve. Lastly, the idea emphasizes the importance of developing solutions that are resource-effective, scalable, and adaptable to ensure long-term sustainability (Tietjen et al., 2021). By

considering factors such as changing circumstances and evolving needs, these approaches can effectively address social challenges and generate lasting change within the communities they serve.

The research emphasizes the proactive and transformational nature of Criminology graduates in socio-civic organizations through leveraging their talents for good social effect and ensuring the long-term sustainability of their projects. These graduates become significant change agents, encouraging community development and advancing society by capitalizing on their skills and creating plans for long-term effects.

Thus, the statements of some of the participants said that:

"Utilizing my knowledge of program design and evaluation, I can create program frameworks that align with the organization's mission and goals. This includes setting clear objectives, identifying measurable outcomes, and developing strategies for program implementation, resource allocation, and monitoring."

"With a strong foundation in research and analysis, I can contribute to the development of evidence-based strategies. By conducting research, gathering data, and evaluating existing programs and interventions, I can provide valuable insights to inform the design of initiatives that address social issues effectively."

"Our organization conducts thorough research and needs assessments to gain a comprehensive understanding of the community we serve. This helps us tailor our plan to address the specific needs, challenges, and aspirations of the people we aim to impact. By conducting research, collecting data, and engaging with the community, we can ensure that our plan reflects their voices and aligns with their values."

Leveraging the strengths of Criminology graduates is essential for achieving positive social impact(Kay,et.al., 2019). These individuals possess a unique skill set that can be utilized to address societal challenges effectively. By recognizing and utilizing their strengths, we can maximize their potential for creating meaningful change. One strength of Criminology graduates lies in their proficiency in criminal justice, research, analysis, and problem-solving. Their understanding of the intricacies of the criminal justice system equips them with the knowledge to identify root causes, analyze complex social issues, and develop evidence-based strategies. Their ability to conduct research and apply analytical thinking enables them to assess the impact of social initiatives, gather relevant data, and make informed decisions (Matsukawa& Tatsuki,2018).

Contributing to the Destiny of the Criminology Graduates

The study explored how the active participation of Criminology graduates in socio-civic organizations contributes to shaping their destinies. As these graduates engage in transformative initiatives and community development projects, they not only make meaningful contributions to their communities but also experience personal and professional growth. The research delves into the ways in which Criminology graduates actively contribute to shaping their destinies by driving positive social impact and making a difference in the lives of others.

Measuring the Success of Positive Social Impact Initiatives and Sustaining and Building Upon Positive Social Impact center the idea of helping determine the future of criminology graduates. The first topic underlines how critical it is to gauge the accomplishment and influence of activities graduates of criminology have done to improve society. Organizations can accurately analyze the results and implications of their projects by employing reliable evaluation methodologies and metrics. This measurement enables evidence-based decision-making, reveals potential improvement areas, and highlights effective techniques that can be applied to new projects. The second theme is concerned with preserving and expanding beneficial societal influence.

In order to assure the ongoing growth, development, and extension of successful projects, methods, and processes must be developed. Organizations can lay the groundwork for long-term sustainability and increase their positive impact by building on their successes and lessons learned(Nurius& Kemp, 2019).Securing the required resources, encouraging alliances and teamwork, and adjusting to changing social requirements are all part of this. Organizations may lay the groundwork for long-lasting, positive social change by investing in the future of criminology graduates.

Measuring the Success of Positive Social Impact Initiatives includes the idea of influencing the future of criminology graduates. This issue focuses on how important it is to assess and gauge the success of the initiatives taken by graduates of criminology. Organizations and individuals can learn a lot about their influence in the field of positive social change by measuring their success(Renzaho, 2020). Assessing several measures, such as the rise in a community's well-being, the decline in crime, or the empowerment of disadvantaged groups, is a key component in measuring success.

Sustaining and building upon positive social impact requires a multifaceted approach that encompasses various aspects of organizational strategy and engagement. One key aspect is the cultivation of strong relationships with stakeholders, including donors, supporters, partner organizations, and community members(Kaur, et.al.,2019). By nurturing these relationships and maintaining open lines of communication, organizations can foster a sense of trust, collaboration, and shared ownership in their social impact initiatives. This, in turn, enhances long-term support, secures resources, and creates opportunities for collective action and sustainable outcomes. Another crucial element is continuous learning and adaptation(Solymosi & Bowers, 2018). Organizations need to embrace a culture of reflection, evaluation, and improvement. By regularly assessing the effectiveness and impact of their initiatives, gathering feedback from beneficiaries and stakeholders, and leveraging data and evidence, organizations can make

informed adjustments to their strategies and interventions. This enables them to address emerging challenges, respond to evolving community needs, and maximize the long-term sustainability of their social impact efforts.

Thus, the statements of some of the participants said that:

"Before implementing our initiatives, we conduct baseline assessments to understand the existing conditions and challenges in the community. These assessments provide a benchmark against which we can measure the impact of our interventions."

"We document and share case studies and success stories that showcase the impact of our initiatives on individuals, families, or specific community groups. These stories provide tangible examples of how our programs have improved lives and inspire others to support our cause."

"We embrace a culture of continuous learning and adaptation, staying informed about emerging research, best practices, and innovative approaches in the field of criminology and social impact."

"Investing in the capacity building of our members and volunteers is key to long-term sustainability. We provide training, mentoring, and skill development opportunities to empower our team. By building their capabilities, we foster leadership, continuity, and resilience within our organization."

Ensuring long-term sustainability of social impact plans is a critical consideration for organizations committed to creating lasting positive change in society(Tietjen et al., 2021). To achieve this, organizations must adopt a comprehensive and strategic approach that encompasses key elements. First and foremost, building and nurturing relationships play a pivotal role in sustaining an organization's work(Calhoun, 2019). By cultivating a network of individuals who believe in the organization's mission and are willing to contribute financially, advocate for the cause, or provide other forms of support, organizations establish a dedicated support base that can provide the necessary resources to drive socio-civic initiatives. Collaborations and partnerships are also essential for long-term sustainability(Kay,et.al., 2019). By actively seeking collaborations with other organizations, stakeholders, and community members who share a similar vision for positive social impact, organizations can leverage collective resources, share knowledge, and tap into diverse expertise. Working together allows organizations can address complex social issues comprehensively and effectively, while also creating synergies, enhancing their capacity, and expanding their reach(Kaur, et.al., 2019).

CONCLUSION

There are remarkable strengths and qualities inherent in Criminology graduates that drive their active engagement with socio-civic organizations. Through their unique set of skills, knowledge, and perspectives, these graduates are equipped to create a meaningful and lasting impact within their communities. Their understanding of criminal justice systems, empathy for marginalized populations, critical thinking abilities, and commitment to social justice make them valuable contributors to socio-civic initiatives. By recognizing and harnessing these positive qualities, socio-civic organizations can leverage the expertise of Criminology graduates and empower them to effect positive change, ultimately fostering safer and more equitable communities. The study highlights the significance of acknowledging and fostering the future visions and aspirations of Criminology graduates involved in socio-civic organizations. By recognizing their motivations, goals, and desires to create positive social impact, it becomes essential to provide them with the necessary support and resources to turn their dreams into reality. This understanding emphasizes the need for strategic planning, mentorship programs, and opportunities for personal and professional growth that align with their aspirations. By embracing and empowering their dreams, socio-civic organizations can cultivate a motivated and dedicated cohort of Criminology graduates who are committed to driving sustainable change within their communities.

By implementing targeted strategies, such as offering specialized training programs and mentorship opportunities, these organizations can enhance the skills and knowledge of Criminology graduates, enabling them to contribute effectively to positive social impact.

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