SELL, SELL, SELL, AN EXPLORATORY ANALYSIS OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE EDUCATION AND THE SHIFT TO CONSUMERISM

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ABSTRACT

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The undergraduate major of criminal justice may be succumbing to effects of student-consumer attitudes, especially considering that criminal justice as an academic study does not currently benefit from the rigors associated with accreditation. Many students are selecting universities with lower costs of attendance and in locations of the country with lower costs of living with the rising costs of higher education. Criminal justice education may also be associated with the CSI-effect. Popular entertainment such as television shows like *CSI* has shown aspects of the criminal justice system to have more dramatized expectations from the general public. With an expected undergraduate enrollment drop-off by the middle of this decade, it may be likely that criminal justice education is already shifting its curriculum to mirror false expectations of the criminal justice system by way of the CSI-effect. Criminal justice as an academic study can appeal to consumeristic students with consumer-style courses. Although there is some previous research on criminal justice education, studies on the existence of consumerism in criminal justice education are lacking. The current study is an exploratory analysis of the existence of consumer-style courses in criminal justice education and explores 2,957 individual courses from 119 undergraduate degree-earning institutions. Results show that consumer-style courses do exist, but currently in small numbers. More traditional, content based, and standardized courses on the other hand, exist in high numbers, accounting for over half the sample size. Implications for both results are discussed in the manuscript.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Background

Criminal justice as an academic study is a new discipline when compared to other social sciences. Unlike its predecessors such as sociology, criminal justice as a science has not had the benefit of time to lay a firm groundwork of what defines a structured curriculum. It was not until the 1960s that criminal justice as an undergraduate major was starting to come about as a field of study at four-year institutions. After the turn of the century, the academic study of criminal justice had developed into a discipline studied across the United States. By the early 2000s, there were several hundred undergraduate criminal justice programs (Clear, 2001). While the number of criminal justice programs grew throughout the last half-century, one may wonder if there is consistency in the curriculum offered by these programs when compared to the more established disciplines.

There have been attempts by some academic organizations to create structure and continuity between criminal justice programs. Following the creation of criminal justice as an academic discipline, concerns over the quality of the discipline arose. The year 1963 saw the creation of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS). A few years after the inception of ACJS, the organization developed accreditation standards for ensuring quality in these fledgling programs. However, the original standards were quickly abandoned in the early 1970s (Peat, 2009). For the next three and a half decades, regional accreditation standards and academic peer reviews served as the milestones for the new discipline. Then, in 2005, the ACJS developed a formal certification and standards process (Peat, 2009). The ACJS developed nine standards including: program and mission history, program structure and curriculum, faculty, admission

and articulation, resources, student services, integrity, program quality and effectiveness, and other instructional sites. According to Peat (2009), “Each section includes two or more standards for which selected indicators are recommended for inclusion in the program’s self-study” (pp. 17). While it appears that the ACJS rolled out the needed components of an effective criminal justice program, the sections can seem somewhat broad, allowing programs some freedom of interpretation. Furthermore, in April, 2019 the Executive Director of the ACJS announced to all ACJS members that the executive board had ruled that no new programs would receive ACJS certification under these standards due to a general lack of interest by the programs to apply for certification. The lack of interest by individual programs in developing clear and concise curriculum continues to show some added difficulties in the development of a consistent curriculum for the study of criminal justice.

Establishing a foundation for criminal justice education is challenging, as research confirms there is a lack of consistency in the courses currently offered. For example, in a 2014 study, Bostaph et al., examined the prevalence of victim-based courses in criminal justice curricula. This study included 433 universities with 679 degree programs. The study identified course catalogs and department websites for the content analysis of course titles and descriptions. The study noted that only two courses are required by more than fifty percent of undergraduate criminal justice program, which were an introduction to criminal justice course and a criminological theory course (Bostaph et al., 2014).

The previous accreditation standards laid out by the ACJS included six content areas to which criminal justice programs should focus courses. The required course content areas included Administration of Justice, Corrections, Criminological Theory, Law Adjudication, Law Enforcement, and Research and Analytic Methods (ACJS, 2005). These courses and their related

content are included in Table 1.1. Due to the lack of interest of programs to seek ACJS certification, there may be fewer programs requiring these courses for completion of a criminal justice degree at the undergraduate or graduate level. That is an unfortunate assumption as the previously listed courses could serve as a strong starting point for cohesion among criminal justice programs. The courses of requirement in criminal justice programs will be the main focal point of this analysis. It is important to find what content is being taught by criminal justice programs across the country. With a lack of accepted standards, there are vast freedoms for criminal justice programs to venture into subjects that might be of a less centralized content area than what the ACJS once deemed as core content areas required for program certification in the academic organization.

Table 1.1. *ACJS Required Courses and Content for Certification*

Course	**Content**
Administration of Justice	Contemporary criminal justice/criminology system, major systems of social control and their policies and practices; victimology; juvenile justice; comparative criminal justice.
Corrections	History, theory, practice and legal environment, development of correctional philosophy, incarceration, diversions, community-based corrections, treatment of offenders.
Criminological Theory	The nature and causes of crime, typologies, offenders, and victims.
Law Adjudication	Criminal law, criminal procedures, prosecution, defense, and court procedures and decision-making
Law Enforcement	History, theory, practice and legal environment, police organization, discretion, and subculture.
Research and Analytic methods	Quantitative-including statistics-and qualitative, methods for conducting and analyzing criminal justice/criminology research in a manner appropriate for undergraduate students.

This study's purpose is to explore the characteristics of baccalaureate criminal justice programs and the potential consumerization of criminal justice education. This study will also explore the significance of the characteristics of the institutions and their association with consumerism in their criminal justice program.

Current Issues

In summary, there are challenges with the current state of criminal justice education. First, the study of criminal justice is still a newer discipline when compared to other social sciences, which potentially affects its value as a respected discipline in academic communities. Second, there is a lack of oversight in requirements of criminal justice program curricula. Third, where there have been requirements, programs may be overlooking them in course content. Instead of following guidelines for course content laid out by the ACJS, programs may be implementing classes that have questionable relevance on producing graduates with skills applicable to careers in the criminal justice field.

Another issue that will likely plague higher education in many different disciplines is the decline of the college-aged population in the next decade. Economist Nathan D. Grawe (2018) expected that the college attendance will drop by 15% during the span of 2025-2029 and continue to drop in the years following. While this drop may be due to a handful of reasons, Grawe argues that it is mainly due to a drop in birth rates during and directly following the financial crisis in 2009. Since there will be fewer incoming students by the end of the next decade, academic disciplines will likely need to find competitive ways to attract students**.** Criminal justice education is no exception**.** The lack of curriculum standards may lead some programs to develop courses focused solely on attracting students. Along with a lack of

curriculum standards, criminal justice programs may focus on the attitudes of students, who are taking an approach more in line with a consumer purchasing a product.

Consumerism in Criminal Justice Studies

The need to attract students into criminal justice programs has coincided with greater accessibility to highly influential television programming via streaming services and other media outlets that dramatized the criminal justice system with, what will be discussed in the next chapter as, the CSI Effect. As noted previously in this chapter, criminal justice programs have a vast amount of freedom to decide the courses and course content to which its students study. The popularity of crime dramas and the CSI Effect that results from these easily accessible media services may be causing a phenomenon that is be deemed "consumerism." What this term means for the discipline is that criminal justice programs may be offering more attractive-sounding courses that have titles and content that appear similar to crime drama television and movies, rather than content that would align with potential job prospects upon completion of a criminal justice degree. Rather than teaching a student applicable skills, institutions may be selling a product (consumer-style courses) to students (consumers).

Applicable skills can described as the requirements of program learning outcomes. For example, Bowling Green State University's Criminal Justice learning outcomes are (1) Identify, investigate, and propose solutions to problems/issues facing the criminal justice system, (2) critically evaluate policies and practices of the criminal justice system, (3), communicate effectively, both orally and in written form (Learning Outcomes, 2019). The University of Central Florida also describes a number of Academic Learning Compacts for students including the requirement of students to acquire a knowledge of the fundamental principles of criminal law

and procedure and how the law affects criminal justice operations in the areas of: (1) law enforcement, (2) courts, and (3) corrections (Academic Learning Compacts, 2019). Another example of a description of traditional learning outcomes comes from Ball State University's program priorities: (1) Understanding the functions and processes of the criminal justice system, (2) learning the role of criminology as it informs public policy, and (3) identification and adoption of best practices (Program Priorities, 2019).

There may be evidence of a shift to consumer attitudes pertaining to incoming students. In 2016, a survey was administered to 508 first year students in the College of Health and Human Services at Bowling Green State University. Of the surveyed students, 145 were criminal justice majors, 80% of whom responded that their choice of major was moderately to strongly influenced by television, movies, or books (Burek et al., 2016). Although this is just one program at a single institution, it may be assumed that this number may be similar among other criminal justice programs.

Another reason that criminal justice education may be shifting to consumerism is based on student attitudes towards financials. Due to the rising costs of higher education and the consideration of post-graduation employment prospects, students may focus their attention on cost-effectiveness when choosing a college or university. This argument is examined by previous research in the next chapter.

The idea that criminal justice education is being "consumerized" was presented by graduate students and faculty from Bowling Green State University's Master of Science in Criminal Justice program at the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences 2019 meeting in Baltimore, Maryland. The data collected for that presentation is discussed further in this manuscript in Chapter 3. Consumeristic courses will tend to include titles and information that

stray away from the former ACJS content noted in Table I: Titles like “Sex Crimes & Culture,” “Trafficking of Humans, Drugs, &Guns,” and “Murder, Mayhem, & the Media” are just a few of the consumer-style courses that were found throughout the early analysis.

Problem

Universities may be offering topics of study that students may have interests in that influenced entertainment rather than applicable skills. Student interests may be aversive to producing criminal justice graduates who have obtained content knowledge and critical thinking skills through traditional criminal justice education. Without oversight from organizations like the ACJS or regional accrediting organizations, criminal justice education may move into a discipline more interested in attracting students through consumerism, rather than educating individuals on the system so they may be ready to address the issues inherent to the criminal justice system as practitioners or researchers. This analysis aims to call that notion into question. Unfortunately, there is not an easy answer to whether or not criminal justice programs are leaning towards consumerism with their curriculums. First, there is limited research on the degree needs and offerings of criminal justice as a discipline. Second, there is no research exploring whether or not undergraduate criminal justice programs are taking this type of approach to course requirements directly or indirectly.

Summary

This chapter introduced an overview of criminal justice as an academic discipline and discussed some of the challenges the discipline has had in creating a concrete framework of content areas for programs to educate students. This chapter also described the need for criminal justice programs to remain competitive in enrollment numbers, especially considering a college-

aged population drop forthcoming in the next decade. Further, the term consumerism was introduced to describe criminal justice programs being influenced by the media to create titles of courses and program content offerings in academia. The remainder of this study explores whether, and if so, to what degree criminal justice programs have strayed into consumerization and what types of programs have followed suit. The influx of consumer style courses may be a result of the recruitment needs from the enrollment drop-off, lack of consistent standards in criminal justice education, and the results of consumerism including student-attitudes and the CSI Effect. The next chapter will explore more of the previous research on these topics. Chapter 3 will then explain the methods of this study. Chapter 4 will describe the analysis of the results. The final chapter of this paper will discuss the major findings, limitations of this research, and recommendations for future study on this topic.

CHAPTER 2. CRIMINAL JUSTICE EDUCATION AND A SHIFT TO CONSUMERISM?

To address the current climate of criminal justice course offerings, previous research is examined in order to better understand the discipline that is criminal justice. While the research on the topic of consumerism in criminal justice is very limited, there is some research on criminal justice as an academic discipline. This chapter examines the literature and research on the lack of instructional cohesiveness in criminal justice curricula. It will also discuss other social sciences that have created accreditation standards and their importance. The chapter then shifts its focus to the evidence of consumerism in criminal justice education by discussing the CSI Effect and the attitudes of students as consumers that is a result of the enrollment drop-off.

Criminal Justice Education and Accreditation

In the previous chapter, an overview of standards, or the lack thereof, in criminal justice education was briefly described. It is important to note the impact of criminal justice education on the practitioners working in the field of criminal justice today. Currently, over half of American police officers in the field have some college-level education, much of which is criminal justice related education (Finckenauer, 2007. Finckenauer (2007 noted that an overlying goal for criminal justice education should be to work toward accreditation based on the 2005 ACJS core content standards. However, with the 2019 discontinuation of the certification standards described in the previous chapter, this seems to be a currently unattainable goal unless curriculum standards are reintroduced by the ACJS or another recognized entity.

When compared to other disciplines, notably other social sciences, criminal justice is behind in the adoption of set standards. For instance, the discipline of psychology saw its first standards in 1952 at Cornell University. An examination ten years later at the University of

Michigan found that 274 of 411 respondent psychology programs had adopted the Cornell Conference Curriculum at some point in the ten year span (Henderson, 2016). After decades of updates, in 2013 the American Psychological Association (APA) Board of Educational Affairs Task Force on Psychology Major Competencies had created outcomes and guidelines for any program offering psychology as a baccalaureate major (Henderson, 2016; APA, 2013). While psychology does not have a set of national accreditation standards, these guidelines offer a consistent set of core goals for baccalaureate psychology programs.

Criminal justice education can also be compared to social work, a discipline also considered a social science. In 1973, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) issued its first accreditation standards for baccalaureate programs, and were last revised in 2015 (CSWE, 2015). By 2019, the CSWE Commission on Accreditation had accredited 529 undergraduate programs in the United States and Canada with 15 programs still in the candidacy phase (CSWE, 2019). Social work programs use the CSWE's accreditation standards to demonstrate high levels of performance, integrity, and quality to ensure confident practitioners to serve the public (2015). With over 500 programs accredited by the CSWE and more under review, the discipline of social work seems to have set standards that a large number of programs follow, arguably resulting in curricula cohesiveness between programs.

Sociology has also provided a national and international accreditation commission for two sub-disciplines, applied and clinical sociology. Clinical and applied sociology differ from their parent discipline in that they include those using sociology as a practice rather than just an academic study. Fritz (1991) described clinical and applied sociology as, "scholar-practitioners, combining a scientific approach with practical application"(pp. 17). The American Sociological Association (ASA) note some potential career opportunities for clinical and applied sociologists.

Some of these possible careers are counselors or socio-therapists, group facilitators, criminal mitigation experts, community consultants, and organizational consultants (ASA, 2003). The Commission on the Accreditation of Programs in Applied and Clinical Sociology (CAPACS) started in 1995 in conjunction with the Society for Applied Sociology (SAS) and the Sociological Practice Association (SPA), CAPACS aims to develop, promote, and support quality sociological education and practice through accreditation of sociological studies (CAPACS, 2019). Since its inception in 1995, four programs (three in the United States), have been accredited by CAPACS (2019). While slow to catch on, there is at least the option of standardizing curriculum.

There has also been discussion over the relevance of accreditation and whether or it is important in criminal justice education. Eaton (2012) argued that accreditation is the primary factor in ensuring quality in higher education. Accreditation is important in this argument in that it develops policies to provide judgement on quality and improvement of quality that is periodically reviewed by the governing body (Eaton, 2012). Federal and state governments have also expanded regulatory powers over higher education standards and practices. Eaton (2012) also expressed that an increase of government involvement in higher education threatens academic practices and it is up to academic communities to, "contain the expansion (of government authority) and preserve core academic values" (pp. 15). Knowing this, the importance of ensuring quality and cohesiveness in higher education is noted when making a push for accreditation standards.

Sloan (2018) also discussed the importance of accreditation, specifically for criminal justice. Sloan's analysis collected data on schools, departments, and curricula from 670 four-year colleges and universities offering a baccalaureate degree in criminal justice to examine how

effectively these programs are meeting the seven ACJS Core Curriculum Standards previously used for certification. Only 2% of programs met all seven standards with most (90.1%) meeting one to four standards (Sloan, 2018). Sloan mentioned that criminal justice education should be reexamined and strongly consider adopting accreditation standards, because most criminal justice bachelor programs did not meet all seven certification criteria. (Sloan, 2018; Southerland, 2002).

Southerland (2002) conducted a study of criminal justice baccalaureate program curricula in the 50 states and District of Columbia in 1988-1989 and then again in 1999-2000. In her examinations, she included four research questions: (1) Are there more criminal justice programs in 1999-2000 compared to two decades ago?; (2) What are the trends in course requirements?; (3) Is there a consensus across the curricula?; and (4) Where should we go from here? Southerland identified that criminal justice education lacked a set of essential courses for criminal justice baccalaureate programs. She noted, however, that there was progress towards consensus in requiring courses on research methods, policing, and juvenile justice. She also found that there was a regression towards consensus on other courses such as introduction to criminal justice, corrections, and judicial procedure (Southerland, 2002). Southerland (2002) proposed that the ACJS should take action and start a process of academic accreditation. In 2005, ACJS did create the certification process as noted earlier in this manuscript, which lasted until 2019.

It has been nearly 20 years since Southerland proposed that criminal justice education create accreditation standards or guidelines. Sloan (2018) noted that even with ACJS certification standards, most programs were not even adhering to all standards or applying for certification. With the discontinuation of ACJS program certification, criminal justice education

has moved backwards on its progress towards accreditation standards. Compared to the disciplines of psychology, social work, and applied and clinical sociology, criminal justice does not have set standards that could result in accreditation standards or closely followed guidelines.

Further, without the certification standards, the quality of individual criminal justice programs is called into question. After the implementation of the ACJS standards in 2005, it was thought that the reputation and status of programs that obtained certification would be enhanced (Southerland et al., 2007). Without the certification standards, there is difficulty in measuring the reputation of individual programs. Criminal justice programs may also be driven by economic motivations rather than academic standards. Programs tend to focus on acquiring the available federal funding and obtain these funds through large enrollments (Southerland et al., 2007; Bassi and Rogers, 1976). This relates to the argument that criminal justice programs may be "selling" an education to students rather than focusing on instructing applicable skills through the core content areas that the ACJS previously set forth. This "sale" of an education is important to note, as it was previously discussed in Chapter 1 that an enrollment drop-off is taking place. College attendance is expected to drop by at least 15% by the end of the next decade (Grawe, 2018). The lack of certification or accreditation standards allow criminal justice programs to make course offerings more enticing through consumerism, even if it means possibly sacrificing the academic rigor involved with the previously set forth standards.

Consumerism in Criminal Justice Education

The question of whether consumerism exists in criminal justice is based on at least two concerns: (1) the CSI Effect, and (2) student consumer attitudes. The enrollment drop-off (Grawe, 2018) has likely had an influence on higher education to focus on the values of the consumers to attract students. The CSI Effect and decisions relating to the cost of higher

education could be the result of this consumerism. Along with the recruitment needs of the enrollment drop-off and the lack of consistent standards, the CSI Effect and student consumer attitudes may result in consumeristic courses offered to students.

The CSI Effect

There is a notion of entertainment media products like the television program *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* have real world impacts on the criminal justice system. Entertainment products may cause individuals involved with the system to expect a more dramatized version of the process than what happens in reality. The process has been described by Bergslien (2006) as, "the manner in which science is used to solve crimes on television has led to increased public expectations of science and a significant misunderstanding of how forensic science really works" (pp.690). In one study, 38% of surveyed prosecutors in Maricopa County, Arizona felt that cases resulted in a hung jury or acquittal because the jury found a lack of evidence (mitochondrial DNA, latent prints, trace evidence, ballistics, etc.) typically discussed in shows like *CSI*. Furthermore, almost three-quarters of prosecutors found that the jury in these cases expected to be presented with more scientific evidence (Thomas, 2006).

These seemingly unwarranted expectations are found both outside the courtroom and within the context of the street level in law enforcement as well. The CSI Effect may create problems for law enforcement by conveying a perception of a less legitimate style of policing and delivering the illusion that investigations should only rely on technology rather than personal techniques of investigators (Byers and Johnson, 2009). The CSI Effect may have a grip on the criminal justice system. It seems that the public's expectations of the criminal justice system itself has been consumerized. If this is the case, it would not be surprising that criminal justice

education has also fallen victim to the CSI Effect and the Hollywood-like consumerism that could follow.

Thomas (2006) noted a specific example of the CSI Effect in his review of *State of Arizona v. James Calloway* (2005). In this case, an inmate was found with a fresh puncture mark on his arm and a syringe was found in his cell. The inmate in question admitted that the syringe was his. At trial, the jury questioned the rigor of the prosecution's case because there was no DNA evidence analyzed from the syringe. What seemed like an open and shut case was questioned by members of the jury because of the lack of evidence usually found in television programs that are related to or drive the CSI Effect (Thomas, 2006).

There is also evidence that students are taking courses related to forensics because of television shows like *CSI.* While forensic science and forensic investigations are important disciplines for future practitioners, the false realities described in entertainment media may not create an accurate portrayal of the methods of these disciplines. This takes place through the "educator's effect." The educator's effect claims that the show *CSI* attracts students into careers in forensic science, just as related shows such as *L.A. Law* attract students to law programs and the book and film *Silence of the Lambs* generated interest in careers in forensic profiling. The latter of which there are few positions available (Cole and Dioso-Villa, 2011; Fuller, 2001).

Relatedly, Bergslien (2006) noted that, "Non-science majors who are only exposed to these ideas in introductory-level or general science classes may end up with severely distorted ideas about the power of forensic science, and by extension, of all scientific disciplines" (pp.690). The lack of understanding of the true scientific methods used in forensic investigations may be troublesome as there has been an increase in student interest in forensic sciences (Bergslien, 2006). There has been an increase in forensic sciences and forensic investigations

being “consumed” by students possibly due to the CSI Effect. It could also be because of a consumer-driven style of media, rather than an interest in the actual methods that forensics entails. Students may find that a discipline that has an interesting sounding title, or aligns with their personal interests, has different realities of its application off screen. It could follow then that consumerism of other aspects of criminal justice education outside of forensics may also be taking place as well.

McCay (2014) noted the idea that the CSI Effect seems to be influencing criminal justice education. “Throughout the same time period of the development of the CSI Effect, there has been an increase in enrollment numbers in forensic science and criminal justice programs (pp. 10). There have been conflicting views, however, as there is the position that a person who is pursuing a degree in forensic science is not more likely to watch or be influenced by crime-related entertainment (McCay, 2014; McManus, 2008). Thus, while there is debate that the CSI Effect is leading to more student interest, there is correlation between the influx of crime-related entertainment and the growth of programs like forensic investigations.

Student Consumer Attitudes

There is also evidence of the college-aged population leaning towards consumeristic behaviors by selecting institutions that have aspects that are important to the student as a consumer. Trusheim et al., (1990) conducted a survey of individuals who received offers of admission from the University of Delaware (N=1,362). The most important attitudes for predicting college enrollment that were significant were closeness to home, quality of academics, quality of academics at the university, the general reputation of the university, and the quality of programs in the applicants’ area of study (Trusheim et al., 1990).

Financial factors might also have an influence on student consumer attitudes and university choice. Maringe (2006) examined a number of university choice variables, through a survey of 387 students at the University of Southampton in Southampton, United Kingdom. Students were asked to rank 35 university choice variables falling under the following categories:

- Programme: field of study, courses, majors, course structure and degree organization.
- Price: fees, flexibility in payment, effort needed to qualify, opportunities sacrificed, distance from home, transport and living costs, opportunities for part time work.
- Promotion: advertising in local and national press, publicity about academic research, publicity about teaching excellence, electronic media and marketing communications.
- People: gender composition, tutors credentials, alumni and personal contacts, graduate profiles.
- Prospectus: the university prospectus, programme booklets.
- Prominence: institutional reputation, staff reputation, press reviews by national newspapers, institutional websites, league tables.
- Place: campus accommodation, degree credits, facilities, racial diversity, residential requirements, class sizes.

Respondents were asked to rank the level of importance of the factors using a ten-point Likert scale. The predominant observations were: (1) Students were adopting a consumerist ideology when making decisions on where to attend a university because of an importance attached post-graduation employment prospects, and (2) Students considered price-related issues as one of the most important factors in deciding where to attend university

(Maringe, 2006). Thus, the cost effectiveness in deciding where to attend supports the notion that students have a consumeristic attitude in attending a university that is less expensive. This finding is echoed by another study conducted in the United Kingdom. Brown et al. (2008) explored the views of 22 first year students at a university in North West England. The students participated in focus groups in a semi-structured format. It was found that courses offered, academic reputation, and avoidance of universities located in areas with high costs of living (London, UK in this case) are the three variables consistently rated as being important to prospective students. A major finding of this focus group was that students chose universities in cities that are cheaper than other locations of the country. This observation that student consumers take into account the cost of living and the overall cost of attendance when making a decision on where to attend college is in line with consumeristic behaviors of student consumers when making a decision on where to attend college.

Another study administered in England identified the consumeristic attitudes of students in STEM programs. STEM programs consist of studies in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Many of these programs have clear routes to professional roles when compared to degrees in other fields. Over six hundred students completed the survey examining consumeristic attitudes and their possible effects on grade performance. The study found that STEM majors expressed higher consumer orientation (Bunce et al., 2016). Criminal justice education also has somewhat clear routes to practical careers albeit not as clear as STEM degrees. Careers in criminal justice may include becoming a police officer, corrections officer, probation officer, or criminal investigator just to name a few. It might be said that criminal justice education straddles both professional and academic pathways. As student-as-consumer attitudes are higher among

STEM students (Bunce et al., 2016), there is the possibility that criminal justice students also have consumeristic attitudes.

Summary

This chapter described the current research on criminal justice education and the shift of criminal justice education recruitment to a consumer-based objective due to the effects of the enrollment drop-off. Criminal justice as an academic discipline lacks structural guidelines, such as those of accreditation bodies, to set forth a criteria of curriculum and standards. This is the case despite past attempts to establish guidelines and scholars who have called for guidelines and quality. The most recent certification guidelines offered by the ACJS were discontinued in the spring of 2019. This discontinuation may open the door for criminal justice education to offer more consumer-based courses rather than teaching the realities of the criminal justice system to the next generation of criminal justice practitioners and researchers entering the job market.

Entertainment media has been shown to have a major influence on the operations of the criminal justice system through the phenomenon known as the CSI Effect. The CSI Effect has influenced the general public to have false expectations in regard to actual criminal justice practices. Even members of juries may be influenced by consumerist media that their findings of guilt or innocence are based on the lack of scientific evidence displayed in media programming that is part of the CSI Effect (Bergslien, 2006). These expectations may also be spilling into the world of academia, as colleges and universities seemingly embrace the CSI Effect to buffer against the pending decreases in the number of college-bound individuals.

Institutions of higher education are expected to experience a drop in enrollment rates by the end of next decade (Grawe, 2018). To remain competitive, many institutions may be shifting

focus from teaching applicable skills to the next generation on the job market to instead offering attractive sounding courses to "sell" to the students who are viewed as "consumers."

The idea that consumerism exists in higher education is further bolstered by the decision making processes of prospective students. Students reported that cost of attendance (Maringe, 2006) and cost of living associated with the location of an institution of higher education (Brown et al., 2009) are both aspects important to the student decision-making process. By extension, students will pay close attention to the overall cost of their attendance, and make decisions accordingly, much like real world consumers.

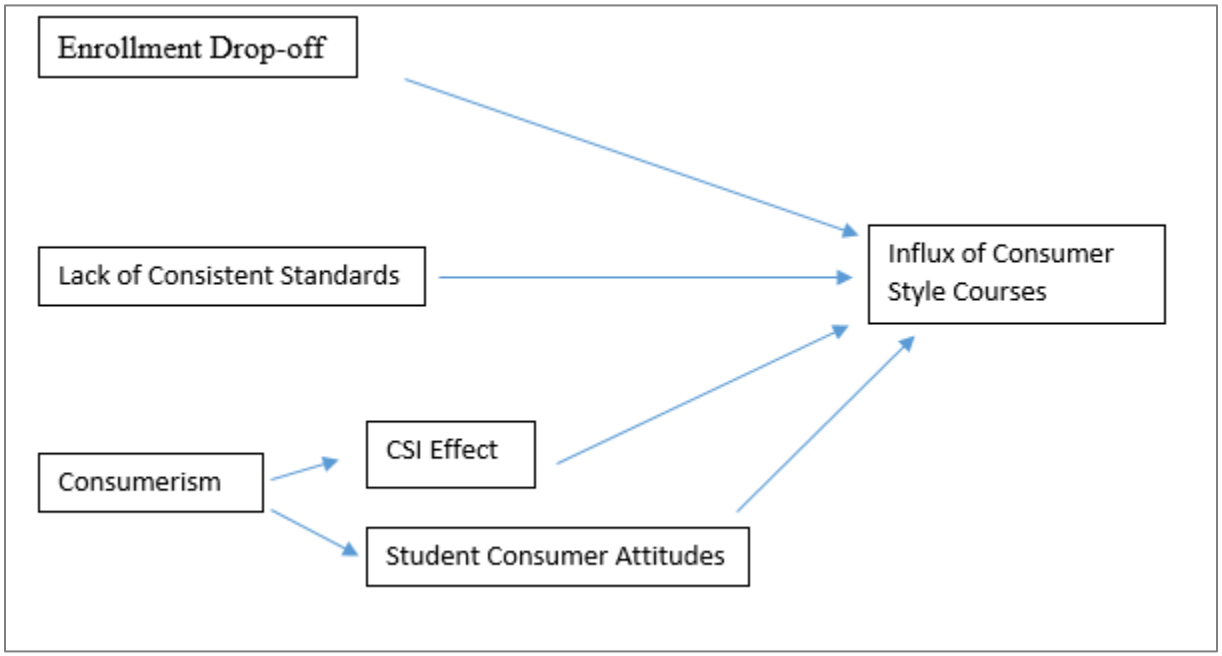

Figure 2.1. *The Potential Causes of Consumer-style Criminal Justice Courses*

Conclusion

This chapter discussed some of the previous literature on the aspects of criminal justice education essential to this analysis. The intent of this study is to provide an exploratory analysis of the prevalence of consumer-oriented courses in criminal justice education among

undergraduate criminal justice programs in the United States. The current research on criminal justice education and the lack of consistent standards in the discipline were presented. The chapter then reviewed the literature pertaining to the phenomenon of the CSI Effect and how it has created consumers of the general public, with expectations of a system that are unfounded in reality. The literature covered also opened a discussion for a potential spillover of consumerism in not just the criminal justice system, but in higher education as well. The next chapter details the methods utilized in this study.

CHAPTER 3. METHODS

The purpose of this study is to explore the characteristics of consumerism and their presence in criminal justice course offerings at the undergraduate level. The study will also describe the types of institutions housing criminal justice programs and the consumeristic classes. The primary research question is: are criminal justice programs selling a product to a consumer rather than teaching applicable skills and related content to students?

This study uses data collected as part of a visual presentation at the ACJS Annual Meeting 2019 in Baltimore, Maryland. The data set was compiled by four BGSU graduate students in the Master of Science in Criminal Justice (MSCJ) program and advised by two faculty members in BGSU's Criminal Justice program. The original sample was collected as part of a class presentation in a required course for graduation in the MSCJ program. The dataset is relevant for future research on criminal justice curriculum so the data collection was expanded from its original form for this study.

Data and Sample

The current sample includes 119 undergraduate criminal justice programs with a total of 2,957 individual courses. The list of attendees at the 2017 ACJS Annual Meeting served as a frame for the selection of the sample. Institutions were chosen at random from this sampling frame. International institutions, non-four year institutions, and non-academic institutions that were on the list were omitted from the study. Degree programs that were not in criminal justice or criminology were also omitted. For instance, if the degree program was sociology, but offered criminal justice courses, the degree program was not included in the sample.

The sampling frame was randomized by giving each remaining institution a number after placing the institutions in alphabetical order and using an online random number generator to select schools for analysis. When programs were chosen, the institutional characteristics were also collected for the respective institutions, which were recorded on a paper instrument (see Appendix A.) and compiled in Qualtrics, an online survey tool. Institutional characteristics were found using the institution's main website and individual criminal justice or criminology program websites. The unit of analysis is the individual courses represented through the course title and description of course content. Data collection was modeled after a previous study on the frequency of victim and victimology-based courses in criminal justice curricula Bostaph et al. (2014). The details of this study were noted in Chapter 2.

Variables

Variables in the current study were chosen based on a review of the relevant literature represented in Table 3.1. Undergraduate enrollment size is included due to the evidence that course offerings are driven by grants and opportunities for research that are typically associated with universities with larger student populations (Southerland et al., 2007; Bassi and Rogers, 1976). With more course offerings at larger institutions, it is assumed that more consumeristic courses will be found at these institutions. Location of the program will be included as location has been found to be a strong indicator of student decisions on where they will attend, wherein students select a school in a location with a low cost of living (Brown et al., 2008). In-state tuition costs will be included as previous research found that students prefer universities that are more budget friendly (Maringe, 2006) and most students choose to stay in state (How America Pays for College, 2019). Other variables that will be explored are admissions selectivity, institutional control, and faculty size.

Table 3.1. *Institutional Characteristic Variables*

Variable	Operationalization
Enrollment Size	Small (0-4,999 Undergraduate Students)
	Medium (5,000-9,999 Undergraduate Students)
	Large (10,000 + Undergraduate Students)
Location by Region	Northeast
	Southeast
	Midwest
	West
Cost of Attendance	High (>/= $11,001)
(In-state tuition cost per year)	Moderate ($6,801-$11,000)
	Low (</=$6,800)
Institutional Control	Public
	Private
School Admissions Selectivity	Most Selective (0-24% Acceptance Rate)
	Selective (25%-50% Acceptance Rate)
	Least Selective (51%-100% Acceptance Rate)
Faculty Size	Large (12 + Faculty Members)
(Total number of faculty. Program	Medium (6-11 Faculty Members)
does not distinguish by level)	Small (1-5 Faculty Members)

The examination of both the number of courses that could be considered “consumer” and the aforementioned institutional characteristics may provide insight as to the number and types of colleges and universities offering those types of courses. Enrollment size was discussed in Chapters 1 and 2 and is important to consider given that a larger number of students should increase the need for more course offerings at institutions with higher enrollments. In turn, this may result in a larger number of consumer-style courses being available.

The location of the institutions that house criminal justice programs may also be important to explore in regards to programs offering consumeristic courses. Researchers studying university course selection have argued that location, reputation, and course content are three of the most important factors to prospective students (Brown et al., 2008; Moogan et al., 1999, 2001; Price et al., 2003). Students were found to look closely at location when deciding where to attend college, and applied deliberately to universities thought to have a lower cost of living (Brown et al., 2008). While the present study does not account for cost of living, it is still relevant to discuss what states and regions are offering consumer-style courses to inform future research studies to examine this variable more closely. The United States was broken down into four regions for this analysis, as detailed in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2. *United States Regional Breakdown*

Region	States Included in Region
Northeast	Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, Delaware, Maryland, Maine
Southeast	West Virginia, Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Florida
Midwest	Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota
West	Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, Utah, Arizona, Nevada, California, Oregon, Washington, Alaska, Hawaii

The final characteristic that could drive offerings of consumeristic courses is the cost of attendance. Described in Chapter 1, cost of attendance is one of the most important factors influencing a student's decision to attend a certain university. With competition between institutions to recruit from a limited number of students, there may be a connection between the cost of attendance and consumer-style courses. Institutions with lower in-state tuition prices will likely offer more consumeristic courses in an attempt to recruit more students. In this study, in-state tuition is used rather than out of state tuition costs because of the disparity in attendance between the two categories of students, as about 82% of individuals surveyed in a large national survey reported that they were going to a college in their home state (How America Pays for College, 2019). In-state tuition costs per year is operationalized as the price of two full time semesters of 12 credit hours each, or a total of 24 credit hours per academic year. Institutions considered to have a high in-state tuition charged over $11,001 per 24 credit hour year. This variable was created by taking the lower quartile of in-state tuition costs for low cost institutions, the upper quartile for high in-state tuition costs, and the middle quartiles for a middle priced institution. An institution priced at the mid-range for in-state tuition was $6801 to $11,000. An institution priced in the low range for in-state tuition cost was $6,800 or less per academic year.

The other university characteristics included in this study are institutional control, school admissions selectivity, and faculty size. Institutional control is measured as whether an institution is public or private. The percentage of applicants accepted into a university is often categorized as levels of admissions selectivity. Most selective accept 0-24% of applicants, selective institutions accept 25%-50% of applicants, and least selective schools accept 51%-100% of applicants. Faculty size is measured as the total number of faculty in a criminal justice program, a faculty of 12 or more members is considered large sized, a medium-sized faculty has

6-11 faculty members, and a small-sized faculty having 1-5 members (Refer back to Table 3.1). Since this study is exploratory, identifying possible characteristics of institutions offering consumer-style courses is the first step in understanding the nature of education, especially criminal justice education today.

The consumerization of courses is important to operationalize as well. Earlier this was described as course offerings that are attractive-sounding, and that have content that may relate to television, movies, or other media portraying a dramatized view of the criminal justice system that may be more relatable to current and prospective students. These courses are heavily influenced by the CSI Effect as described in Chapter 2. It also encompasses courses that seem to have little relation to applicable skills for entry-level criminal justice practitioners.

All courses examined in the study were given a code from a list of 24 different types of course content that included both the consumeristic courses as well as the ACJS core curriculum that was described in Chapter 1. The two faculty members and four graduate students involved in the original study coded each course title and description as one of the 24 course types. Any courses that seemed to fall under more than one category or conflicting categories were discussed and then one code was assigned as determined by the group. Courses that had content that was typical to criminal justice curriculum, but had a title that was deemed to "sell" were given a placeholder value of "9" in front of their normal code. For instance, a corrections-based course that had an overly interesting title but had a description that fit with general corrections was given a 92, rather than just 2. Table 3.3 describes the courses that were coded in this analysis. Included in the first six codes of the table are the six former ACJS core curriculum standards for certification.

Table 3.3. *Course Content Coding Scheme*

Content Area	**Related content topics**	**Code Number**
Administration of Justice	Contemporary criminal justice/criminology system, major systems of social control and their policies and practices; victimology; juvenile justice; comparative criminal justice	1
Corrections	History, theory, practice and legal environment, development of correctional philosophy, incarceration, diversions, community-based corrections, treatment of offenders	2
Criminological Theory	The nature and causes of crime, typologies, offenders, and victims	3
Law Adjudication	Criminal law, criminal procedures, prosecution, defense, and court procedures and decision-making	4
Law Enforcement	History, theory, practice and legal environment, police organization, discretion, and subculture	5
Research and Analytic Methods	Quantitative-including statistics-and qualitative, methods for conducting and analyzing criminal justice/criminology research in a manner appropriate for undergraduate students	6
Forensics	Investigations, criminalistics, elements of forensic science, criminal evidence, financial	7
Digital Crime	Cybercrime, internet crime, computer and network security, digital piracy, identify theft, programming	8
Corporate Crime	White-collar crime, occupational crime, environmental crime,, organized crime, corporate security	9
Emergency Management	Crisis intervention, public safety management, conflict resolution	10
Organization and Management	Personnel/police/corrections/courts (whatever) administration and management,	11
Homeland Security/Defense and Terrorism	Homeland security, terrorism, genocide, global Jihad	12
Special Topics, workshops ,contemporary	Anything like Topics in CJ courses where description is generic and faculty can pick anything to teach on so look for word “selected” and similar	13
Capstone courses	Senior seminar, capstone, culminating course	14
Directed and Independent Studies, Thesis, Dissertations, Honor’s Thesis	So labeled	15
Technical Skills	Report writing, interviewing, observation, interrogation, interpersonal skills/communication, counseling	16
Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders	Drugs, mental illness, trauma-informed care	17
Security and Loss Prevention	Private security, loss prevention, asset protection	18
Experiential Learning	Field experiences, internships, practicum, service learning	19
Woman and Crime	Female offender, women and the CJS, women and crime	20
Diversity and Inclusivity	Race, class, gender, sexual identity	21
Victims and abuse	Sexual assault, child abuse, elder abuse	22
Common Others	Death penalty, capital punishment, serial killers, gangs	23
Consumer Style	Crimes against humanity, art crimes, rap and crime, heavy metal and crime, comic books and crime	24

Analysis

This study is exploratory in nature and uses univariate statistics on criminal justice course content and institutional characteristics of programs. The analysis incorporates a content analysis of course titles and course descriptions. Previous literature has noted the lack of standards for criminal justice course requirements. This study will point out, if applicable, any outliers from previously set forth standards as they may relate to consumerism. Essentially, the analysis will describe the existence and extent of consumer-style courses in criminal justice education. The analysis will also explore the characteristics of institutions to which these consumer-style courses are housed at. The findings will be reported as frequency tables for the descriptive statistics on the total number of consumer-style courses and the prevalence of the ACJS core curriculum certification standard classes. Frequencies of course content relating to consumer-style courses (refer back to Table 3.3) will also be analyzed alongside the institutional characteristic variables noted in Table 3.1.

Conclusion

The purpose of the study is to explore criminal justice course titles and content that appear to be a product to entice students, rather than educate on applicable skills that are relevant for criminal justice practitioners. This is an important topic when making recommendations for a need for curriculum standards in the still relatively new field of study. The institutional variables being tested for relationships to consumeristic courses are also important to identify universities that are more likely to offer consumer-style courses rather than focusing on the former curriculum standards set forth by the ACJS. This content analysis will utilize secondary data from 119 undergraduate criminal justice programs with a total of 2,957 courses and the

characteristic variables from those 119 degree programs. An issue to note is that the unit of analysis, course titles, may not equate with consumerism. Consumerism may exist outside of course titles and content without this study's findings. This will be further noted in the final chapter. Findings are described in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine criminal justice education and provide descriptive statistics about criminal justice course offerings. The current state of criminal justice education was described in preceding chapters. There is a potential for a shift to consumerism in education given the imminent drop-off of college enrollment expected in the next decade. With a dramatized version of the criminal justice system being the focus of many television and other entertainment productions, the CSI Effect described throughout this manuscript may be influencing the course offerings of criminal justice education as well. The previous chapter discussed the methods utilized in this study to explore if, and to what extent, consumerism exists in criminal justice education. This chapter provides and interprets the results of this analysis. Institutional variables examined include enrollment size of an institution, location by region, cost of attendance, institutional control, school admissions selectivity, and faculty size. The characteristics of the institutions where the sample of courses was drawn from was noted in Chapter 3.

Course Coding Scheme

Each of the 2,957 courses explored in this study were given a code based on the course title and content. The content descriptions were described in Chapter 3 (see Table 3.3). The highest percentage of courses fell under the heading of Administration of Justice at 13.7% (404 courses). The second highest percentage of courses were captured as Law Adjudication at 10.8% (230 courses) of the sample. These two course categories listed were the only two of the 24 possible codes to have over 10% of the total courses collected in the dataset. Both types of courses also fell within the content areas from the 2005 ACJS core content standards that were

used for program certification from 2005 until 2019. Along with Corrections (8.0%), Criminological Theory (7.8%), Law Enforcement (5.7%), and Research and Analytic Methods (4.2%), the six ACJS core content standards characterized 50.1% of the total courses offered in the sample.

The focus of this study, however, is mainly concerned with those courses that are described as consumer-style courses. As described in Chapter 3, consumer style courses were, "course offerings that are attractive-sounding, and that have content that may relate to television, movies, or other media portraying a dramatized view of the criminal justice system that may be more relatable to current and prospective students." Content in courses such as this included topics like crimes against humanity, art crimes, rap and crime, heavy metal and crime, comic books, and crime but were not limited to those subjects. These types of courses only accounted for 2.4% of the dataset with 71 courses coded as such (see Table 4.7).

Institutional Control

Recall that the datas included in this study contain 2,957 individual criminal justice courses housed at 119 criminal justice programs throughout the United States. Table 4.2 reveals that a majority of courses are housed at public institutions. Consumer-style courses accounted for 76.1% (54) of the sample, 77.4 % (1,146) ACJS-style, and 77.4 % (1,088) of all other courses are housed at public colleges and universities.

Enrollment Size

Institutions with over 10,000 undergraduate students were categorized as having large enrollments, 5,000-9,999 as medium enrollments, and under 5,000 undergraduate students as small enrollments. The findings are reported in Table 4.3. Not unexpectedly, the majority of

courses of all categories were found in institutions with large enrollments, followed by schools with medium enrollments, and then those classified as small enrollments. However, the raw number distribution of consumer-style courses is fairly similar across the three enrollment sizes with 28 at large enrollment institutions, 23 at medium enrollment institutions, and 20 at small enrolment institutions.

Table 4.1. *Course Codification (N=2,957)*

Content Area	**Number of Courses**	**% of Courses**
Administration of Justice	404	13.7
Corrections	236	8.0
Criminological Theory	230	7.8
Law Adjudication	319	10.8
Law Enforcement	169	5.7
Research and Analytic Methods	123	4.2
Forensics	187	6.3
Digital Crime	38	1.3
Corporate Crime	89	3.0
Emergency Management	16	0.5
Organization and Management	86	2.9
Homeland Security/Defense and Terrorism	95	3.2
Special Topics, workshops ,contemporary	136	4.6
Capstone courses	57	1.9
Directed and Independent Studies, Thesis, Dissertations, Honor's Thesis	96	3.2
Technical Skills	56	1.9
Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders	58	2.0
Security and Loss Prevention	33	1.1
Experiential Learning	136	4.6
Woman and Crime	38	1.3
Diversity and Inclusivity	86	2.9
Victims and abuse	47	1.6
Common Others	151	5.1
Consumer Style	71	2.4

Table 4.2. *Institutional Control Percentages (N= 2,957) (and raw numbers in parentheses)*

	Consumer %	ACJS %	Other %
Public	76.1 (54)	77.4 (1,146)	77.4 (1,088)
Private	23.9 (17)	22.6 (335)	22.6 (317)
Total	100.0 (71)	100.0 (1,481)	100.0 (1,405)

Table 4.3. *Enrollment Size Percentages (N= 2,957) (and raw numbers in parentheses)*

	Consumer %	ACJS %	Other %
Small	28.2 (20)	24.4 (361)	25.3 (356)
Medium	32.4 (23)	36.4 (539)	36.9 (518)
Large	39.4 (28)	39.2 (581)	37.8 (531)
Total	100.0 (71)	100.0 (1,481)	100.0 (1,405)

School Admissions Selectivity

Another variable that was examined was the selectivity of institutions, measured by the acceptance rate of the institutions studied (see Table 4.4). Institutions that accept between 50% to all of its applicants, or the least selective, had the majority of consumer style (85.9%), ACJS-style (90.6%), and 91.6% of all other courses. The selective schools, or those that have an acceptance rate of 25-50% had only 10 consumer-style and 139 ACJS-style courses. No institutions in the present study could be categorized as most selective.

Table 4.4. *School Admissions Selectivity Percentages (N= 2,957) (and raw numbers in parentheses)*

	Consumer %	ACJS %	Other %
Least Selective	85.9 (61)	90.6 (1,342)	91.6 (1,287)
Selective	14.1 (10)	9.4 (139)	8.4 (118)
Most Selective	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)
Total	100.0 (71)	100.0 (1,481)	100.0 (1,405)

Location by Region

The regional breakdown of the United States was described in Chapter 3 (see Table 3.2). The majority of courses of all categories were found at institutions in the Southeast United States followed by schools in the Northeast. Schools in the West had the third most consumer-style and all other criminal justice courses but had the fewest number of ACJS-style courses. Schools in the Midwest had the fewest number of consumer-style and all other criminal justice courses, and the third most ACJS-style courses. With only 71 courses categorized as consumer-style in the dataset, the dispersion between the location categories is not exceptionally wide. Twenty-six consumer-style courses were identified in the Southeast, 19 in the Northeast, 15 in the West, and 11 in the Midwest. These results are detailed in Table 4.5.

Cost of Attendance

The cost of attendance was also examined in this study and was measured as the cost of two semesters of 12 credit hours (24 credit hours total). An institution categorized as having a

high cost of attendance charged over $11,000 for 24 credit hours, those with a moderate cost of attendance would charge between $6,801-$11,000, and a low costing institution would bill $6,800 or less for two semesters of 12 credit hours. The majority of all criminal justice courses were housed at institutions that had a moderate cost of attendance, with 43.7% of consumer-style courses, 39.1% of ACJS-style courses, and 41.8% of all other criminal justice courses. Over 500 ACJS-style courses were housed at institutions categorized as a high cost institutions, which was close to the number-of courses categorized as belonging to moderate cost institutions at 579. Table 4.6 displays these results.

Table 4.5. *Location by Region Percentages (N=2,957) (and raw numbers in parentheses)*

	Consumer %	ACJS %	Other %
Northeast	26.7 (19)	22.3 (330)	23.2 (326)
Southeast	36.6 (26)	39.1 (579)	39.8 (559)
Midwest	15.5 (11)	19.6 (290)	16.6 (233)
West	21.1 (15)	19.0 (282)	20.4 (287)
Total	100.0 (71)	100.0 (1,481)	100.0 (1,405)

Table 4.6. *Cost of Attendance Percentages (N= 2,957) (and raw numbers in parentheses)*

	Consumer %	ACJS %	Other %
Low	22.5 (16)	22.6 (335)	22.4 (315)
Moderate	43.7(31)	39.1 (579)	41.8 (587)
High	33.8 (24)	38.3 (567)	35.8 (503)
Total	100.0 (71)	100.0 (1,481)	100.0 (1,405)

Faculty Size

The final institutional variable explored in this study is faculty size. A large faculty size was referred to as a program that has 12 or more faculty members. A medium-sized faculty was categorized as having six to 11 faculty members in its criminal justice/criminology program. A small-sized faculty was a program with one to five criminal justice/criminology faculty members. As reported in Table 4.7, most criminal justice courses were found in programs with large faculty sizes that offered 59.2% of consumer-style courses, 57.5% of ACJS-style courses, and 57.4% of all other criminal justice courses. Criminal justice programs with fewer faculty members (i.e., medium and small faculty sizes) were fairly similar in total numbers of consumer-style courses listed in their offerings.

Table 4.7. *Faculty Size Percentages (N= 2,957) (and raw numbers in parentheses)*

	Consumer %	ACJS %	Other %
Small	21.1 (15)	17.6 (261)	18.1 (254)
Medium	19.7 (14)	24.9 (368)	24.5 (344)
Large	59.2 (42)	57.5 (852)	57.4 (807)
Total	100.0 (71)	100.0 (1,481)	100.0 (1,405)

Conclusion

This chapter presented the descriptive statistics of this study. The chapter identified the types of criminal justice and criminology courses being offered related to what course coding scheme they fall under and their institutional characteristics. These characteristics included enrollment size, location by region, cost of attendance, institutional control, school admissions selectivity, and faculty size. These findings will be discussed further in the following chapter, which also details the study's limitations and implications, as well as suggestions for future research on the topic.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study has focused on the present state of criminal justice curricula in undergraduate criminal justice programs in the United States by identifying the prevalence of consumer-style courses currently offered. The analysis presented the descriptive results of several institutional characteristics of the programs that house criminal justice courses. The study also identified the prevalence of the six ACJS Core Curriculum courses, previously used as a requirement from ACJS certification from 2005-2019. This chapter provides a discussion of the results and addresses the limitations of the present study, and the need for further research on this topic.

Discussion

The identified presence of consumer-style courses contained in the sample was one major finding in this study (See Table 4.1) in that they only made up of 2.4% of the 2,957 courses detailed in this analysis. While that does not seem to be a high percentage, it is greater than eight other content areas described in this manuscript. To date, it does not appear that criminal justice education has succumbed to the CSI Effect or consumerization effects discussed earlier in this manuscript in that only 71 classes could be classified as consumeristic. ACJS Core Curriculum type courses made up over half (50.1%) of all courses, which fall into the content areas of Administration of Justice, Corrections, Criminological Theory, Law Adjudication, Law Enforcement, and Research and Analytical Methods. Both consumer and ACJS-style courses have relevant implications that are discussed later in this chapter.

Previous research has identified correlations between the increase of crime-related television and other types of entertainment and the influx of criminal justice and forensic investigations programs (McCay, 2014; McManus, 2008). It is important to note the characteristics of the programs housing sensationalized criminal justice courses. Certain

institutional characteristics were more likely to house a majority of consumer-style, ACJS-style, and all other styles of courses. These included public institutions, institutions with large undergraduate enrollments, those that are least selective in admissions, located in the Southeastern United States, have a moderate cost of attendance, and have larger numbers of faculty. These results are important to note as the descriptive statistics show that most courses instructed by criminal justice programs are found at institutions fitting these aforementioned characteristics.

To illustrate, prior literature stated that students hold consumeristic attitudes when making a decision on where to attend college. Cost of attendance is typically one of the main focuses of students when making that decision (Maringe, 2006). Interestingly, however, institutions categorized as lower costs of attendance did not contain the most consumer-style courses. The majority of consumer-style courses were found at institutions with a moderate cost of attendance. The second highest number of consumer-style courses in the sample were found at institutions that had a low cost of attendance. This finding differs from the expectations of previous literature that state that students choose institutions that have lower costs of attendance (Maringe, 2006) and that students choose to attend universities in regional locations with lower costs of living (Brown et al., 2008).

Implications

The major findings produced a number of potential implications for criminal justice education. With only 2.4% of all courses sampled having a name and description that is deemed consumer-style, the courses do exist in greater numbers than eight other content areas described in this analysis. Consumer-style courses exist in higher percentages than women and crime, emergency management, and victims and abuse to name a few other areas. The implication that

results from this finding is that consumerism does exist and may continue to increase in frequency with the impending enrollment drop-off (Grawe, 2018). The possibility of an increase may mean that criminal justice education will shift to consumerism rather than instruct applicable skills to future practitioners (Finckenauer, 2007).

Courses that fall into content areas previously used as by ACJS as part of its program certification standards account for just over half of all courses contained in this analysis. While the ACJS discontinued use of certification standards in the spring of 2019, the percentage of courses could affect the future of criminal justice education accreditation or certification. With just over half of all criminal justice courses in this descriptive analysis falling into a content area of the former ACJS Core Curriculum standards used for ACJS certification for nearly 15 years, most courses already fit a groundwork that could be used by an accrediting body as course content standards. The importance of accreditation was explained by previous literature in this manuscript. Accreditation ensures quality in higher education and develops policies for the improvement of said quality (Eaton, 2012). Previous work also notes that most criminal justice programs had met four of the seven ACJS Certification Standards, and because very few programs met all seven, criminal justice education should consider adopting some type of accreditation standards (Sloan, 2018; Southerland, 2002). The results of this descriptive analysis show that criminal justice education has the potential to introduce accreditation or a new certification standard as many programs appear to be instructing on similar content areas. This consistent instruction of a few select courses could provide the groundwork for one part of accreditation or certification by at the very least providing the required content areas of instruction for a program seeking accreditation.

Limitations

This study did encounter a number of issues resulting in limitations. First, there was no enrollment data for individual programs compiled during the data collection. Therefore, there is no way of knowing the number of students taking the courses analyzed by this study, just that these such courses exist. Second, this study was dependent on the information provided by the websites of the individual institutions. Information on each colleges or universities publishing of information on tuition, faculty, course offerings, admissions rates, and other variables may not always be up to date on the web. Furthermore, the characteristic of location by region was explored but the previous literature on the cost of living associated with regional location was not included.

One issue the study encountered that should be considered for future research and is a limitation was the unit of analysis. This study provided descriptive statistics for the unit of analysis as individual courses. Utilizing individual programs as the unit of analysis when discussing institutional characteristics may have been more beneficial and could allow for multivariate testing as to whether certain colleges/universities are significantly more likely to offer consumer-style courses. The current study shows the number of courses that fit into each characteristic. However, it is unknown how many courses come from each criminal justice program at each college/university with the study's current design. Furthermore, the unit of analysis limits the extent of consumerism to the titles and content description of each course. It is possible that consumerism exists outside of course content to which this study did not account for.

Another limitation is that this study is cross-sectional. Analyzing data at a single point in time makes it difficult to confirm with any certainty that criminal justice education is shifting

towards consumerism. Another major limitation is the type of study itself. As this analysis was exploratory, descriptive statistics were reported and detailed. Therefore, the study is unable to test for the existence of any significant relationships between consumerism and criminal justice education.

Future Research

This study was only conducted with course offerings currently available, therefore, it is not possible to identify a when or if a shift towards consumerism occurred. This snapshot only shows that consumer-style courses do in fact exist. Future research should consider carrying out a longitudinal study to examine any changes in the number of consumer-style courses offered in criminal justice programs across the country. With the impending drop-off in the undergraduate student population (Grawe, 2018), it will be important to note if there has been any shift towards consumer-style offerings, rather than traditional criminal justice course offerings, as students become more consumer-minded (Tursheim et al., 1990; Maringe, 2006; Brown et al., 2008).

Programs will have to increase competiveness in recruitment methods with students becoming more consumer-minded, and a decrease in the total population of students attending colleges and universities. One method could be the increase of consumer-style courses and a longitudinal study may be able to identify this shift. An increase in the percentage of consumer-style courses over the coming years will be more telling of any fundamental changes in criminal justice education. Future research should also consider implementing tests of significance for the presence of consumer-style courses and the characteristics of the institutions housing such courses. Past literature also notes that one student consumer attitude is that students choose to attend universities in regional locations associated with a lower cost of living (Brown et al., 2008). As this study did not include a measure on the cost of living for the four regional

locations included, future research should address this. As mentioned in the results, programs in the Southeastern United States instructed a majority consumer-style, ACJS-style, and all other courses. It would increase our knowledge on this topic to note if the region that houses the highest number of criminal justice courses in all categories also had the lowest cost of living given what has been noted in previous studies.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to describe the existence and frequency of consumer-style courses in criminal justice education. The study analyzed descriptive statistics of 119 undergraduate institutions housing 2,957 individual criminal justice courses. Only 2.4% of all courses contained in the study could be categorized as consumer-style. The study also explored the existence of ACJS Core Content courses that were previously used for a requirement of ACJS certification. Those ACJS-style courses accounted for over half of all courses examined in this study. The presence of both styles of courses have produced implications relevant to the future of criminal justice education. Those implications have been mentioned in this chapter. This chapter also discussed the limitations present in the current research as well as the recommendation for future research on the subject, including specific methodology to produce more relevant and constructive results for the future of criminal justice education and program curriculum.

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APPENDIX A. PAPER DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

Data Collection Sheet – Criminal Justice Programs

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">PART 1: SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Name of School:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Location (City, State):</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Program Home:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">College:

School (if college categorizes programs into schools):

Department/Program:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Institutional Control:
☐ Public
☐ Private</td><td colspan="2">Undergraduate Enrollment:
☐ Small (<4,999 UG Students)
☐ Medium (5,000 – 9,999 UG Students)
☐ Large (10,000 + UG Students)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">UNDERGRADUATE COST:</td><td rowspan="3">School Admissions Selectivity:
☐ Most Selective (0-24% Acceptance Rate)
☐ Selective (25%-50% Acceptance Rate)
☐ Least Selective (76%-100% Acceptance Rate)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Cost of In-State (Full-time enrollment/Year):</td><td>Cost of Out of State (Full-time enrollment/Year):</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">GRADUATE COST:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Cost of In-State (Full-time enrollment/Year):</td><td>Cost of Out of State (Full-time enrollment/Year):</td><td rowspan="2">Notes:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Faculty:
_____ # Assistant Prof

_____ # Associated Prof</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">_____# Professor

_____ # Instructor/Lecturer

_____ # Adjuncts/Part-time (if listed)

_____#Total number faculty. Program does not distinguish by level.</td><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">PART 2: GRADUATE PROGRAM – MASTER'S LEVEL ONLY</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Application Requirements:</td></tr>
<tr><td>GRE (check all that apply):
☐ All applicants required to submit GRE scores
☐ GRE scores required contingent on GPA
☐ GRE required contingent on work experience
☐ No GRE requirement for any applicant</td><td>GPA:
Minimum GPA required for regular (not conditional) admission
☐ Yes
☐ No

If yes, minimum GPA:</td><td>Personal Statement
☐ Yes
☐ No

Writing Sample
☐ Yes
☐ No

Application Fee: $</td><td>Letters of Recommendation
☐ Yes
☐ No

If yes, number of letters:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Funding Opportunities:</td><td colspan="2">Program Delivery</td></tr>
<tr><td>Graduate Assistantships/Stipends:
☐ Yes
☐ No</td><td>Graduate Scholarships:
☐ Yes
☐ No</td><td colspan="2">School Offers (check all that apply):
☐ Full-time online
☐ Full-time in-person
☐ Part-time online
☐ Part-time in-person
☐ Hybrid</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Degrees, Specializations, and Certificates – Master's Level Only:</td></tr>
<tr><td># of credit hours for degree completion:</td><td colspan="3">List the names/titles of the degrees offered:
(ex. Master of Science in Criminal Justice):</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Certificates Offered:
☐ Online
☐ Face to Face
☐ None
If yes, list all certificates by title and include # of credit hours:</td></tr>
</table>

Specializations/Concentrations Offered: ☐ Online ☐ Face to Face ☐ None If yes, list all specializations/concentrations by title and include # of credit hours:				
Internship:		**Graduation Requirements:**		
Internship Requirement: ☐ Required ☐ Optional	If internship is required, # of credit hours: # of clock hours:	Comprehensive Exam ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Or thesis	Thesis ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Or comp.	Other, culminating experience (list all options):
PART 3: UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM				
Program Delivery:				
School Offers (check all that apply): ☐ Full-time online ☐ Part-time online ☐ Part-time in-person ☐ Hybrid		Minimum GPA undergraduate students must maintain as required by program not the institution: (Ex. BGSU CJ students must maintain a 2.5 GPA)		
Degrees, Specializations, and Certificates:				
List the names/titles of the degrees offered: (ex. Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice):				
Certificates Offered: ☐ Online ☐ Face to Face ☐ None If yes, list all certificates by title and include # of credit hours:				
Specializations/Concentrations Offered: ☐ Online ☐ Face to Face ☐ None If yes, list all specializations/concentrations by title and include # of credit hours:				

Internship		**Accelerated programs**
Internship Requirement: ☐ Required ☐ Optional	If Required, Number of credit hours: Number of clock hours:	Accelerated program available: ☐ Yes ☐ No

	Copy all courses with descriptions to a word document and upload to Canvas. **Label with the full name of the Institution. (Ex. Bowling Green State University not BGSU)**	
	Undergraduate Courses documented and uploaded ☐ **Yes**	Graduate Courses documented and uploaded ☐ **Yes**