IGNATIAN
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH
www.icceph.com
ISSN 2984-9942

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF STUDENT RETENTION POLICY IN THE B.S CRIMINOLOGY PROGRAM: BASIS FOR POLICY ENHANCEMENT

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ABSTRACT

This study, completed in 2026, examined the challenges encountered in implementing the student retention policy in the Bachelor of Science in Criminology program at Saint Ferdinand College–Cabagan Campus as a basis for policy enhancement. Using a descriptive quantitative design, data were collected through a questionnaire from 220 second- and third-year criminology students, six faculty members, and four administrators during Academic Year 2025–2026. Frequency and percentage distributions, weighted means, analysis of variance, and Pearson's correlation coefficient were employed. Findings revealed that students sometimes experienced emotional, academic, social, and long-term challenges, with an overall mean of 3.31. Long-term challenges obtained the highest mean of 3.34, followed by emotional and social challenges at 3.30 each, and academic challenges at 3.29. Stress and anxiety, reduced motivational and family support, repeated coursework, perceived inequitable treatment, and delayed graduation emerged as prominent concerns. Administrators and faculty sometimes encountered finance, educational quality, and implementation-related issues, while concerns regarding enrollment and institutional reputation were less frequent. A significant relationship was found between students' academic performance and emotional challenges, whereas academic, social, and long-term challenges showed no significant relationships with performance. A significant difference was also identified between administrators' and faculty members' perceptions of policy implementation. The study concludes that although the retention policy supports academic standards, its implementation creates emotional, financial, instructional, and progression concerns. Policy enhancement should emphasize transparent communication, reasonable examination fees, shared administrative and faculty oversight, academic remediation, counseling, peer mentoring,

https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23662051

stress-management services, and periodic evaluation to promote rigor, fairness, student well-being, and institutional sustainability.

Keywords: *Academic Performance, B.S. Criminology, Policy Enhancement, Student Challenges, Student Retention Policy*

INTRODUCTION

Quality education plays a crucial aspect in higher education institutions, it is the foundation of academic success to produce competent graduates . It generally enhances intellect, skills and competence in the chosen endeavor, and defines success in various ways. To others however, it may not be that easy as issues and challenges in college life are expected. Some students struggle with internal issues as well as external challenges which somehow affect academic success. There are several tools used by the HEI in providing quality and competent graduates and one of these is the Retention policy.

Student retention policy refers to the set of institutional criteria and procedures governing students' academic progression, probation, remediation, readmission, program transfer, and dismissal. Higher education institutions commonly establish these requirements to monitor student performance and maintain the academic standards of their programs, particularly those leading to professional licensure examinations. Retention policies may assess whether students have acquired the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary to advance to the next curriculum level or whether they require academic intervention, remediation, or redirection to another academic program(Ablian et al., 2023; Barbera et al., 2020).

Given the professional nature of criminology and its direct relevance to national security, public safety, peace and order, and the administration of justice, examining the challenges encountered in implementing student retention policies is essential. Higher education institutions offering criminology programs are expected to develop competent, ethical, and professionally prepared graduates. Understanding implementation-related concerns may provide administrators, faculty members, and policymakers with evidence for improving existing guidelines and balancing academic rigor with appropriate student support interventions(Commission on Higher Education [CHED], 2018; Republic Act No. 11131, 2018).

In the Bachelor of Science in Criminology program, retention policies may play an important role in ensuring that students progressively acquire the competencies expected of criminology graduates and are adequately prepared for the Licensure Examination for Criminologists administered by the Professional Regulation Commission. Criminology education and professional practice in the Philippines are governed by Republic Act No. 11131, otherwise known as the *Philippine Criminology Profession Act of 2018*. The law seeks to standardize and regulate criminology education and develop competent, virtuous, productive, and well-rounded criminologists capable of responding to the

https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23662051

demands of law enforcement, public safety, peace and order, and national development(CHED, 2018; Republic Act No. 11131, 2018).

To respond to the evolving demands of higher education and professional preparation, higher education institutions may establish institutional or program-specific retention requirements to determine students' eligibility to advance to higher curriculum levels. These requirements are commonly based on academic performance, such as grades, the number or percentage of failed subjects, and demonstrated achievement of prescribed learning outcomes. Depending on the institution and program, students who fail to meet the requirements may be placed under academic warning or probation, required to complete remediation, advised to transfer to another program, or dismissed from the program. Nevertheless, retention criteria must be clearly communicated, consistently implemented, and aligned with the minimum program standards and expected learning outcomes prescribed by CHED(CHED, 2018; Tarlac State University, n.d.).

On the other hand, strict retention policies may create institutional and student-related challenges. For students, academic disqualification may be associated with failed subjects, work-study difficulties, personal circumstances, and problems complying with academic or administrative requirements. For private higher education institutions, declining enrollment and student attrition may also have financial implications because tuition and other student-related revenues contribute to institutional operations. Although retention policies can help uphold academic standards and potentially improve graduates' preparedness for licensure examinations, their implementation may present substantial challenges for smaller or developing institutions. Consequently, these policies should be supported by clear procedures, academic advising, remediation programs, counseling, and other appropriate interventions that promote both educational quality and student success(Ablian et al., 2023; Bayudan-Dacuycuy et al., 2024).

Saint Ferdinand College Cabagan Campus, a private catholic educational institution is devoted to providing higher learning to its students. To maintain academic standards, specifically in the Criminology Department, a Student Retention Policy was first established and implemented during the Academic Year 2023-2024 focusing on the major board subject as a way of measuring the students' understanding of certain core competencies. Although this retention policy seeks to improve student learning and is meant to prepare students academically, there is a need to determine the challenges that confront the students in its implementation.

The researcher, an educator, observes that there are a number of students who do not re-enroll in the program or transfer to another program. Some of them share their fear of the student retention policy in their program This scenario captured the researcher's attention by determining the challenges that might affect the implementation of student retention policy and to discover the possible challenges encountered in the implementation, the reason of failure, student motivation, student engagement, student preparedness, and student well-being including the challenges perceived by the faculty and the administrators in implementing the policy. And recommend solutions or other possibilities in enhancing academic performance of the learners.

https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23662051

Research Questions

This study generally aimed to identify and determine the specific problems encountered in the implementation of student retention policy at Saint Ferdinand College - Cabagan Campus. Specifically, it answered the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of:
1.1 Age
1.2 Sex
1.3 Year Level
1.4 Board Course Performance
2. What are the issues encountered in the implementation of student retention policy as perceived by the Administration and Faculty in terms of;
2.1 Enrollment
2.2 Finance
2.3 School Reputation/ Image.
2.4 Quality of Education
2.5 Faculty and Administration
3. What are the challenges affecting the implementation of student retention policy in terms of the following;
3.1 Emotional Challenges
3.2 Academic Challenges
3.3 Social Challenges
3.4 Long term Challenges
4. Is there a significant relationship between the performance of the student respondents and challenges in the implementation of student retention policy?
5. Is there a significant difference in the issues encountered in the implementation of student retention policy as perceived by the administrators and faculty?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive research design to comprehensively investigate the issues and challenges in the implementation of student retention policy of Saint Ferdinand College- Cabagan Campus.

According to Bryman (2016), quantitative research involves quantifying things and asks questions such as "how long," "how many," and "the degree to which." Quantitative research aims to quantify the data and generalize findings from a sample of a study from varied perspectives and relies on data collection and data analysis

This approach involves a quantitative data collection and analysis technique to provide a holistic understanding of the issues and challenges in the implementation of student retention policy. In this study, a structured questionnaire was used to gather data

https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23662051

on issues in terms of enrollment, finance, school reputation/image, quality of education, faculty/administrations and also on the challenges in terms of emotional, academic, social and long term. These discussions focused on the impact and possible remedy on the issues and challenges in the implementation of student retention policy.

The quantitative findings are integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of the specific issues and challenges in the implementation of students' retention policy at SFC Cabagan specifically in the criminology department.

Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at Saint Ferdinand College Cabagan Campus, Centro, Cabagan, Isabela. Saint Ferdinand College Cabagan Campus started its formal operation with the opening of a 4-year course in B.S Criminology in 2000.

The locale of the study has been chosen by the researcher as it is directly related and connected to her profession as a Criminology instructor leading to easy and reliable access to the respondents and records used in this study. And as faculty of the Criminology department, the researcher observes that there are difficulties faced by the students in overcoming the retention policy.

Selection and Description of Respondents

In the selection of the respondents, a careful and systematic approach was employed to ensure the inclusion of individuals who possessed the relevant knowledge, experiences, and perspectives necessary for the study. The four (4) administrators of SFC with the six (6) Criminology faculty at SFC cabagan campus are the respondents. The study used a total population method, where a total of 220 students, composed of 102 second year and 118 third year criminology at Saint Ferdinand College – Cabagan Campus, for AY 2025-2026, served as respondents. The table below shows the distribution of respondents.

Table 1
Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
2nd year level	102	44.35
3rd year level	118	51.30
Faculty	6	2.61
Administrators	4	1.74
TOTAL	230	100

https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23662051

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher formally communicated to the Administration of Saint Ferdinand College for permission to conduct the study.

After approval and refinement of the questionnaire, the researcher personally distributed the questionnaire to the respondents. Ethical considerations were strictly considered. Informed consent was obtained from the participants, ensuring their voluntary participation and protection of their rights. Measures were also taken to maintain confidentiality and anonymity. Once the questionnaires were completed and collected, a post-test was conducted. This involved a thorough review and analysis of the responses to ensure consistency and accuracy.

After the collection and verification of the administered questionnaire, the needed data were statistically tabulated and analyzed.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The following statistical tools were used in analyzing the data gathered.

Frequency and percentage distribution. This was utilized to determine the profile of the respondents.

Weighted mean. This was used to determine the issues and challenges in the strict implementation of student retention policy.

ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) is a statistical test used to determine if there are significant differences between the means of three or more independent group according to the student respondent encountered as to the emotional. academic, social and long term challenges.

ANOVA F-Test. This was employed to determine the significant differences in the perception of the faculty and administrations on the issues involved in the implementation of student retention policy.

Pearson's Coefficient of Correlation r-test. This was used to determine if there is a significant relationship between the board course performance of the student respondent and their perception in the implementation of the student retention policy.

https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23662051

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

1.1 Age

Table 1.1
Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents in Terms of Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-20	171	77.7
21-22	44	20.0
23-25	5	2.3
Total	220	100.0

Table 1.1 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents according to their Age. The table shows that the age bracket 18-20 has a frequency of 171 or 77.7 percent; followed by age bracket of 21-22 with a frequency of 44 or 20.0 percent, while the age bracket of 23-25 has a frequency of 5 or 2.3 percent when combined has an overall mean of 220 or 100%.

This implies that the majority of B.S. Criminology students are aged 18–20.Young age is primarily influence by the retention challenges because students at the early age adjust more to college life and highly encounter challenges passing the retention policy. These challenges must be identify to help them succeed by giving targeted support, such as mentoring, academic guidance, and counseling (Mwale et al.,2024).

1.2 Sex

Table 1.2
Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents in Terms of Sex

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	50	22.73
Male	170	77.27
Total	220	100.0

Table 1.2 displays the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents according to their sex. The data showed that the majority of the respondents are male, with a frequency of 170 or 77.27 percent, while female had a frequency of 50 or 22.73 percent out of 220. This reflects the traditionally male-dominated nature of criminology and law enforcement-related fields, where men often comprise a larger portion of the student population. However, the presence of female students highlights the increasing participation of women in the discipline, signifying a shift toward greater gender diversity in the field. Understanding this distribution is crucial, as differences in academic performance, learning strategies, and adaptability to retention policy may vary based on

https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23662051

gender-related factors, which could influence them to pass the retention policy. Therefore, gender-sensitive interventions, such as mentoring, counseling and engagement programs help students to improve academic outcomes by addressing these distinct needs and integrate gender-responsive strategies into retention policies which foster more inclusive learning environment to enhance the likelihood of student success (Chapin and Warne, 2020).

1.3 Year Level

Table 1.3
Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents in Terms of Year Level

Year Level	Frequency	Percentage
2nd Year	102	46.4
3rd Year	118	53.6
Total	220	100.0

Table 1.3 displayed the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents in terms of year level, where 102 or 46.4 percent are second year students, while third year level composed of 118 or 53.6 percent out of 220 students or 100%. This indicates that there are higher numbers of incoming third year students who perceive more challenges in the implementation of retention policy because they already try and experience the retention policy compare to the incoming second year.

This supports the study conducted by Maliyao and Amangao (2020) which indicates that early-year students are most at risk of attrition due to adjustment difficulties, academic preparedness, and engagement levels, highlighting the importance of targeted support programs such as mentoring, academic counseling, and structured orientation initiatives. Implementing such interventions can help ensure smoother transitions and improve overall retention across all year levels while Bihag & Allanic (2025) found that a higher proportion of third-year students indicates that the student retention policy in the B.S. Criminology program is generally effective in supporting student progression and promotion. However, it also suggests that retention challenges may be more evident in the lower year levels.

1.4 Board Course Performance

Table 1.4.1
Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Incoming Second Year Respondents in Terms of Board Course Performance

Board Course Performance	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
75 below	1	0.9
75- 79	19	18.6
80-84	48	47.2
85-87	27	26.6

https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23662051

88-90	4	3.9
91-93	2	1.9
94-96	0	0
97-100	1	0.9
Total	102	100

Table 1.4.1 shows the board course performance of the 102 second year students. The board course performance was based on the retention policy consisting of a 100% combination of 50 percent rate coming from the written exam and 50 percent coming from the GWA in the board subject where both 1 respondent got 75 below and 97-100 board course performance. There are 19 students who got 75-79 and 48 students who got 80-84 while 4 students had 88-90. 2 students got 91-93 and none of the students got 94-96 as shown in the table.

Summarily, there are a total of 20 students who scored 79 or below and these students are required to submit an affidavit of undertaking and should refrain from having a grade of 75 below in all board subjects and hit the specific rate/grade point average of 80 as written in the retention policy. Using formal conditional contracts like an affidavit of undertaking serves as an effective "early warning" mechanism, prompting low-performing students to rectify their study habits before reaching high-stakes, board-intensive third- and fourth-year courses which triggers the institutional requirement to sign an affidavit of undertaking if failed to meet the required specific rate and grade point average, additionally to refrain from delaying an additional year in college. The impact of retention policy is believe to be high because there are 82 students who passed the required specific rate/grade point average of 80 and this aligns with the findings which demonstrated that clearly defined grade requirements and probational policies significantly enhance student mastery of professional subject matter and psychological readiness (Katzman, et al., 2026).

Table 1.4.2
Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Incoming Third Year Respondents in Terms of Board Course Performance

Board Course Performance	Frequency	Percentage
75 Below	0	0
75-79	11	9.32
80-84	72	61.02
85-87	19	16.10
88-90	11	9.32
91-93	5	4.24

https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23662051

94-96	0	0
97-100	0	0
Total	118	100

Table 1.4.2 shows the Board Course Performance of the 118 third year students. The Board Course Performance is a 100 percent combination of a 50 percent GWA and 50 percent rate in the retention exam both covering the major subject area. None of the students perform at 94-100 and 75 below while there were 11 students who got 75-79 below. Out of 72 students, there are 14 students who perform below the required specific rate/grade point average which is 82 below. Overall there are 25 students who failed to meet the required specific rate/grade point average of above 83 mandated by the retention policy. The policy requires the 25 students to submit an affidavit of undertaking to refrain from getting a failing grade. These students execute an affidavit of undertaking to refrain for an additional year in college. This indicates that there are really challenges on the part of the student in the implementation of student retention policy and this aligns with the study Doyaoen (2024) who used a quantitative archival method, analyzed enrollment data and academic records to identify retention trends and conducted interviews with advisers, instructors, and classmates to validate the reasons for the delay and attrition, it is revealed that academic difficulties, such as failing grades and incomplete grades, are major contributors to student attrition. This underscores the necessity of comprehensive support systems and tailored interventions to effectively support all students. By implementing policies that address financial, academic, and personal challenges, institutions can create a more supportive environment conducive to student success.

The table shows that there are a total of 93 respondents who performed 83 above in their course board performance. This indicates that there are a higher number of respondents who performed above the minimum required retention policy grade not lower than 83% for incoming third year as written in the retention policy.

The results imply that most students are performing at an average level of 83 above indicating stable but moderate academic achievement. However, the relatively small number of low performing students suggests a need for enrichment programs to promote excellence, and may benefit from targeted academic support. Overall, the data highlight the importance of strengthening instructional strategies and support systems to improve overall academic performance (Bihag and Allanic, 2025). According to the research conducted by Kuh et al., (2029) showing that students clustered around average performance benefit significantly from structured academic interventions and support programs, which improve engagement, learning outcomes, and retention. Strengthening instructional strategies and student support systems is therefore essential for enhancing overall academic performance and promoting success across all student groups.

https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23662051

2. Issues encountered in the implementation of student retention policy as perceived by the administration and faculty in terms of:

2.1 Enrollment

Table 2.1
Mean Distribution and Description of Responses of Respondents on the Issues Perceived in the Implementation of Retention Policy in Terms of Enrollment

INDICATOR	ADMINISTRATORS		FACULTY	
	Mean	Description	Mean	Description
1. Retention policy may adversely affect enrollment figures in the program.	3.50	Often	4.00	Often
2. The retention policy may create second thoughts about whether incoming enrollees will enroll in the course	3.50	Often	3.75	Often
3. Retention policy may discourage senior students from finishing their course in the institution	2.00	Rarely	2.63	Sometimes
4. Retention policy may cause a delay in finishing the degree	3.50	Often	3.63	Often
5. Retention policy may cause stress for students	3.33	Sometimes	3.67	Often
6. Retention policy may cause a great impact on enrollment stability	3.67	Often	3.71	Often
7. In some cases, the retention policy may cause the closure of some courses offered	2.17	Rarely	2.46	Rarely
8. Retention policy may cause inconsistencies, leading to confusion and frustration among students.	2.33	Rarely	2.67	Sometimes
9. The policy negatively impacts students' morale and motivation.	2.67	Sometimes	3.21	Sometimes
10. The policy may lead to long waitlists for students who enroll in the program.	2.17	Rarely	2.58	Rarely
11. Retention policy limits the program, making it difficult for students to complete the degree requirements.	2.50	Rarely	3.13	Sometimes
12. The policy makes it difficult for students to plan their academic schedule and lighten their course load.	2.00	Rarely	2.50	Rarely
13. The policy is treating students inequitably, with some students	1.50	Never	1.63	Never

https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23662051

receiving more favorable treatment than others.				
14. Scholarship grant decreases due to the result of retention policy.	2.50	Rarely	2.75	Sometimes
15. Students feel they are not receiving adequate support to meet the retention policy's requirements.	2.17	Rarely	2.08	Rarely
16. The policy increases competition among students for a limited number of spots.	2.17	Rarely	1.83	Rarely
17. The retention policy is too rigid and does not account for individual differences.	1.33	Never	1.42	Never
18. Retention policy is time-consuming.	2.33	Rarely	2.29	Rarely
Overall Mean	**2.52**	**Rarely**	**2.77**	**Sometimes**

Table 2.1 displays the mean distribution and description of responses on the issues encountered in the implementation of retention policy in terms of enrollment. It shows that administrators and faculty have diversified responses to problems encountered in the implementation of retention policy in terms of enrollment.

The administrators give a rating of 2.52 or "**Rarely**", while the faculty rate 2.77 or "**Sometimes**". This implies that the faculty or teaching staff generally feel the burden of enrollment in several aspects, while the administrators get a lesser weight or burden on the said aspect. However, both groups of respondents give a description of "**Often**" on items no. 1 "*Retention policy may adversely affect enrollment figures in the program*", no. 2 "*The retention policy may create second thoughts about whether incoming enrollees will enroll in the course*", no. 4 "*Retention policy may cause a delay in finishing the degree*", and no. 6 "*Retention policy may cause a great impact on enrollment stability*". As expected, retention policy adversely affects enrollment figures as those who fails to maintain the criteria may not be allowed to continue their studies in the same institution; incoming freshmen may be adamant to take the course in the institution; retention policy delays the period of achieving a degree; and all these in the end causes stability of enrollment. In the interview conducted among respondents, their responses revealed that according to respondent 1, *"When retention policies cause second thoughts or delay graduation, the students don't go to the top administrators—they come to us, the faculty. We spend hours doing uncompensated academic counseling, mapping out remedial tracks, and handling the frustration of delayed students. This heavy advising load is why we feel the weight of the policy much more frequently."* while respondent 2 says *"Enrollment instability directly threatens our teaching loads. If a retention policy causes a sudden drop in students, those specialized classes get dissolved. Faculty members are then forced to scramble for replacement loads, teach subjects outside their expertise, or face a reduction in their contract hours. Administrators don't face that personal job instability. "*

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Further, the faculty perception that retention policies contribute to student stress is supported by the studies of Oding et al. (2021), showing that academic retention requirements often generate anxiety and pressure among students, particularly those who struggle to meet performance standards. Faculty members' closer interaction with students may explain why this concern was more frequently expressed by the teaching group than by administrators.

However, the finding that both group of respondents considers item no. 13 "*The policy is treating students inequitably, with some students receiving more favorable treatment than others*" as "**Never**" contrasts with earlier studies of Jimerson, suggesting that standardized retention criteria may disadvantage certain learners and fail to accommodate individual differences. More recent literature, however, suggests that when retention policies are paired with academic support mechanisms, they are more likely to be perceived as fair and appropriate, which may explain the respondents' generally positive view of policy equity in this study.

2.2 Finance

Table 2.2
Mean Distribution and Description of Responses of Respondents on the Issues Perceived in the Implementation of Retention Policy in Terms of Finance

INDICATOR	ADMINISTRATORS		FACULTY	
	Mean	Description	Mean	Description
1 Retention policy may lead to lesser enrollment.	3.67	Often	3.83	Often
2 Retention policy may adversely affect needed support facilities, which tend to sacrifice quality education	3.50	Often	2.88	Sometimes
3 Retention policy may lessen the maintenance of educational facilities, such as classrooms	2.17	Rarely	2.21	Rarely
4 Retention policy may cause a reduction in the budget	2.17	Rarely	2.33	Rarely
5 Retention policy may cause financial drain	2.50	Rarely	2.13	Rarely
6 Retention policy may weaken long-term financial viability	2.17	Rarely	2.08	Rarely
7 Retention policy will increase student expenses due to the retention exam fee.	3.67	Often	3.58	Often
8 Retention policy may inadvertently contribute to higher dropout rates, especially among marginalized groups who may lack adequate support systems	2.50	Rarely	3.00	Sometimes

https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23662051

9 Students incur additional financial burden due to retention policy requirements.	3.50	Often	3.38	Sometimes
10 Students affected by the retention policy risk losing financial aid or scholarships.	3.00	Sometimes	3.00	Sometimes
11 The financial implications of the policy lack transparency, leading to confusion and frustration among students.	2.83	Sometimes	2.79	Sometimes
12 Financial stress caused by the policy negatively impacts students' mental health and well-being.	3.17	Sometimes	3.21	Sometimes
13 The institution may experience a reduction of budget from the scholarship of students.	2.00	Rarely	2.00	Rarely
14 Inviting new students is costly, and institutions may struggle to recoup these costs if students do not persist.	2.67	Sometimes	2.96	Sometimes
15 The institution loses revenue when students drop out or fail to re-enroll.	2.83	Sometimes	2.92	Sometimes
16 The school's financial stability does not improve in the long run due to the implementation of retention policy.	1.33	Never	1.67	Never
Overall Mean	**2.73**	**Sometimes**	**2.75**	**Sometimes**

Table 2.2 shows the mean distribution and description of responses of respondents on the issues encountered in the implementation of retention policy in terms of finance. The administrators and faculty give mean ratings of 2.73, and 2.75, respectively, with both description of "**Sometimes**". Both groups of respondents give a description of "**Sometimes**" on items no. 10 ''*Students affected by the retention policy risk losing the financial aid or scholarships"*, *no. 11 ''The financial implications of the policy lacks transparency, leading to confusion and frustration among students".* no.12 ''*Financial stress caused by the policy negatively impacts students' mental health and well-being."* no. 14 ''*Inviting new students is costly, and institutions may struggle to recoup these costs if students do not persist"* no. 15 ''*The institution loses revenue when students drop out or fail to re-enroll"*

In the interview conducted among respondents, one of the responses revealed asking about their observation of financial stress from the policy which negatively impacts students' mental health, (item No.12),what common complaints or signs of stress do they notice from students in their classrooms.

https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23662051

In the interview conducted among respondents, their responses revealed on asking about the data in (item 11) that both administrators and faculty agree that the financial rules of the policy are "Sometimes" lack of transparency, causing confusion and frustration among students, what specific parts of the policy cause the most confusion, and how does this lack of clarity affect the students, respondent 3 answered, *"I see high levels of anxiety and absenteeism. Students frequently open up to me about panic attacks and sleepless nights because they are terrified that failing a single retention exam means losing their education due to financial costs."* and Respondent 1 observed that *"The confusion usually happens because the breakdown of retention exam fees is not clearly explained during enrollment. Students often do not realize that failing to meet the retention criteria means a sudden change in their fee structure such securing affidavit of undertaking. Because the communication channels fail to highlight these financial consequences early on, it is possibly leads to a lot of frustration."* while Respondent 2 says, *"Students constantly approach us asking why they are being charged retention fees. The policy guidelines are written in legal or academic language that students may find hard to understand. This lack of transparency makes them feel confused though we try explain them it is the materials and payment for the proctor where their money is being used but the policy does not clearly breakdown exactly. And i think what students want to clearly see is the breakdown of said fee especially they are comparing the exam fee for incoming second year for 150 in 100 item exam while the incoming third year is also 150pesos for almost 200 item. It create additional confusion."* on asking about lack of transparency under item no. 11

The findings implies that generally, both administrators and faculty are sometimes confronted with problems in the implementation of retention policy in terms of finance. It is interesting to note that both groups believe that retention policy would not only often lead to lesser enrolment but also increase student expenses due to the retention exam fee. Meanwhile, the administrators expressed that retention policy not only adversely affects needed support facilities that tend to sacrifice quality education but also believe that students would incur additional financial expenses, a burden especially to their parents.

The finding was aligned with study of Seery et al. (2021) which states that to improve retention, the institution needs to focus on faculty-student interactions and providing additional student support services. On the other hand, Oding et al. (2021), states that retention policy is often viewed as a source of stress for students because of the compliance requirements set by the university. Some students argue that this policy discriminates against those who learn at a slower pace. However, despite these challenges, students are encouraged to prepare and confront the demands of the retention policy because universities strive to effectively meet student need. Retention exams and academic performance indicates a complex relationship influenced by various factors. Barbera et al. (2020) noted that a student's profile, characteristics, academic readiness and financial challenges are key predictors of retention and graduation in undergraduate programs.

https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23662051

2.3 School Reputation/Image

Table 2.3
Mean Distribution and Description of Responses of Respondents on the Issues Perceived in the Implementation of Retention Policy in Terms of School Reputation/Image

INDICATOR	ADMINISTRATORS		FACULTY	
	Mean	Description	Mean	Description
1 Retention policy may create a negative impression on the image of the institution	1.83	Rarely	2.04	Rarely
2 Retention policy may cause loss of trust and credibility among stakeholders	1.67	Never	1.71	Never
3 Retention policy may downgrade the reputation of the institution	1.50	Never	1.75	Never
4 Retention policy yields a negative impact on the students, parents and other factor	1.83	Rarely	2.17	Rarely
5 Retention policy affects the mission and vision of the institution of inclusivity.	1.67	Never	1.46	Never
6 Retention policy may discriminate against those who learn at a slower pace	2.00	Rarely	2.00	Rarely
7 Retention policy creates a negative perception of the school's academic standards.	1.67	Never	1.46	Never
8 The policy focuses on grades, which defines success too narrowly, neglecting other important aspects of education.	2.33	Rarely	2.54	Rarely
9 The policy can lead to a stressful or competitive environment if not balanced with emotional and academic support	2.17	Rarely	2.46	Rarely
10 Strict requirements may undermine students' autonomy and motivation to learn.	1.67	Never	1.71	Never
11 Alumni may feel dissatisfied with their academic experiences and be less likely to recommend the school to others	1.67	Never	1.83	Rarely
12 The school gains a reputation for being overstrict or unforgiving, which may deter other students.	1.17	Never	1.58	Never

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13 The policy may create challenges for the school's recruitment efforts, as potential students may be deterred by the policy's requirements.	2.33	Rarely	2.79	Sometimes
14 The policy may impact the school's ability to secure funding or donations, as supporters may be deterred by the policy's perceived harshness.	2.17	Rarely	1.96	Rarely
15 The policy may conflict with the school's values and mission, damaging its institutional identity.	1.83	Rarely	1.79	Never
16 Retention policy exposes students to embarrassing situations	2.00	Rarely	2.50	Rarely
17 The policy may create a perception that the school is not supportive of students' academic success or well-being.	1.83	Rarely	1.67	Never
18 The policy may negatively impact the school's reputation, and it may have long-term consequences affecting the school's ability to attract students, faculty, and resources.	3.00	Sometimes	2.63	Sometimes
19 Retention policy needs to be revised to take into account the importance of its impact on the school's reputation/image.	3.33	Sometimes	3.04	Sometimes
Overall Mean	**1.98**	**Rarely**	**2.06**	**Rarely**

Table 2.3 presents the mean distribution and description of responses of respondents on the issues encountered in the implementation of retention policy in terms of school reputation/image. This item rate by the administrators and the faculty, with a mean average of 1.98 and 2.06, respectively, or both with a description of "**Rarely**". Both groups of respondents give a description of "**Sometimes**" on items no. 18 *''The policy may negatively impact the school's reputation, and it may have long-term consequences affecting the school's ability to attract students, faculty, and resources."* and no. 19 *''Retention policy needs to be revised to take into account the importance of its impact on the school's reputation/image"*

The results show both groups admitted that the retention policy may sometimes negatively impact the school's reputation which may have long-term consequences like affecting the school's ability to attract students, faculty and resources. Moreover, they also expressed the belief that the retention policy needs to be revised to take into account the importance of its impact on the school's reputation or image.

In addition, the faculty express concern regarding the effect of retention policy in terms of creating challenges for the school's recruitment efforts, as potential students may

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be deterred by the policy's requirements. In the interview conducted among respondents, their responses revealed on asking about Item 18, although the overall data shows reputation issues are "Rarely" an immediate problem, it is noted that the policy *sometimes* carries long-term consequences for attracting students, faculty, and resources. What specific long-term risks worry you the most regarding the school's competitive edge? Respondent 3 answered *"In the short term, our stakeholders trust our standards. However, if our retention rates remain low over several years, the community might start viewing our institution as a place where it is impossible to graduate. This long-term branding risk could deter top-tier student applicants, discourage highly qualified faculty from joining a high-stress environment, and make corporate partners hesitant"*

In the interview conducted and ask about (Item 8 & 16) the policy *rarely* to *sometimes* focuses too narrowly on grades and can expose students to embarrassing situations, how do these pressures affect classroom morale and student motivation during exam weeks?, the respondent 1 says, *"The pressure is visibly toxic during exam weeks. Because success is defined so narrowly by a single grade cut-off, students stop focusing on actual learning and instead focus entirely on survival. When exam results are released, it creates an embarrassing environment for those who did not make the cut, severely damaging their self-esteem and creating an overly competitive, anxious classroom atmosphere."*

The findings that retention policies may negatively affect the school's reputation and recruitment efforts are supported by previous research. Studies by Sheikoleslami et al. (2025) that retention requirements can influence external perceptions of an institution, potentially deter prospective students and affect faculty recruitment, funding, and overall institutional image. This aligns with faculty concerns that retention policies may create barriers to enrollment and necessitate revisions to protect the school's reputation. However, research by Toyohama et. al (2025) suggests that well-designed and transparent retention policies can enhance an institution's image by demonstrating a commitment to academic standards and student success, indicating that reputational impact depends on policy implementation and communication.

The retention of students, particularly international students, is a critical concern for higher education institutions due to impact on enrollment stability, budgets, and institutional reputation. Besides, Kretschmann et al. (2019) mentioned that the number of students attending higher education courses in Brazil is increasing but at the same time the rates of students drop out is increasing too and the Higher Education Institution (HEI) had implemented the retention policy.

The student's decision to drop or pursue a program is a problem that needs to be understood from the perspectives of the student. To understand the factors from the viewpoint of the students in the said policy that will contributes to the management and improve quality.

https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23662051

2.4 Quality of Education

Table 2. 4
Mean Distribution and Description of Responses of Respondents on the Issues Perceived in the Implementation of Retention Policy in Terms of Quality of Education

INDICATOR	ADMINISTRATORS		FACULTY	
	Mean	Description	Mean	Description
1 Retention policy negatively impacts the quality of education	1.33	Never	1.29	Never
2 Retention policy may not help improve the cognitive skills of students	1.50	Never	1.38	Never
3 Some students might experience anxiety, stress, or loss of confidence, especially if they fear failure or feel unsupported, causing poor performance.	3.50	Often	3.63	Often
4 Retention policy may hinder students from overcoming academic challenges	2.33	Rarely	2.29	Rarely
5 Retention policy may discourage students from excelling	1.83	Rarely	1.92	Rarely
6 Retained students may feel embarrassed or isolated, which can affect their social relationships and mental well-being, and can lead to poor performance.	2.83	Sometimes	3.04	Sometimes
7 Retention policy may increase anxiety and foster a negative academic environment	3.17	Sometimes	3.46	Often
8 Retention policy may hinder the academic discipline and responsibility of students	2.17	Rarely	1.83	Rarely
9 Students are pressured to get good grades rather than learn, resulting in academic failure.	3.83	Always	3.17	Sometimes
10 Students who are retained may experience decreased motivation and self-esteem, which can negatively impact their academic achievement.	3.33	Sometimes	3.54	Often
11 Retention policy focuses on grades, which can lead to an overemphasis on grades, rather than a focus on learning and academic achievement	3.33	Sometimes	3.42	Often

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12 The policy's focus on retention and grades can lead to decreased student motivation and engagement	3.33	Sometimes	3.17	Sometimes
13 The policy does not account for different learning styles and needs.	1.83	Rarely	1.79	Never
Overall Mean	**2.64**	**Sometimes**	**2.61**	**Sometimes**

Table 2.4 shows the mean distribution and description of responses of respondents on the issues encountered in the implementation of retention policy in terms of quality of education. This item rate by the administrators and the faculty, with a mean average of 2.64 and 2.61, respectively, or both with a description of "**Sometimes**". Both groups of respondents gave a description of "**Sometimes**" on items no. 6 ''*Retained students may feel embarrassed or isolated, which can affect their social relationships and mental well-being, and can lead to poor performance.''* and no. 12 *''The policy's focus on retention and grades can lead to decreased student motivation and engagement'.* The findings indicate that both administrators and faculty perceive the challenges related to the quality of education in retention policy implementation as occurring "**Sometimes**." Issues such as social isolation, embarrassment, and decreased motivation among retained students suggest that while the policy is generally effective, it may unintentionally affect students' well-being and engagement.

In the interview conducted among respondents on asking about "Always" pressured to get grades rather than learn (Item 9) and Focus on grades (Item 11). how do they see the pressure to maintain grades affecting students behave in class daily?, Respondent 1 says *"It creates an atmosphere of extreme compliance rather than curiosity. Daily, I see students who are hyper-fixated on the points, not the concepts. If I assign an activity, the very first question isn't 'How does this work?' but 'Is this graded?' or 'How many points is this worth?' When students are on the border of retention, they stop taking risks. They won't raise their hands unless they are 100% sure they have the right answer because they are terrified a mistake will lower their average. This completely matches why the survey shows a high 'Always' or 'Often' rating for grade pressure. The joy of learning is completely replaced by the anxiety of survival."* In the interview conducted among the respondents in asking about (Item 3, 6, & 10 "Often" / "Sometimes" ratings for anxiety, embarrassment, isolation, and dropped self-esteem), when a student is retained or is facing retention, what changes does they observe in their self-esteem and peer relationships? Respondent 3 says *"The transformation is heartbreaking. In our culture, being retained carries a massive social stigma. When a student is held back, they are physically separated from the peer group they grew up with. In the classroom, they become invisible. They sit at the very back, they avoid eye contact, and they rarely participate in group work because they feel embarrassed and isolated. They see themselves as 'the failure' of the class. This drop in self-esteem creates a vicious cycle: they feel stupid, so they stop trying, which then causes their academic performance to drop even further. It completely validates the 'Sometimes' and 'Often' marks in the data regarding mental well-being."*

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The findings that retention policies may increase student anxiety, stress, and decreased confidence are supported by previous research. Studies by Rabbi and Islam (2024) that strict retention or progression requirements can create pressure to achieve high grades, leading students to focus on performance over learning and contributing to poor academic outcomes.

Similarly, Oding et al. (2021) study says that retention may reduce motivation, self-esteem, and engagement align with research demonstrating that retained students often experience negative academic and emotional effects. Administrators' concerns that students prioritize grades over learning are also supported by studies indicating high-stakes retention policies can foster grade-focused behavior.

2.5 Administrators/Faculty

Table 2.5
Mean Distribution and Description of the Implementation of Retention Policy as Perceived by the Administrators and Faculty

INDICATOR	ADMINISTRATORS		FACULTY	
	Mean	Description	Mean	Description
1 The pressure to meet retention targets can lead to increased stress and burnout for teachers, potentially negatively impacting teacher morale and job satisfaction.	4.83	Always	3.79	Often
2 Teachers might feel conflicted between maintaining high standards and showing compassion for struggling students.	3.33	Sometimes	3.04	Sometimes
3 Teachers feel pressure to teach rather than focus on deep learning and critical thinking.	4.50	Always	3.63	Often
4 Teachers experience stress and burnout due to the pressure of meeting retention and achievement targets.	4.17	Often	3.58	Often
5 Teachers feel that they do not have the resources and support needed to effectively teach and support students.	2.67	Sometimes	2.33	Rarely
6 Teachers feel forced to prioritize teaching to the policy's requirements, rather than meeting the individual needs of the students.	3.00	Sometimes	2.75	Sometimes

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7. The policy's requirements can limit the flexibility of teachers and administrators to respond to the needs of individual students.	1.33	Never	1.54	Never
8 The policy may mean increased workload for teachers by preparing remedial programs, providing tutoring or handling repeated courses.	3.17	Sometimes	2.46	Rarely
Overall Mean	3.38	Sometimes	2.89	Sometimes

Table 2.5 displayed the mean distribution and description of responses of administrators and faculty on the issues encountered in the implementation of retention policy.

This item rate by the administrators and the faculty with an overall mean of 3.14. The administrators register a mean of 3.38 while the faculty had a mean of 2.89, both of which are described as "**Sometimes**". Both groups of respondents give a description of "**Sometimes**" on items no.2 ''*Teachers might feel conflicted between maintaining high standards and showing compassion for struggling students"* and no. 6 ''*Teachers feel forced to prioritize teaching to the policy's requirements, rather than meeting the individual needs of the students.'* On the other hand, items no. 7 for both administrators and faculty with a weighted mean of 1.33 and 1.54 or never on the statement "*The policy's requirements can limit the flexibility of teachers and administrators to respond to the needs of individual students*, while on the statement no. 4 "*Teachers experience stress and burnout due to the pressure of meeting retention and achievement targets*,' with a weighted mean of 4.17 and 3.58 or Often.

In the interview conducted among the respondents in asking "Both faculty and administrators agreed that teachers 'Sometimes' feel conflicted between maintaining high policy standards and showing compassion to struggling students. Can you share an experience where you felt torn between these two forces?" Respondent 2 answered *"I face this dilemma every grading period. I had a student who was dealing with a severe family crisis. They were trying so hard, staying after class, and showing immense personal growth. But on paper, their numerical score was still below the retention cut-off line. The policy demands that I strictly apply the standard, which means holding them back. But my professional instinct and empathy told me that retention would completely break this student's spirit. You feel forced to choose between being a compliant rule-follower or a compassionate human being. It creates a lot of internal guilt. To deal with the guilt, I try to find loopholes within the rules, like giving them extra credit projects or oral recitations to bump up their scores. That way, I am still following the grading policy but also rewarding their hard work and effort especially those really trying.*

In the interview conducted among respondents and ask about (item No.4) that teachers often face high stress and burnout because of retention targets, what does this pressure feel like for you on a normal school week? Respondent 3 answered *"It feels like a constant weight on my chest. I am already emotionally exhausted. I spend my*

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weekends grading and worrying about my passing rates instead of resting. It feels like my performance as a teacher is only judged by a number, which makes me feel very unappreciated and burnt out." In the interview conducted among respondents and ask about (item no.2) ‘’Teachers might feel conflicted between maintaining high standards and showing compassion for struggling student’’"Do you ever feel torn between following strict passing rules and being kind to a student who tries hard but fails?" The 3rd Respondent says *"Yes, and it is the hardest part of my job. I have students who attend every remedial class, submit every workbook, but just cannot pass the heavy exams. The policy says I must fail them. My heart breaks because I know failing them might make them drop out or lose all self-esteem. It makes me feel incredibly guilty.",* and Respondent 1 added *"Honestly, no. I believe true kindness is being honest about a student's academic standing. If a student tries hard but still fails, passing them anyway does them a disservice in the next grade level. It compromises our educational standards. The rules are there to ensure they actually master the skills."*

The findings suggest that administrators and faculty encounter moderate challenges “**Sometimes**” in implementing the retention policy, particularly in balancing high academic standards with compassion for struggling students and meeting individual student needs. While the policy rarely limits flexibility, the frequent stress and burnout reported by teachers indicate that retention requirements can create significant pressure. These results imply that policy enhancements should address teacher support, workload management, and strategies to balance retention goals with personalized student care to ensure both staff well-being and effective student outcomes.

According to the study of Acang et al., (2019) physical and emotional well-being of examinees played a significant role in their examination results. The key aspects included focus, mindset, stress management, and avoiding unproductive activities that could hinder their effectiveness. The study highlighted that exam preparation, like attending review classes, was essential.

3. Challenges affecting the implementation of retention policy as perceived by the student respondents

Table 3
Mean Distribution and Description of Responses of Student Respondents on the Challenges and Issues in the Implementation of Retention Policy

Challenges and Issues in the Implementation of Student Retention Policy	**Mean**	**Description**
1. **Emotional Challenges**		
1.1 Retention policy causes undue stress/anxiety in students	3.50	Often
1.2 Retention policy increases dropout rate	3.18	Sometimes
1.3 It has a negative impact on student’s self-esteem	3.14	Sometimes
1.4 It creates problems in balancing commitment	3.35	Sometimes

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1.5 It adversely affects motivational/family support	3.57	Often
1.6 It has ill effects on living conditions	3.07	Sometimes
Mean	**3.30**	**Sometimes**
2. Academic Challenges	**Mean**	**Description**
2.1 Retention policy leads to repeated coursework	3.45	Often
2.2 It adversely affects academic preparedness	3.35	Sometimes
2.3 It causes loss of momentum and low motivation	3.10	Sometimes
2.4 It adversely affects the time frame and management of students.	3.36	Sometimes
2.5 It negatively affects attendance in school.	3.19	Sometimes
Mean	**3.29**	**Sometimes**
3. Social Challenges	**Mean**	**Description**
3.1 Retention policy causes social stigma/labeling	3.17	Sometimes
3.2 It causes inequitable treatment among students	3.62	Often
3.3 It brings about high expectation from family/parents	3.05	Sometimes
3.4 It leads to social isolation and depression	3.31	Sometimes
3.5 It builds a lack of recognition due to disappointments	3.32	Sometimes
Mean	**3.30**	**Sometimes**
4. Long-term Challenges	**Mean**	**Description**
4.1 Retention policy creates a limited opportunity for employment	3.31	Sometimes
4.2 It also has potential for discrimination	3.31	Sometimes
4.3 It causes a delay in student's graduation	3.52	Often
4.4 It influences setting of standards on school performance	3.44	Often
4.5. It greatly affects students' communication abilities	3.11	Sometimes
Mean	**3.34**	**Sometimes**
Overall Mean	**3.31**	**Sometimes**

Table 3 presents the mean distribution and description of responses of student respondents on the challenges and issues in the implementation of retention policy. Generally, the respondents are sometimes having Challenges and Issues in the Implementation of Student Retention Policy as reflected by its over-all mean of 3.31.

In terms of emotional challenges, statements 1.1 'Retention policy causes undue stress/anxiety in students' and 1.5 "It adversely affects motivational/family support" has the highest weighted means of 3.50 and 3.57 or often, while the statements 1.4 and 1.3 has the lowest weighted means of 3.35 and 3.14 or sometimes "It creates problems in

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balancing commitment" and "It has a negative impact on student's self-esteem'. The over-all weighted mean was 3.30 or sometimes. This implies that Students sometimes experience challenges with the retention policy, particularly stress, anxiety, and reduced motivation. This highlights the need for support systems, such as counseling and stress management, to safeguard students' well-being while maintaining policy effectiveness.

In the interview conducted to the student respondents about (Item 1.1 & 1.5) the data shows that the retention policy 'often' causes severe stress, anxiety, and deeply affects your family support and motivation, how does this policy affect your emotional well-being on a daily basis?" The Respondent 1 says *"It completely ruins my peace of mind. Every single day, I walk into school feeling terrified that one bad quiz score will trigger the policy and ruin my life. My parents also get very anxious, and instead of supporting me, they constantly pressure me and tell me I am wasting their money. It makes me want to give up."* while Respondent 2 says *"It makes me lose my motivation to study. When you are constantly under the threat of being retained, you stop studying out of love for learning and only study out of fear. My family tries to be supportive, but they don't understand how heavy the pressure is, which makes me feel isolated at home."* and Respondent 3 expresses that *"The stress is definitely there, but I try to use it as a wake-up call to study harder. It does create a tense environment at home because my parents keep a very close eye on my grades now. It is emotionally draining, but I just force myself to push through the anxiety."* who chooses to be optimistic.

Conversely, in terms of Academic Challenges the over-all mean of 3.29 indicates that, generally, the respondents are sometimes agreed on the statements regarding the Challenges and Issues in the Implementation of Student Retention Policy. However, among the statements, statement no. 2.1 "Retention policy leads to repeated coursework" has the highest weighted mean of 3.45 or often, while statement 2.3 "It causes loss of momentum and low motivation" has the lowest weighted mean of 3.10 or sometimes. Students sometimes face academic challenges due to the retention policy, particularly repeated coursework, which occurs more frequently and can affect motivation. This suggests a need for academic support strategies, such as tutoring or targeted guidance, to help students maintain progress while minimizing setbacks. In the interview conducted among students on asking about the data "sometimes" revealed in (Item 2.1 & 2.3) the repeating coursework as a major academic challenge, how does repeating subjects affect your academic momentum and motivation to stay in school? The Respondent 4 says, *"Sitting in a classroom repeating the exact same module while watching your former classmates move ahead is incredibly humiliating. It completely kills your momentum. You feel like you are running in place, and it makes you want to drop out entirely because school stops feeling progressive."* and Respondent 5 says *"It is a setback, and it definitely slows you down academically. Repeating the same lessons is boring and frustrating, but looking at it practically, it gives me a second chance to master the basics that I missed the first time around so I don't fail later on."* Additionally, in terms of social challenges only the statement 3.2 "It causes inequitable treatment among students" are often perceived in the Implementation of Student Retention Policy with a weighted mean of 3.62 which supported by the statement of the respondents in conducting interview on asking about (Item 3.2 & 3.4) students rated 'inequitable treatment' as an 'Often' occurring problem

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under this policy, in what ways do you feel students facing retention are treated differently or isolated socially?, Respondent 5 revealed that the "*Teachers definitely treat you differently. If you are on the retention list, some teachers look at you like you are a lost cause and focus all their attention on the top students. Your peers also look down on you, and that unfair treatment makes you isolate yourself and slide into depression."* and Respondent 6 also says, *"You get an unofficial label of being a 'failing student.' During group works, nobody wants to group with you because they think you will drag their grades down. It creates an unfair environment where the smart stick together and the struggling students are pushed aside especially when the sectioning was formed from highest earn grades to lower, and I, from the least section feels frustrated"*

The lowest weighted mean was the statement 3.3 "It brings about high expectation from family/parents" with a weighted mean of 3.05 or sometimes. The over-all weighted mean in terms of social challenges was 3.30 or sometimes. This implies that social challenges related to the retention policy are generally occasional, but inequitable treatment among students occurs more frequently as the student expresses during the informal interview. This highlights the need for fair and transparent implementation practices to ensure all students are treated equitably and social pressures do not hinder their academic progress.

Lastly, in terms of long-term challenges the over-all weighted mean of 3.34 or sometimes a challenge in the Implementation of Student Retention Policy. However, the statements 4.3 and 4.4 "It causes a delay in student's graduation and It influences setting of standards on school performance" has the highest weighted means of 3.52 and 3.44 or Often, while the lowest weighted mean among the statements are statement no. 4.5. "It greatly affects students' communication abilities" are sometimes a challenge and issues in the implementation of student retention policy with a weighted mean of 3.11.

In the interview conducted among the respondents when being asked about (Item 4.3 & 4.4), the survey highlights that delaying your graduation is a significant fear. How does the threat of a delayed graduation change your long-term plans or view of your future? Respondent 4 answered *"It feels like my whole future is delayed. My family is poor, and they expect me to graduate on time so I can start working and helping them financially, it makes me feel like a massive burden to them."* Respondent 2 also says: *"It makes me anxious about my employment opportunities later on. I worry that when companies see my academic record and notice that I was delayed because of a retention policy, they will discriminate against me and choose someone who graduated on time instead."* and Respondent 6 says: *"It changes my timeline, which is frustrating. I wanted to finish school quickly, but now I have to accept that my path will take longer. It's hard to accept that the school's standards are this rigid, especially for a slow learner like me, but I just have to focus on finishing eventually, even if it's delayed. "*

This implies that Long-term challenges of the retention policy occur sometimes, particularly in delaying graduation and influencing school performance standards. This suggests a need to review policy impacts on students' academic progression and institutional expectations to ensure long-term outcomes do not unintentionally hinder student success.

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This finding clearly implies that challenges and issues in the implementation of retention policy, whether long-term, emotional, social, or academic, does not exert much burden on the students. The finding that retention policies do not impose a significant burden on students is supported by research showing that when policies are implemented with adequate support, such as tutoring, mentoring, and counseling, students can meet progression requirements without major emotional, social, or academic difficulties.

The current study was paralleled to the study of Oding et al. (2021) indicate that retention policies can increase stress, anxiety, and reduced self-confidence when students perceive requirements as punitive or unsupported. These findings suggest that the impact of retention policies on students largely depends on the availability of support systems and the way the policies are implemented.

4. Is there a significant relationship between the performance of the respondents and the challenges in the implementation of retention policy?

Table 4
Results on the Significant Relationship between the Performance of the Respondents and Their Perceptions on the Effect of the Challenges in the Implementation of Retention Policy

In terms of	Significance r	Decision	Remarks
1 Emotional Challenges	.028	Reject Ho	Significant
3.2 Academic Challenges	.119	Accept Ho	Not Significant
3.3Social Challenges	.104	Accept Ho	Not Significant
3.4 Long term Challenges	.470	Accept Ho	Not Significant

Table 4 exhibits the significant relationship between the academic performance of the respondents and their perceptions on the effect of the challenges in the implementation of retention policy using Pearson's Coefficient of Correlation r-test at .05 level of significance.

As can be seen, the significance r -values for the group academic performance of the respondents and their perceptions on the effect of the challenges in the implementation of retention policy in terms of academic challenges, social challenges and the long-term challenges were greater than .05 which resulted in the acceptance of the null hypothesis. There is no significant relationship between the academic performance of the respondents and the effect of the challenges in the implementation of retention policy in terms of academic challenges, social challenges, and long-term challenges encountered by the respondents.

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As to the effect of the challenges in the implementation of retention policy in terms of emotional challenges; the significance r- value was less than .05 resulting in the rejection of the null hypothesis. There is a significant relationship between the academic performance of the respondents and the effect of the challenges in the implementation of retention policy in terms of emotional challenges.

Hence, academic performance of the students is not influence by the implementation of retention policy in terms of academic challenges, social challenges, and long-term challenges; however, it was influenced significantly by the emotional challenges encountered by the respondents. This is supported by the study of Austria-Cruz (2019) that there is correlation between academic pressure, including retention exams and student's self-reported well-being. Their study concluded that transparent communication about the purpose and expectations of retention exams can alleviate anxiety and foster a positive academic environment.

5. Significant difference in the perception of the administrators and faculty on the issues involved in the implementation of student retention policy.

Table 5
Significant difference in the perception of the administrators and faculty on the issues involved in the implementation of student retention policy.

Group	Significance F	Decision	Remarks
Faculty and School Administrators	.00	Reject Ho	Significant

Table 5 displayed the significant difference in the perception of the administrators and faculty on the issues involved in the implementation of student retention policy using Analysis of Variance ANOVA F-test at .05 level of significance. As revealed, the significance F -values for faculty (.00) and school administration (.00) were less than .05 and resulted to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Hence, there is significant difference in the issues involved in the implementation of student retention policy as perceived by the administrators and faculty.

Both the groups of school administrators and the faculty claimed that they differ on their outlook as to how student retention policy were being implemented. The significant difference in perceptions between administrators and faculty indicates a gap in understanding and experience regarding the implementation of the student retention policy. This suggests the need for clearer communication, collaborative planning, and shared decision-making to align perspectives and ensure consistent and effective policy implementation across all levels of the institution.

According to Seery et al. (2021) to improve retention, the institution needs to focus on faculty-student interactions and providing additional student support services. Oding

https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23662051

et al., observed that retention policy is often viewed as a source of stress for students because of the compliance requirements set by the university. Some students argue that this policy discriminates against those who learn at a slower pace. However, despite these challenges, students are encouraged to prepare and confront the demands of the retention policy because universities strive to effectively meet student needs. Retention exams and academic performance indicates a complex relationship influenced by various factors.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, several critical conclusions can be drawn regarding the implementation and impact of the student retention policy. First, a distinct institutional perception gap exists between school administrators and faculty regarding the operational effects of the policy. While administrators feel less affected by these institutional shifts, the teaching faculty bears a significantly heavier burden concerning enrollment fluctuations and the direct consequences of strict policy execution. Second, the enforcement of the retention policy results in compounded financial and emotional stress for the student body. Although the policy aims to maintain high academic rigor, it inadvertently introduces localized financial strains through retention exam fees and triggers psychological distress, including social isolation, embarrassment, and diminished motivation among students. Finally, the policy exerts a pervasive and uniform impact across the entire student population regardless of academic standing. This study is clearly evidenced by the lack of a significant relationship between the students' actual academic performance and their negative perceptions of the challenges imposed by the retention policy.

Recommendations

Based on the foregoing findings and conclusion of the study, the following are recommended for implementation.

1. The faculty reported a greater burden in managing enrollment issues as compared to administrators, which described “sometimes”, suggesting the need to balance responsibilities to ensure efficiency and reduce faculty stress. With this, there is a need to develop clear guidelines such as publish a clear, simplified handbook or web page detailing requirements on passing the retention policy so that the policy will be thoroughly understood by the students reducing the stress experiencing by the faculty in lesser number of enrollees , hold regular orientation assemblies and clear communication drives led by academic advisors to walk students through the rules and answer their questions to lessen enrollment/future problems, it also serve as a tool that the policy is surely follow and comprehend by each students. Set an annual visit of administrators to the Criminology Program to ensure that the faculty is managing the implementation of retention policy; this is also an approach of better communication to address matters of experiences in the implementation of retention policy perceived by the faculty. Conduct meetings with the students at least one week before the retention exam proper to ensure transparency.

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2. Establish a Unified Institutional Review Committee: School leaders should create a joint committee of both administrators and faculty to bridge the perception gap. This will ensure that enrollment and operational burdens are shared and managed collaboratively.

3. Review and Subsidize Retention Fees: The administration should evaluate the financial impact of the retention policy on students for financial aspects. The financial burden is understandable if the amount of retention exam fee is reasonable, The Program coordinator should discuss this matter to the administrators to reduce student financial burden encounter by the students which affect retention and persistence. Reducing the exam fee for incoming second year students, the amount of fee can be replace from 150 to at least 120 pesos because their examination consists of 100 items for two (2) board subjects. The exam fee for the incoming third year which is 150 is reasonable for their exam consisting of almost 200 items for thirteen (13) board subjects given that the questions in their examination are much longer. Waiving or reducing retention exam fees by considering the pages of examination paper, payment of proctor and the payment of the checker to minimize economic burden which affect student retention.

4. Integrate Resilient Psycho-Social Support Mechanisms: The Guidance and Counseling Office should design targeted mental health programs, peer mentoring networks, and stress-management workshops specifically tailored for students struggling to meet the retention policy requirements.

5, Perform a mixed-methods study to quantify the direct impact of the student retention policy on faculty workload, grading stress, and teaching morale, given that faculty perceive implementation challenges more frequently than administrators and conduct a comparative policy analysis evaluating the academic performance and student satisfaction rates of an institution before and after transitioning from a punitive retention policy to an incentive-based academic advancement framework.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

This study adhered to established ethical standards throughout the research process. Prior to data collection, the researcher obtained formal permission from the administration of Saint Ferdinand College–Cabagan Campus and secured informed consent from all respondents. Participation was voluntary, and the respondents were informed of the study's purpose, procedures, and their right to decline or withdraw without penalty. The confidentiality, anonymity, privacy, dignity, and welfare of the participants were protected by excluding personally identifiable information from the questionnaires, data analysis, and presentation of findings. All collected information was used exclusively for academic purposes and was securely handled to prevent unauthorized access or disclosure. The researcher also observed honesty, objectivity, and integrity in gathering, analyzing, interpreting, and reporting the data. No respondent was subjected to coercion, discrimination, deception, or unnecessary harm during the conduct of the study. Furthermore, the findings were presented accurately and without intentional manipulation, fabrication, or misrepresentation. Proper acknowledgment and citation of all scholarly sources were observed to prevent plagiarism and uphold academic integrity.

https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23662051

Any potential conflict of interest arising from the researcher's role as a faculty member in the Criminology Department was managed through impartial administration of the research instruments, confidential treatment of responses, and objective interpretation of the results.

Acknowledgements

The researcher's journey toward completing the Master of Science in Criminal Justice (MSCJ) was never easy. There were times when the researcher struggled to maintain momentum, particularly while balancing the demanding responsibilities of being a Criminology instructor and a mother. After spending the entire day at school, the researcher would return home to fulfill essential parental responsibilities, care for two children, and manage the household. Despite the exhaustion, pressure, and challenges, the researcher's faith in Almighty God provided the strength needed to persevere and complete this thesis. This academic undertaking would not have been possible without the invaluable assistance and encouragement of the people who consistently offered their support.

First and foremost, the researcher wishes to express profound appreciation to the thesis adviser, Dr. Diosdado T. Patubo, for his exceptional mentorship, intellectual guidance, and constant encouragement, from the conceptualization of the study to the completion of the thesis.

The researcher also extends sincere gratitude to Dr. Charina G. Alejo and Dr. Mario Q. Sevilla for their patience in reviewing the manuscript and for generously providing their guidance and assistance throughout the research process.

To the students who willingly devoted their time and honestly participated in the conduct of the study, the researcher offers heartfelt gratitude. Their cooperation and valuable contributions were essential to the successful completion of the research.

The researcher likewise extends sincere appreciation to the colleagues in the Criminology Department and the entire SFC Cabagan College Department for their stimulating discussions, encouragement, and emotional support throughout the completion of the thesis.

The researcher's deepest love and gratitude are extended to the family for their unwavering faith in the researcher's capabilities and for being a constant source of strength and inspiration. Special appreciation is given to Krizena and Kriztela, whose presence served as a source of motivation. The researcher is also profoundly grateful to Mommy Ehm, the researcher's sister, for helping care for the children while the thesis was being written. Heartfelt thanks are likewise offered to the researcher's husband, Joshua, for his understanding, patience, and financial support throughout the academic journey.

The researcher also expresses profound gratitude to Papa Edwin, whose continuous encouragement inspired the researcher to strive for greater achievements in life and to maintain unwavering faith that Almighty God would grant the desires of the researcher's heart. The researcher lovingly acknowledges Mama Zenaida, who is now resting in paradise. The researcher recognizes that the person and professional the researcher has become would not have been possible without the love, sacrifices, guidance, and influence of both parents.

Above all, the researcher offers the highest praise and thanksgiving to Almighty God for His constant presence, for answering silent prayers, and for granting the wisdom, strength, perseverance, and divine guidance needed to undertake and complete this thesis. Without God, none of these accomplishments would have been possible.

In all things, to God be the highest glory!

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APA Citation:

Aguinaldo-Esguerra, W., & Patubo, D. T. (2026). CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF STUDENT RETENTION POLICY IN THE B.S CRIMINOLOGY PROGRAM: BASIS FOR POLICY ENHANCEMENT. Ignatian International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research, 4(10), 565–597. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23662051

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