

Willingness of Employers to Hire Ex-Convicts in Private Institutions: A Basis for Non-Discriminatory Hiring Guideline Handbook in Employing Ex-Convicts

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Abstract—This study explores the willingness of employers to hire ex-convicts, a crucial aspect of their reintegration into society. Factors influencing employers' willingness include the nature of the crime, the time elapsed since the conviction, and the individual's rehabilitation efforts. Studies indicate that educational and vocational training programs, along with government incentives, can positively impact employers' attitudes. However, persistent stigmas and legal barriers remain significant obstacles. Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach, encompassing policy reforms, awareness campaigns, and support systems that highlight the benefits of inclusive hiring. This research underscores the need for a balanced perspective that aligns societal reintegration goals with business interests, promoting a more inclusive and equitable job market for ex-convicts. The demographic data indicates that most employers are experienced, with 57% aged 30 to 49 and none aged 50 and 54% being male. All employers hold bachelor's degrees. Furthermore, 46% have over five years of service, and 43% are in managerial positions. Employers' perceptions of hiring ex-convicts were analyzed using various theoretical lenses. Attribution theory results showed a favorable perception, with a mean score of 3.80. Labeling theory indicated a rejection of negative stereotypes, with a mean score of 2.25. Conflict theory analysis revealed that educational background, professional licenses, job experience, and social standing influenced hiring decisions, with a mean score of 3.76. Education and work experience were crucial factors, with scores of 4.21 and 4.22, respectively.

Index Terms—Employing Ex-convicts, Non-discriminatory Hiring Guideline Handbook, Attribution Theory, Labeling Theory, Conflict Theory.

1. Introduction

Employers are crucial stakeholders in successful reintegration into, and one could argue that they are also gatekeepers. On the other hand, former criminals often present with little to no employment history, technical abilities, or education (Fahey et al., 2006; Visser et al., 2011), which limits their job chances to low-skilled and low-wage positions (Western et al., 2002).

Re-entry into the workforce is one of the most challenging

circumstances they confront. Employment rates and earnings of ex-offenders are low by almost any measure, although they were typically low before these (mostly male) individuals were incarcerated. Extremely high recidivism rates among formerly incarcerated individuals appear to be correlated with low employment rates.

There is a low willingness of employers to employ ex-convicts due to negative perceptions and stereotypes associated with them. The stigma of having a criminal history is a topic frequently in studies on how employers view people engaged in the court system. Research has shown that having a criminal history might skew the application evaluation process and make potential employers hesitant to recruit people with substance use disorders. (Agan and Starr, 2017; Denver et al., 2017; Sered and Norton-Hawk, 2019). The general public needs to be ready to assist the massive influx of formerly incarcerated individuals as they reintegrate back into society. Reducing recidivism, which contributes to a safer community, is a significant advantage of supporting the release of convicts.

There are numerous justifications for employing incarcerated individuals. Providing employment opportunities to incarcerated people can help them acquire valuable skills and work experience, which may increase their chances of employment after their release. Most inmates in jail participate in rehabilitation programs, which serve the institution's purpose of reducing crime. This type of rehabilitation aims to help ex-offenders transition back into society as productive members of society when they leave jail (Abotchie, 2008). Undoubtedly, many who recidivated sought to become productive members but ran into societal roadblocks. The likelihood of rehabilitation decreases, and ex-convicts often fall back into a pattern of crime if they are unable to obtain employment or are otherwise discriminated against because of their status as ex-offenders. It is in the greatest interest of society as a whole that barriers to rehabilitation be removed. Many inmates have benefited from this since they gained practical experience in their field of study; this provides them with valuable work experience and

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the opportunity to develop skills that could help them land a job (Collins et al., 2009).

In this sense, the prison is not just a place to lock up offenders but a place to rehabilitate them and provide them with skills they can use when they get out. (Atkin and Armstrong (2013), Lloyd et al., 2020; Prescott et al., 2020) Employers are more likely to reject candidates with felony convictions and histories of violent or sexual offenses than those charged with misdemeanors and drug crimes. Unemployment rates are higher for people of color because of the negative perception that many employers have of SIP (Decker et al., 2015).

The gaps in the present research from which it is adapted are as follows: Respondents are employees from private institutions, specifically in canning manufacturing; the study was conducted on a local level region, particularly within General Santos City; the variables from the adapted study have been included in this study, such as the profile of the employers; employers' perception (Attribution Theory, Labeling Theory, Conflict Theory), and the influencing factors. The study's primary area of concentration is the employers in canning manufacturing. Finally, the study proposes a Non-discriminatory Hiring Guideline Handbook for Employing Ex-Convicts.

However, there are numerous arguments against employing incarcerated individuals. Whether to employ incarcerated individuals is complicated and requires careful consideration of the potential benefits and drawbacks. One concern is that using prison labor to generate profits for businesses may be exploitative without equitably compensating the workers. Thus, these programs must be devised and implemented fairly and ethically that prioritizes the well-being of the participating workers.

In this study, the researchers determined the willingness of employers to employ ex-convicts. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the employers in terms of the following:
 1. age;
 2. sex;
 3. educational attainment;
 4. years of service;
 5. work position;
2. What is the level of employers' perception in hiring an ex-convict in terms of the following?
 1. attribution theory;
 2. labeling theory;
 3. conflict theory;
3. What is the level of influence of employers' willingness to hire an ex-convict in terms of the following?
 1. education/training background;
 2. work experience;
 3. committed crime;
4. Is there a significant relationship between employer's profile and employer's perception?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the influencing factors and employer's perception?

The null hypothesis of the study is stated as follows:

HO₁: There is no significant relationship between an employer's profile and employers' perception of hiring ex-convicts.

HO₂: There is no significant relationship between the influencing factors and employer's perception of hiring ex-convicts.

2. Materials and Methods

A. Research Design

The research employed a descriptive-correlational research design. The descriptive-correlation design permits using quantitative methods to investigate the population's attitudes, behaviors, and characteristics based on the study. Given the purpose of the study, the descriptive - correlation research design is suitable. It is believed that employers' willingness, perspective, and influencing factors fall under the purview of behavioral evaluation, thus the design selection. On the other hand, a descriptive survey design is utilized when the study's objectives are to identify and describe individuals' behavioral and trend changes (Wiafe, 2021).

Research designs can be broken down into several categories, one is the correlational study, in which two or more variables correlate to determine any possible associations. Studies based on correlation are considered non-experimental, indicating that the study's researchers do not attempt to alter or control any of the variables (Cherry, 2023).

B. Sampling Method

This study adopted the non-probability sampling technique, the judgmental or expert sampling method. This research uses an intended or selective sampling strategy and focuses on individuals who are qualified. (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). The classification bases itself on private institutions, specifically in the canning manufacturing of General Santos City. Judgmental or expert is a non-probability sampling technique in which the researcher chooses units to sample based on their knowledge and personal judgment about the particular area.

C. Research Instrument

A particular questionnaire is formulated to determine employers' willingness to employ ex-convicts. Researchers utilize the Likert Scale to evaluate how individuals are perceived. Initially, a pilot questionnaire is developed and distributed to participants to corroborate the items' objectivity and clarity. The final version of the questionnaire will incorporate suggestions for improvement.

This study was adapted from Wiafe (2021), Willingness of Employers to Employ Ex-convicts among selected SMEs in the Western region of Ghana. The questionnaires were adapted from the research of Young (2011), Employer Attitudes Toward Hiring First Time Felons in Newport News, Virginia, Wiafe (2021), Willingness of employers to employ ex-convicts among selected SMEs in the western region of Ghana, and Starks (2018), Employer Attitudes and Beliefs About Hiring Post Incarcerated Offenders in Mississippi.

The questionnaire is divided into three parts. Section 1

includes general information about the employers. Section 2 contains the level of employers' perception of hiring an ex-convict. The five-point rating scale was used, and the interpretations are indicated. The Attribution and Labeling theories have the same description and interpretation as shown below.

Scale	Verbal Description	Interpretation
5	Strongly Agree	This means that employers are extremely willing.
4	Agree	This means that employers are averagely willing.
3	Neutral	This means that employers are somewhat willing.
2	Disagree	This means that employers are not willing.
1	Strongly Disagree	This means that employers are definitely not willing.

Table 1. Attribution Theory and Labeling Theory Five-point Rating Scale

Below is the five-point rating scale for Conflict Theory. The five-point rating scale was also used and the interpretation are indicated as follows.

Scale	Verbal Description	Interpretation
5	Extremely Influential	This means that the statement has a high influence in the perception of employers to hire ex-convicts.
4	Very Influential	This means that the statement has just a right influence in the perception of employers to hire ex-convicts.
3	Moderately Influential	This means that the statement has an average influence in the perception of employers to hire ex-convicts.
2	Slightly Influential	This means that the statement has a modest influence in the perception of employers to hire ex-convicts.
1	Not at All Influential	This means that the statement has a hardly no influence in the perception of employers to hire ex-convicts.

Table 2. Conflict Theory Five-point Rating Scale

Section 3 determines the level of influence of employers' willingness to hire an ex-convict. The five-point rating scale was used and the interpretation are indicated. Educational Attainment and Work/Training Experience has the same description and interpretation as indicated below.

Scale	Verbal Description	Interpretation
5	Extremely Important	This means that the statement is highly important factor to hire ex-convicts.
4	Very Important	This means that the statement only has exact important factor to hire ex-convicts.
3	Moderately Important	This means that the statement is reasonably important factor to hire ex-convicts.
2	Slightly Important	This means that the statement is somewhat important factor to hire ex-convicts.
1	Not at All Important	This means that the statement is in no way important factor to hire ex-convicts.

Table 3. Educational Attainment and Work/Training Experience Five-point Rating Scale

Below is the five-point rating scale for Committed Crime. The five-point rating scale was also used and the interpretation are indicated as follows.

Scale	Verbal Description	Interpretation
5	Strongly Agree	This means that employers are extremely willing.
4	Agree	This means that employers are averagely willing.
3	Neutral	This means that employers are somewhat willing.
2	Disagree	This means that employers are not willing.
1	Strongly Disagree	This means that employers are definitely not willing.

Table 4. Committed Crime Five-point Rating Scale

D. Data Gathering Procedure

Preparation and Validation involve the foundational stage of the study, where careful planning and validation processes are undertaken to ensure the effectiveness and reliability of the study. Researchers diligently prepare and organize the groundwork during this step, establishing a framework for subsequent phases. This includes defining the research objectives, formulating hypotheses or research questions, and selecting appropriate qualitative, quantitative, or a mix of both methodologies.

Interview and Data Gathering focuses on conducting surveys and gathering data to enrich the research on employers' perspectives related to hiring individuals with criminal records. This stage is critical for obtaining firsthand insights, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the nuances surrounding the employment decisions of private institutions. Researchers will give questionnaires to the hiring managers, human resources professionals, and industry stakeholders to explore the factors influencing their willingness to hire ex-convicts.

Data Encoding and Tallying refers to the process of systematically converting raw data into a format that can be easily managed and analyzed. Researchers typically assign numerical codes or symbols to represent different categories, responses, or variables within the collected data during this step. This encoding simplifies the information, making it more amenable to statistical analysis.

Data Evaluation and Analysis: in this crucial stage, researchers meticulously examine and analyze the gathered data to derive meaningful insights and draw conclusions. This process involves carefully examining the quality, relevance, and reliability of the collected information, employing statistical methods as appropriate.

In this study, the researchers modified and adopted a questionnaire. Before conducting the study, the researchers submitted a letter to the College of Business Administration and Accountancy Dean requesting permission to conduct the study.

Prior to the survey, researchers obtained approval for their questionnaire. Three (3) validators are required to review and authenticate the questionnaire's validity, which serves as the primary tool for collecting primary data. The questionnaire comprises three main sections: the first addresses the demographic profile of employers, the second focuses on employers' perceptions of hiring ex-convicts, and the third explores influencing factors on employers' willingness to hire ex-convicts. The questions consist of closed-ended inquiries.

Before initiating the survey, researchers sought ethical clearance from the Institutional Ethics Review Committee - Mindanao State University - General Santos to ensure study

confidentiality and other ethical considerations. After receiving ethical clearance, a letter and the ethical clearance were attached to the survey questionnaire to assure employers. Strict confidentiality and respect for employers were maintained, and participant consent was obtained. Employer's anonymity was preserved by identifying them with non-traceable initial letters.

The self-administered questionnaires were delivered to employers in their respective companies, allowing a two-week interval for participants to fill them out without feeling pressured. This approach aimed to prevent biased responses. Completed questionnaires were handed to the guard/security during the researcher's second visit. Out of the eleven (11) canning manufacturing companies in General Santos City, only seven permitted the survey. Fifty-four (54) employers completed the questionnaires, including HR officers, managers, recruitment officers, and supervisors.

Following data collection, the collected data were tabulated and recorded in an Excel spreadsheet for statistical analysis. Then, they sent it to a statistician for evaluation and interpretation in accordance with the purpose of the study. Mean was used to determine the average mean score for profile and employer perception data. To assess the significant relationship between the employer's profile and employers' perception and the significant relationship between the influencing factors and employer's perception, the Pearson (r) Coefficient was used. After analyzing and interpreting the data collection results, the researchers provided recommendations.

E. Data Analysis

The data gathered through the questionnaires will be tallied and treated using the following statistical tools:

Mean. This will be used to determine the average mean score of the data collected on the profile and employers' perceptions.

Pearson (r) Coefficient Correlation. This will be applied to determine the significant relationship between the employer's profile and employers' perception of hiring ex-convicts and the significant relationship between the influencing factors and employer's perception of hiring ex-convicts.

3. Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of data collected from survey questionnaires distributed among employers of private institutions, specifically in the canning manufacturing in General Santos City. The findings are displayed in succeeding graphs and tables with accompanying discussions and explanations. Furthermore, this chapter addresses specific problems outlined in the preceding chapter.

Table 5 shows the profile of the canning manufacturing employers in General Santos City with respect to their age. The result revealed that 52% of employers were 30 to 39 years old, and 5% were 40 to 49 years old, which collectively represents 57% of the total employers. This suggests that a substantial portion of employers are more experienced. Meanwhile, employers in the 18 to 29 age range constituted the remaining 43%, demonstrating a presence of relatively young employers. Differences in productivity between age groups might also stem from systematic increases in qualification levels obtained

between cohorts (Haegeland et al., 2001). Notably, there were no employers in the 50 years old and above age range.

Table 5. Age Distribution of Canning Manufacturing Employers in General Santos City

Age	Total
18 – 29 years	43%
30 – 39 years	52%
40 – 49 years	5%

Table 6. Sex Distribution of Canning Manufacturing Employers in General Santos City

Sex	Total
Male	54%
Female	46%

Table 6 shows the profile of canning manufacturing employers in General Santos City with respect to their sex. The result revealed that 54% of employers were female, while 46% were male employers. This indicates unequal distribution of employers, which suggests a gender imbalance within the canning manufacturing. The reality that there is a gender imbalance at work and in social institutions continues to spark debates, conversations, and worries, it is a deprivation of rights of the individual that could have contributed positively to the development of the organization and the society at large. (Olaogun et al. 2015).

Table 7. Educational Attainment Distribution of Canning Manufacturing Employers in General Santos City

Educational Attainment	Total
Batchelor's Degree	100%
Vocational	--
Master's Degree	--
Doctoral Degree	--

Table 7 shows the profile of the canning manufacturing employers in General Santos City with respect to their educational attainment. The result revealed that all employers were bachelor's degree holders. No employers in the canning manufacturing had vocational, master's, or doctoral degrees. Educational attainment and employment rates are strongly correlated. Upper secondary or post-secondary non- tertiary education is often seen as the minimum educational attainment for successful labor-market participation for most individuals (OECD, 2021).

Table 8. Years of Service Distribution of Canning Manufacturing Employers in General Santos City

Years of Service	Total
1 to 2 years	26%
3 to 4 years	28%
More than 5 years	46%

Table 8 shows the profile of the canning manufacturing employers in General Santos City with respect to their years of service. The result revealed that a large portion of the canning

manufacturing comprised more experienced employers, with 46% of employers in service for more than five years and 28% in service for 3 to 4 years. The role of experience was also prominent in gaining the knowledge that helps one to assess one's own choices and decisions (Paloniemi, S. 2006). Furthermore, the remaining 26% of employers were in service for 1 to 2 years. Notably, there were no employers with less than one year of employment.

Table 9. Work Position Distribution of Canning Manufacturing Employers in General Santos City

Work Position	Total
HR Officer	41%
Manager	43%
HR Assistant	7%
Supervisor	9%

Table 9 shows the profile of the canning manufacturing employers in General Santos City with respect to their work position. Sharing such responsibilities with HRM professionals should be treated more seriously since they risk losing control over the process and the outcomes of employing workers in ways that harm the organization rather than help (Gollan, P. J. 2012). The result revealed that the majority of the employers had a managerial role, accounting for 43% of the total employers. Additionally, 41% of employers were HR officers, while only 9% were supervisors. Lastly, the remaining 7% of employers were HR assistants.

Table 10. The Level of Employers' Perception in Hiring an Ex-Convict in Terms of Attribution Theory

Attribution Theory	Mean	Description
1. I am willing to hire an ex-convict based on their characteristics.	3.67	Agree
2. I am willing to hire an ex-convict due to the need to fill a vacant job position.	3.83	Agree
3. I am willing to hire an ex-convict because it is acceptable in our company.	3.94	Agree
4. I am willing to hire an ex-convict based on their work experience before their crime.	3.85	Agree
5. I am willing to hire an ex-convict based on their work experience after their crime.	4.04	Agree
6. I am willing to hire an ex-convict despite their criminal history.	3.56	Agree
7. I am willing to hire an ex-convict due to potential legal liabilities.	3.74	Agree
Overall Mean	3.80	Agree

Legend: 4.21-5.00 Strongly Agree, 3.41-4.20 Agree, 2.61-3.40 Neutral, 1.81-2.60 Disagree, 1.00-1.80 Strongly Disagree

Table 10 presents the level of employers' perception in hiring an ex-convict in terms of attribution theory. With mean scores ranging from 3.56 to 4.04, the employers agreed that they would hire an ex-convict based on their characteristics, work experience before and after their crime, and their criminal history. According to Albright and Denq (2004), employers' attitude is a major stepping stone for advancing ex-offender employment efforts. In addition, they found that 21% of employers reported that their decision to hire depended on the type of crime committed and the circumstances surrounding the commission of the crime. Furthermore, they agreed that they were willing to hire an ex-convict due to the need to fill a vacant job position, potential legal liabilities, and because it was acceptable in their company.

Overall, the calculated overall mean score for the level of employers' perception in hiring an ex-convict in terms of attribution theory was 3.80. This suggests that canning manufacturing employers show an agreeable level in hiring an ex-convict based on attribution theory. Contrary to more recent studies, the early work of Atkinson, Fenster, and Blumberg (1976), which used a basic survey methodology, found that the majority (69%) of potential employers expressed a willingness to hire ex-offenders. This favorable level implies a positive perception of canning manufacturing employers to evaluate individuals beyond their criminal history, aligning with the principles of attribution theory.

Table 11. The Level of Employers' Perception in Hiring an Ex-Convict in Terms of Labeling Theory

Labeling Theory	Mean	Description
1. I believe that when they say ex-convicts are dangerous.	2.46	Disagree
2. I believe that when they say ex-convicts are incompetent.	1.85	Disagree
3. I believe that when they say ex-convicts are untrustworthy.	2.52	Disagree
4. I believe that when they say ex-convicts are dishonest.	2.48	Disagree
5. I believe that when they say ex-convicts have learning difficulties.	1.63	Strongly Disagree
6. I believe that when they say ex-convicts have mental issues.	1.78	Strongly Disagree
7. I believe that when they say ex-convicts are responsible for admitting their crimes.	3.00	Neutral
Overall Mean	2.25	Disagree

Legend: 4.21-5.00 Strongly Agree, 3.41-4.20 Agree, 2.61-3.40 Neutral, 1.81-2.60 Disagree, 1.00-1.80 Strongly Disagree

Table 11 presents the level of employers' perception in hiring an ex-convict in terms of labeling theory. With mean scores ranging from 1.85 to 2.52, the employers disagreed when others said ex-convicts are dangerous, incompetent, untrustworthy, and dishonest. Moreover, with mean scores of 1.63 and 1.78, the employers strongly disagreed when others said ex-convicts have learning difficulties and mental issues. However, with a mean score of 3, the employers held a neutral view when others said ex-convicts are responsible for admitting their crimes.

Conflict Theory	Mean	Description
1. I prefer to hire an ex-convict who held a higher position in the workplace before being convicted, rather than who held a lower position.	3.85	Very Influential
2. I prefer to hire an ex-convict who comes from a well-known family.	3.59	Very Influential
3. I prefer to hire an ex-convict with job experience.	3.98	Very Influential
4. I prefer to hire an ex-convict who was already an adult when they committed their crime.	2.70	Moderately Influential
5. I prefer to hire an ex-convict with a degree.	4.06	Very Influential
6. I prefer to hire an ex-convict with a professional license.	4.06	Very Influential
7. I prefer to hire an ex-convict who has spent fewer years in prison.	4.09	Very Influential
Overall Mean	3.76	Very Influential

Legend: 4.21-5.00 Extremely Influential, 3.41-4.20 Very Influential, 2.61-3.40 Moderately Influential, 1.81-2.60 Slightly Influential, 1.00-1.80 Not at All Influential

Table 12. The Level of Employers' Perception in Hiring an Ex-Convict in Terms of Conflict Theory

Overall, the calculated overall mean score for the level of employers' perception in hiring an ex-convict in terms of labeling theory was 2.25. This suggests that canning manufacturing employers show a disagreeable level in hiring an ex-convict based on labeling theory. The foremost challenge for

offenders is finding legitimate employment, which contributes to their successful reintegration as well as affects the overall prosperity of their community (Brazzell and La Vigne, 2009). This unfavorable level implies a positive perception of canning manufacturing employers to consider ex-convicts for employment opportunities without affecting their self-concept and behavior from social labels and stereotypes.

Table 12 presents the level of employers' perception in hiring an ex-convict in terms of conflict theory. With mean scores ranging from 3.59 to 4.09, an ex-convict with a degree, professional license, and job experience, who held a higher position in the workplace before being convicted, came from a well-known family, and spent fewer years in prison, was very influential for employers to consider for employment. Education is one of the factors that makes the difference in how ex-convicts are regarded and the attitude and inclination one forms towards them. Owens (2009) indicates that education can reduce negativity associated with ex-convicts. This indicates that the level of education of the ex-convicts influences the willingness of employers to employ them. This establishes that education leads to an increase in the probability of employability by ex-convicts. Moreover, with a lower mean score of 2.70, an ex-convict, who was already an adult when they committed their crime, was moderately influential for employers to consider for employment.

Overall, the calculated overall mean score for the level of employers' perception in hiring an ex-convict in terms of conflict theory was 3.76. This suggests that canning manufacturing employers are influenced by conflict theory when making decisions about hiring individuals with a criminal history. This favorable level implies a preference for canning manufacturing employers to consider ex-convicts for employment opportunities, aligning with the principles of conflict theory.

Table 13. The Level of Influence of Employers' Willingness to Hire an Ex-Convict in Terms of Educational Background

Educational Background	Mean	Description
1. I am willing to hire an ex-convict with prison education or vocational education.	4.11	Very Important
2. I am willing to hire an ex-convict with education/training prior to incarceration.	3.93	Very Important
3. I am willing to hire an ex-convict with relevant education.	4.11	Very Important
4. I am willing to hire an ex-convict with lower primary education (Kindergarten).	4.31	Extremely Important
5. I am willing to hire an ex-convict with higher primary education (Elementary).	4.31	Extremely Important
6. I am willing to hire an ex-convict with lower secondary education (High School).	4.33	Extremely Important
7. I am willing to hire an ex-convict with upper secondary level education (Senior High School).	4.33	Extremely Important
Overall Mean	4.20	Very Important

Legend: 4.21-5.00 Extremely Important, 3.41-4.20 Very Important, 2.61-3.40 Moderately Important, 1.81-2.60 Slightly Important, 1.00-1.80 Not at All Important

Table 13 presents the level of influence of employers' willingness to hire an ex-convict in terms of education/training background. With mean scores of 4.31 and 4.33, the employers were willing to hire an ex-convict with either lower primary, higher primary, lower secondary, or upper secondary level of education. Furthermore, with lower mean scores of 3.93 and

4.11, the employers were willing to hire an ex-convict with relevant education/training prior to incarceration, prison education, or vocational education.

Overall, the calculated overall mean score for the level of influence of employers' willingness to hire an ex-convict in terms of education/training background was 4.21. This suggests that the education and training background of an ex-convict is very important and influential in the willingness of canning manufacturing employers to consider employment opportunities.

According to May and Brown (2011), a recent study indicates that incarcerated individuals are allowed to engage in rehabilitation, educational, and vocational programs throughout their time in prison. Engaging in programs throughout incarceration may enhance the prospects of individuals upon their reintegration into society.

Former offenders are prepared for reintegration into society through the use of correctional pre-release programs. According to the findings of Visser et al. (2011), researchers studied the recidivism rates of former offenders in Virginia. This led to the documentation of the increased employability of offenders who finished the rehabilitation and educational programs while incarcerated. Ex-offenders who previously held positions requiring vocational job skills are in a better position to regain their employment. When they are looking for work, it makes them more marketable to job seekers. (Visser et al., 2011) Ex-offenders who have received training in job skills or formal schooling are viewed more positively by prospective employers. May and Brown (2011) found that the current amount of research revealed that incarcerated individuals can participate in rehabilitation programs, educational programs, and vocational programs while serving their sentences. Those who participate in programs while they are incarcerated may have more possibilities available to them once they are released back into society.

Those who hire formerly incarcerated individuals have disclosed that they recognize the advantages of providing them with employment opportunities. Many individuals had jobs before being detained, which could be beneficial for them in terms of finding employment in the future once they have completed their sentences (Latessa, 2012).

Work Experience	Mean	Description
1. I am willing to hire an ex-convict enrolled in a re-entry program.	4.37	Extremely Important
2. I am willing to hire an ex-convict eligible for the work opportunity program while.	4.00	Very Important
3. I am willing to hire an ex-convict with job skills.	4.46	Extremely Important
4. I am willing to hire an ex-convict with formal training.	4.04	Very Important
5. I am willing to hire an ex-convict with work experience.	4.02	Very Important
6. I am willing to hire an ex-convict with on-the-job trainings.	4.33	Extremely Important
7. I am willing to hire an ex-convict with quality assurance trainings.	4.33	Extremely Important
Overall Mean	4.22	Extremely Important

Legend: 4.21-5.00 Extremely Important, 3.41-4.20 Very Important, 2.61-3.40 Moderately Important, 1.81-2.60 Slightly Important, 1.00-1.80 Not at All Important

Table 14. The Level of Influence of Employers' Willingness to Hire an Ex-Convict in Terms of Work/Training Experience

Table 14 presents the level of influence of employers' willingness to hire an ex-convict in terms of work experience. With mean scores ranging from 4.33 to 4.46, the employers were willing to hire an ex-convict enrolled in a re-entry program with job skills, on-the-job training, and quality assurance training. Furthermore, with lower mean scores ranging from 4 to 4.04, the employers were willing to hire an ex-convict eligible for the work opportunity program with formal training and work experience.

Overall, the calculated overall mean score for the level of influence of employers' willingness to hire an ex-convict in terms of work experience was 4.22. This suggests that the work experience of an ex-convict is extremely important and influential in the willingness of canning manufacturing employers to consider employment opportunities. According to the findings of a study conducted by Young (2011) in Newport News, Virginia, which investigated employers' attitudes regarding hiring first-time offenders, the most significant concerns or influencing factors in considering a felon for employment were job skills, government incentives, and training. The more information provided to companies on the benefits of employing a convicted criminal, the more firms will be receptive to the concept of employing a felon and, ideally, the practice of doing so.

In the study that Starks (2018) conducted in Mississippi to investigate the attitudes and views of employers toward hiring post-incarcerated offenders, the findings revealed that the participants considered the applicant's work history to be an important factor in their hiring choice.

Table 15 presents the level of influence of employers' willingness to hire an ex-convict in terms of committed crime. With mean scores of 1.06 and 1.67, the employers strongly disagreed that they were willing to hire an ex-convict convicted of murder or sexual assault. Moreover, with slightly higher mean scores of 2 and 2.30, the employers disagreed that they would hire an ex-convict convicted of manslaughter or arson.

It was determined by Albright and Denq (2004) that businesses were initially unwilling to hire a former felony; however, when the nature of the offense was considered, employers' willingness to hire a felon changed significantly.

Table 15. The Level of Influence of Employers' Willingness to Hire an Ex-Convict in Terms of Committed Crime

Committed Crime	Mean	Description
1. I am willing to hire an ex-convict convicted of a drug-related offense.	3.19	Neutral
2. I am willing to hire an ex-convict convicted of forgery.	3.57	Agree
3. I am willing to hire an ex-convict convicted of theft, burglary, or robbery.	3.15	Neutral
4. I am willing to hire an ex-convict convicted of arson.	2.30	Disagree
5. I am willing to hire an ex-convict convicted of manslaughter.	2.00	Disagree
6. I am willing to hire an ex-convict convicted of sexual assault or assault.	1.67	Strongly Disagree
7. I am willing to hire an ex-convict convicted of murder.	1.06	Strongly Disagree
Overall Mean	2.42	Disagree

Legend: 4.21-5.00 Strongly Agree, 3.41-4.20 Agree, 2.61-3.40 Neutral, 1.81-2.60 Disagree, 1.00-1.80 Strongly Disagree

well as Von Bergen and Bressler (2016), employers continue to be unwilling to hire individuals who have a criminal history, particularly those who have committed felonies such as rape or murder. When an ex-offender is hired, there is a potential for legal action to be taken against them, which could put innocent victims, such as employees and customers, in danger.

Additionally, according to Starks (2018), the evaluation of the data revealed that the majority of the participants or firms would take into consideration employing former offenders. On the other hand, they might be unwilling to hire a former criminal convicted of a felony, a major charge, or a violent offense, or they might have concerns about doing so.

On the other hand, with mean scores of 3.15 and 3.19, the employers held a neutral view in terms of their willingness to hire an ex-convict convicted of theft, burglary, robbery, or drug-related offenses. However, with a mean score of 3.57, the employers agreed they would hire an ex-convict convicted of forgery.

Overall, the calculated overall mean score for the level of influence of employers' willingness to hire an ex-convict in terms of committed crime was 2.42. This suggests that canning manufacturing employers disagree when it comes to their willingness to hire individuals with criminal records. Hence, employers are open to assessing an ex-convict's qualifications, skills, and character depending on their past mistakes.

Young (2011) concluded that companies would have a neutral attitude toward hiring a convicted felon with sufficient job abilities. When confronted with convicts who possessed the necessary education and job abilities, the majority of surveyed companies stated that they would consider the individual for employment. In addition, the study discovered that companies would be significantly more ready to hire a convicted felon if the convict had gotten such training prior to their incarceration.

To test whether there is a significant relationship between the employers' profile and employers' perception and the significant relationship between the influencing factors and employers' perception, the Pearson (r) Coefficient was utilized.



Fig. 1. Employer's perception histogram

According to the findings of Atkins and Armstrong (2013) as

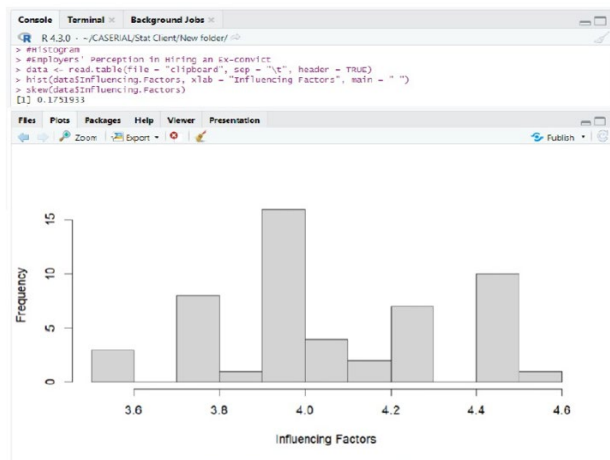


Fig. 2. Influencing factors histogram

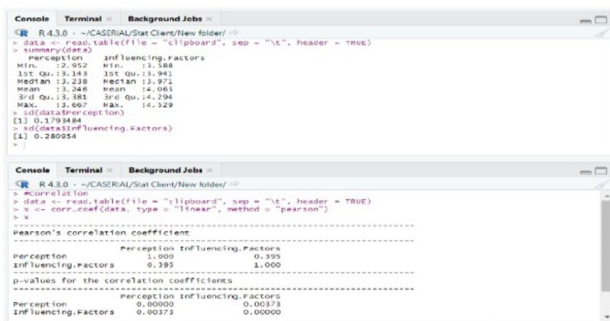


Fig. 3. Mean standard deviation and correlational analysis

The graphs representing the employer's perception of hiring an ex-convict and the influencing factors both exhibited bell-shaped patterns, indicative of normal data distributions. These observations were supported by skewness values of 0.4004 and 0.1752 for the perception of hiring an ex-convict and influencing factors, respectively, suggesting roughly symmetric distributions. Furthermore, the Central Limit Theorem confirmed that sample sizes of 30 or more were sufficient for data to approximate a normal distribution, regardless of the population's distribution, thus satisfying a crucial assumption for conducting parametric tests. This means that variables follow a normal distribution, allowing parametric tests such as Pearson's correlation to examine the relationship between the influencing factors and employer's perception towards hiring an ex-convict.

Based on the correlation analysis presented in Table 11, the correlation coefficient between Influencing Factors and Employer's Perception towards Hiring an Ex-Convict was 0.395, which indicates a positive and weak relationship between these two variables. Additionally, its p-value was very low, indicating a significant relationship between Influencing Factors and Employer's Perception towards Hiring an Ex-Convict ($p = 0.00373 < 0.05$ significance level). This suggests that there is a significant relationship between the influencing factors, namely education/training background, work experience, and committed crime, and the employer's perception towards hiring an ex-convict.

Table 16. Correlational Analysis Results

Variable	M	SD	1
1. Employer's Perception towards Hiring an Ex-Convict	3.246	0.18	
2. Influencing Factors	4.065	0.28	*0.395

Note. M and SD are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. * indicates $p < .05$.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis and interpretation of data collected from survey questionnaires distributed among private institution employers in General Santos City provide a comprehensive understanding of their demographic profiles and perceptions towards hiring ex-convicts. The demographic data revealed that the majority of employers are relatively experienced, with 57% being aged 30 to 49 years and a notable absence of employers aged 50 and above. A gender imbalance was evident, with 54% of employers being male. All employers held bachelor's degrees, indicating a high level of educational attainment but a lack of diversity in educational backgrounds. Additionally, 46% of employers had been in service for more than five years, and 43% held managerial positions.

Employers' perceptions of hiring ex-convicts were analyzed through various theoretical lenses. The results from attribution theory indicated an overall favorable perception, with employers showing a willingness to hire ex-convicts based on their characteristics, work experience, and the need to fill positions, with an overall mean score of 3.80. This suggests that employers are open to evaluating individuals beyond their criminal history.

Labeling theory results showed that employers disagreed with negative stereotypes about ex-convicts, with an overall mean score of 2.25, indicating a positive perception towards considering ex-convicts for employment without being influenced by societal labels.

Conflict theory analysis revealed that employers were influenced by factors such as educational background, professional licenses, job experience, and social standing, with an overall mean score of 3.76. This suggests that employers prefer candidates who have mitigating socio-economic factors and qualifications.

The importance of education and work experience was further highlighted, with high mean scores of 4.21 and 4.22, respectively, indicating these factors significantly influence employers' willingness to hire ex-convicts. However, employers showed a strong reluctance to hire individuals convicted of severe crimes like murder and sexual assault, with an overall mean score of 2.42.

Statistical analysis indicated no significant association between demographic variables (such as age, sex, years of service, and position) and employers' willingness to hire ex-convicts. While educational background and work experience significantly influence employers' willingness to hire, the type of crime committed did not show a significant impact.

Correlation analysis showed a positive but weak relationship between influencing factors and employers' perception towards hiring ex-convicts, with a significant p-value ($0.00373 < 0.05$).

This implies that while factors like education, training, and work experience positively influence employers' perceptions, their impact is relatively modest.

Overall, these findings suggest that private institution employers in General Santos City are generally open to hiring ex-convicts, particularly those with strong educational backgrounds and relevant work experience. Addressing gender imbalances and broadening educational diversity within the workforce could further enhance employment practices and inclusivity.

A. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, several recommendations can be made to enhance the willingness of employers to hire ex-convicts and facilitate the successful reintegration of ex-convicts into the workplace.

1) Recommendation for HR Managers

When concerns arise during the hiring process, it is important to approach discussions about a criminal record with empathy and sensitivity. Considering the criminal background is crucial, along with their rehabilitation efforts and relevant employment history since their release from conviction.

Create and execute educational programs for employers to increase awareness regarding the misconceptions surrounding ex-convicts. Emphasize the potential for rehabilitation and the advantages of providing second chances.

Promote the establishment of workplace integration programs that offer assistance to employers and individuals with criminal records. These programs may consist of mentorship initiatives, counseling services, and skill-building workshops customized to meet the unique needs of individuals with a criminal history.

2) Recommendation for Canning Manufacturers

Considering individuals with a criminal record for employment can be a beneficial approach toward rehabilitation and fostering social integration.

Fair Hiring Practices: Acquire a thorough grasp of the specific job requirements in the canning industry and assess the relevance of past convictions to the position's responsibilities.

Collaborations with Reentry Programs. Establish collaborations with reentry programs or organizations that have expertise in supporting individuals with criminal records.

Considering Individual Circumstances. Adopt a personalized approach when evaluating candidates who have criminal records. Take into account various factors, including the type of offense committed, the length of time that has passed since the conviction, and any signs of rehabilitation.

3) Recommendation for Social Significance

Promote collaboration among businesses, community organizations, and correctional facilities to establish a comprehensive support network for individuals transitioning from incarceration. By actively engaging the community in the rehabilitation process, employers can gain a sense of assurance when considering individuals with criminal records for employment.

Provide a comprehensive overview of the various career opportunities and possibilities for advancement within the

organization. The clarity provided not only serves as a source of motivation for individuals with criminal backgrounds to commit to their employment fully.

4) Recommendation for Global Significance

Recognizing the importance of diversity and inclusion within your organization is crucial. Consider the valuable perspectives and insights that individuals with a criminal history can bring to a diverse and dynamic work environment. It is important to establish a regular evaluation schedule to assess the impact of your hiring practices on individuals with a criminal record.

5) Recommendation for Sustainability Development Growth

Creating employee resources or peer groups can help bring together employees who have had similar experiences, including those who have been arrested or convicted. Effective communication between management, human resources, and employees is crucial in addressing any concerns or questions regarding hiring individuals with criminal records.

Create an inclusive environment where employees, regardless of their past, can openly share their experiences and seek guidance through a peer support system you oversee.

6) Recommendations for Future Researchers

Future research could further enhance this study by specifying different ex-offender subtypes to gain a more detailed viewpoint of employers, which could be done through vignettes that vary by offense type and other variables deemed important in the hiring decision process. A deep comprehension of the intricate relationship between safety regulations, skill demands, and workplace dynamics is of utmost importance. Discover how employers manage compliance requirements while considering the recruitment of individuals with criminal records and evaluate the effectiveness of training programs in meeting the industry's skill demands. Explore the viewpoints of hiring managers and HR professionals in the industry to determine the practicality and advantages of hiring individuals with criminal records.

Furthermore, researchers could seek insights from employers who have previously hired ex-offenders to provide a comprehensive understanding of their experiences, encompassing both positive and negative aspects. This approach would enable a thorough qualitative analysis of the underlying motivations behind employers' decision to hire ex-offenders. By working closely with industry stakeholders and carefully analyzing the policy implications related to manufacturing, researchers can gain valuable insights. The research should strive to generate practical recommendations, taking into account case studies and best practices within the industry to encourage inclusive hiring practices while recognizing the distinct challenges and opportunities present in the canning/manufacturing sector. By implementing these suggestions, upcoming researchers can improve the caliber and influence of their work, making valuable contributions to the progress of knowledge and tackling crucial challenges in their respective fields.

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